

WIXÁRIKA RESEARCH CENTER

July 31, 2017

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Over the past years, the Wixárika Research Center has had the privilege of bringing guest interns to work on the extensive archive that Juan and Yvonne Negrín collected over more than forty years of work with Wixárika elders and various community members. Among other things, these materials consist of an extraordinary collection of contemporary Wixárika yarn paintings, each of which is accompanied by audio recordings between the artist and Juan discussing the symbolism and narratives of the work. But, these materials are far more extensive than the art collection itself and we continue to come across interested scholars who are able to help us with the process of digitizing and cataloguing the materials in order to make them available to the public.

This summer we are happy to announce that we are beginning the revamping of our website for the first time since its creation in 2003. Our new website will be much more suited for the online archive we have been building over the past fifteen years. When we launch our new website in early 2018, we will be able to share the work that our resident interns have helped us digitize and categorize.

In September and October of 2016, Ingrid Arriaga—a doctoral candidate at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris—continued digitizing some of the yarn painting audiocassettes and scanned all of the catalogues and press articles related to the dozens of international exhibits Juan and Yvonne Negrín organized and curated in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to this, Ingrid scanned and made into PDF files numerous Wixárika-related articles that the Negríns had collected over decades. Ingrid's work was made possible by a research grant she received.

In February and March of 2017, we had the privilege of bringing Matsiwa (Baudelio) De la Cruz (one of our oldest colleagues from the Tuapurie ceremonial center of Las Latas) to consult and advise us on photographic and recorded archives. Matsiwa and Yvonne tediously worked through hundreds of photographs that had been scanned from their original slide format, placing them in proper sequence and identifying people, places and activities. Matsiwa also was able to listen to and help us identify rare recordings, including the *Kawitu*—the Wixárika history of creation—as narrated by key *mara'akate* and *kawiterutsiri* (the elders who know the path of the ancestors). The recording was made in 1980 at the request of three *kawiteros* from the community of Tuapurie (Santa Catarina). These recordings were digitized and Matsiwa was able to take a copy of the *kawitu* to each of the families of these elders. Only one of the three is still living.

Continuing with this work, we would like to bring Aukwe (Sofía) García Mijarez for a six week paid internship to help us organize several boxes of documents related to Juan and Yvonne's collaborative efforts with Wixárika communities—principally through their Mexican non-profit ADESMO (the Association for the Ecological Development of the Western Sierra Madre). Aukwe is a native of San Andrés Cohamiata or Tateikié and a recent graduate from Guadalajara's Jesuit University (ITESO) where she received a bachelor's degree in communications. She is also the head of communications for the Regional Wixárika Council, an organism that formed in 2010 to bring all Wixárika communities together in the protection of their sacred sites and ancestral territories. Over the past year Aukwe has also co-hosted "Territorios", a radio program out of the University of Guadalajara's radio station that focuses on matters of indigenous rights.



We believe that Aukwe is an excellent candidate to help us sift through the various files related to ADESMO's work in the sierra communities. We are most interested in Aukwe helping us locate important documents pertaining to the ecological projects that ADESMO led—these include the carpentry and weaving programs as well as efforts to catalogue medicinal plants and their uses and health care initiatives. While we expect many of these documents to consist of the day-to-day business of the non-profit, we know that the ecological projects are important points of reference for current efforts to carry out environmentally and culturally relevant projects in Wixárika communities. Among ADESMO's archives are tape recordings of General Assemblies in three communities and which are of particular interest. Digitizing these archives and making them available to the communal governments and schools has been a goal of the WRC. Community leaders have expressed their interest in having access to this vital information for their own archives.

For this particular internship, we would like to be able to give Aukwe a stipend that will help her pay off her student loan at ITESO. We believe that this is an important gesture that can help a first-generation college student begin her career while providing us the opportunity to involve a young Wixárika woman in our projects of organizing, digitizing and disseminating years of cultural and environmental work. For the six week internship we have set a goal of \$2,700 (\$450 a week) plus her airfare (approximately \$400), visa (\$160) and \$600 for room and board, totaling \$3,860.

Since the Wixárika Research Center was established, we have sought to find ways to involve Wixárika people in different aspects of our archival and on-the-ground projects. Our relationship with Wixáritari university students and graduates has grown over the years, and it is clear that many young Wixáritari are both interested and able to help us bring our unique materials to rural classrooms and community spaces. We believe that this creates a unique opportunity for young and elder Wixárika (in the case of Matsiwa) to engage in intercultural dialogue and guide the direction of future scholarship on Wixárika culture, indigenous rights and environmental advocacy.

We are reaching out to the public to help us raise funds to make this third residency in two years happen and hope that you can make a contribution. Donations can be made securely online by clicking on this link: http://wixarika.mediapark.net/en/en_donations.html or if you prefer, a check can be sent to the Wixárika Research Center, 863 Leo Way, Oakland, CA 94611-1964 with a memo that your donation be earmarked for Aukwe's paid internship.

Last of all, we would like to invite you to like our page on Facebook where we are continually posting articles for those interested in following current events related to Wixárika Cultural Survival and issues of indigenous rights. To find us on Facebook you can follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/WixarikaRC/>

Sincerely,

Wixárika Research Center