This program report briefly summarizes Atzin’s major activities and people’s participation during 2015. Atzin team members were present working in Tlamacazapa a total of 83 days in 2015, including 45 Saturdays out of a possible 51 (absent on Easter, Day of the Dead, Christmas, New Year’s and two training days). While most of administrative, intensive training, accounting and procurement work is done at the Atzin House in Cuernavaca, the team presence in Tlamacazapa provides needed technical and moral support to the village women who are running the day-to-day program activities.
The four sectors of Atzin work and their underlying, inter-related principles are displayed in the above diagram.

A. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM (yellow sector)

Program objective: to contribute to increased literacy and personal development among women, youth and children in Tlamacazapa through educational programs that have relevant, well-organized classes taught by trained local women with technical assistance from Atzin.


Given the importance of early stimulation in the development of young children, Atzin has run the first 1.5 years of a two year pilot project with the establishment of a small learning centre for young children of one to four years of age, starting in September 2014. This project has progressed well. Accomplishments included: complete reorganization of scheduling of existing programs so that the pilot project could be accommodated in our existing facility; graduation of program coordinator from early childhood education; obtainment of workable curricula as examples with drafting of day plans; revision of existing administrative forms; large collection of (gently used) age appropriate toys and materials; orientation of all educators to this project and its purpose; repeated announcements and invitations in village; start-up of program on 10 Sept 2014 with registration of children and classes; three meeting of parents held during 2014-15; orientation of an additional experienced educator and an educator-in-training; incorporation of two children with special needs into program; Plan: to increase to five afternoons per week, three hours per class due to demand.

Range of number of children in a class = 4 to 18 children, with lower numbers being related to rainy or cold weather or village fiesta days. Not surprisingly, older children (3 and 4 year olds) are more likely to continue attending; younger children (1 and 2 year olds) are more likely to become inactive.

**Total number of program days Sept 2014-July 2015:** 124

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of days with children</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 or more</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>22 (related to bad weather or village fiestas).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Tihueliske for Children. Four days per week for 4.25 hours each day for children aged 5-13 years old, taught by five educators. Each educator teaches a different level of learning. A complete review of this curriculum was done in 2015 with many additions and revisions by D. Benavides.

**Total number of program days Aug 2014-July 2015:** 180

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of days with children</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>23 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>72 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>73 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>10 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 or less</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the course of this academic year, the average attendance was 30 children per day from an averaged active registration list of 87 children. More than 30 children attended 53% of the days. Note that the attendance is roughly a third of the larger “pool” of registered children. Twenty children attend very regularly. While bad weather and village fiestas account for low attendance on certain program days, the numbers reflect the irregular attendance of the remaining children on the register – their parents just do not expect or insist on the children going to school.

In comparison with previous years of this program, the registration has dropped, from approximately 110-120 children registered in the program to an overall monthly average of 87 registered children this year. (Each month, children with zero attendance are moved to an “inactive” list – they can be “re-activated” simply by attending two classes in a future month. In this way, children are not removed or kicked out of the program; they are just put on hold and are free to return.) We know that 20 children (registered with Tihueliske Children in 2013-14) went on to enroll in primary school in October 2014 as new classrooms with teachers opened up (which we actually consider a marker of success). Another 10 children over 12 years of age were passed onto the Tihueliske Women and Youth Program, and accounts for the first semester rise in attendance in that program.

Interestingly, registration numbers in both primary schools in Tlamacazapa have also notably dropped (for example, in the federal primary school, 300 children are registered this year, down from 350). There are two possible explanations for this: 1) the daily cost of living has increased to the point where families cannot continue to send their children to study i.e., the evident increased poverty of the poorest families is reflected in lower registration numbers; 2) the bulk of the preschool-aged children are now in school and the upcoming numbers may be lower. The Atzin census done in 2005 gave an excellent picture of the ages of children, the actual numbers of children in school and literacy – those numbers are now out of date, and no one knows what the pre-school or school-age populations are.

3. **Tihueliske for Women and Youth.** Literacy classes three afternoon per week for three hours taught by three educators. Registration with INEA (National Institute for Adult Education) and regular exams. Formal registration of 40 people in the program, roughly half women and half male youth, but daily attendance over the year has fluctuated. In the first semester, daily attendance was up ranging from 10 to 22 learners per day. In December however daily attendance dropped (this is customary as many leave to work outside the village during this month) and didn’t recover in January, remaining at an average of 8-9 people per class, with the majority being under 30 years of age, from a pool of active registrants of 25 people.

Analyzing this situation, the primary cause is likely the difficulty of the INEA books and lack of enough practice sheets; we have recognized this problem for several years but have not had the personnel nor the time to work up a better curriculum from a more relevant basic outline done in 2009.

**Total number of program days Aug 2014-July 2015:** 127
Number of days with 20 learners or more present: 10 (8%)
Number of days with 10-19 learners 36 (28%)
Number of days with 9 or fewer learners 81 (64%; *in part* related to bad weather or village fiestas).
4. **Tihueliske Tutoring.** Two afternoons from 3-5:30pm and Saturday 8:30-11am. Tutoring by three educators for children 9 years old and up who are not passing grade level in primary school. Average of 40 children registered in the program each month, with a range of 35 to 46 registered. This program is more fluid as individual children tend to register, attend and then leave as performance improves, although some attend for the full year. Saturdays usually have lowest attendance compared to after school afternoon classes.

**Total number of program days Aug 2014-July 2015:** 127
Number of days with 20 learners or more present: 52 (41%)
Number of days with 10-19 learners: 62 (49%)
Number of days with 9 or fewer learners: 13 (10%; bad weather or village fiestas).

5. **Promoter Training Igualtanesti (Here comes the dawn):** Leadership and personal development training for promoters (village youth and women who take responsibility for program conduction on a day-to-day basis). Intensive annual participatory training for 9-10 days based on learning about communication and collaboration, conflict resolution, human rights. Follow-up learning circles are held each Saturday with incorporation of community service.

The overall theme of *Iguatlanesti 17* was "We are our Future: The Right to Change." It was held from 21-31 July 2015, with a total of 23 young participants (21 female; 2 male) and 10 trainers/Atzin team members. The workshop focused on subthemes related to human rights, creativity, gender and economic productivity in order to strengthen individual creativity and self-confidence as well as increasing skills of the group. The cost was 325 pesos per person per day (including food, lodging, transportation, all activities, presentations and events).

6. **Youth Scholarships.** Over the 2014-15 academic year, ten youth received scholarships: nine in Tlamacazapa either in junior or high school, receiving 300 pesos/ month and doing weekly community service; and one male in full time studies in technical high school in Cuernavaca, living in the Atzin House.

In August 2015, six scholarships were awarded: the continuation of one male at Los Pequenos Hermanos technical high school; one new female started technical high school, also at Los Pequenos Hermanos; and three young women in junior high in Tlamacazapa with 330 pesos/ month plus community service. As of February 2016, the number in junior high in Tlamacazapa will increase to five.

**B. HEALTH AND HEALING PROGRAM** (blue sector)

**Program objective:** To support the wellbeing of individuals, families and groups in Tlamacazapa through participation in health, dental, nutrition and special needs programs.

1. **Special Needs and Nutrition Program:** Chronic conditions and malnutrition. Provision of vitamins and/or medications; help with special equipment or materials. Accompaniment and help with transport and costs for medical appointments (decided on individual basis, as possible). Provision of supplements for malnourishment. Home visits for stimulation and follow-up.

**December 2015: Program Summary**
- Children (1-17 years): 66
- Children with disability: 15
Adults with disability 26
Elderly with disability 12 (an additional five personas passed away during 2015)
Total number in program 134

- Children and adults, with disability, who receive monthly food package 27
- Poor families with malnourishment, who receive monthly food package 39
- Children and adults, housebound with disability, who receive monthly home visit 31
- Children and adults, with disability, who receive monthly vitamins and medication for chronic conditions. 28
- Children and adults, with disability, who attend Tihuelike Education Program 5
- Children from special needs families who attend Tihueliske Education Program 14
- Children in primary school who receive monthly school supplies/ materials (all previously attended Tihueliske Education Program and were passed to primary school during 2014 and 2015) 28


2015: 76 clinical days (dentist present); average of 11 patients/day (in dental chair; attended by dentist); total of 1,283 treatments for a total of 845 patients. Educational classes on oral hygiene as well as rapid assessment of dental health (with written referrals for children with caries or other oral problems) and toothbrush distribution in two kindergartens and two primary schools (all grades) as well as Tihueliske children.

The owner of the dental clinic building gave Atzin notice to vacate at the end of January 2016. The dental unit has moved into the Atzin Centre temporarily during the search for a new location.

3. La Buena Cocina (The Good Kitchen). Use of ecological rocket stove with follow-up. Preparation of nutritious and economic food (Saturday demonstrations): in 2015 a total of 42 Saturday demonstrations of cooking lentils with vegetables using a rocket ecological stove outside at the Atzin Centre (cooking 2.5 kg of lentils and purchasing 5-6 kg of tortillas). A scoop of the cooked food in a tortilla is distributed to everyone present by promoters, with any leftovers eagerly purchased by women at five pesos for two cups of cooked food. Our conclusion; the successful introduction of lentils into local diet is due to the persistence of preparation and tasting. Lentils are not grown in Tlamacazapa; only 25% of the population have fields and cultivate corn and beans; most food is imported.

The two nutrition promoters prepared a simple atole breakfast / snack (similar to a thin porridge) for the Tihueliske Education Programs four days per week. They served a total of 5,578 breakfasts/ afternoon snacks during 2015 to children and educators.

2015: A traditional (empirical) midwife and a diploma nurse continue to attend to a registry of 23-25 women each month. Prenatal clinic is held every Saturday afternoon, with an average attendance of 6-8 women. Additional women attend for a pregnancy test and initial exam only. Routine services: blood pressure, weight, hemoglobin, fetal growth measurements and heartbeat, traditional massage, vitamins and food supplement; referrals.

C. INCOME GENERATION FOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES (red sector)

Program objective: Contribute to the increased wealth of vulnerable people and families through the creation of viable economic and productive opportunities as well as the development of technical and personal skills.

1. Tehuantitlatemiki (We Dream) Quilting and Sewing Workshop. Sewing workshop with different cloth products (different sized quilts; purses; market bags; clowns). Bottom line: sewers need more moral attention and two more members.

In preparation: Home Sewing Course (pilot): 8 classes in planning stage for 5-6 village women on regular home sewing machines. Taught by two quilters/sewers who will first attend a training of trainers course of 21 days over eight weeks.

2. Zoyatl (Palm) weavers. Group of 20+ weavers who produce high quality articles for sale to Arte Siwame (Women’s Art), a small registered business administered by Atzin to increase market and revenues for weavers. Technical assistance for product quality and sales provided by Atzin. The current Atzin art exhibition (section E.2) has boosted sales of palm weavings very significantly.

3. Timopalaguia (We Help Ourselves) Store. With the owner asking for increased rent, a leaking roof and the store front being vandalised repeatedly, the small promoter store was relocated into the front waiting area of the dental clinic temporarily. This program requires attention.

D. ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND SANITATION PROGRAM (green sector)

Program objective: to promote the wellbeing of families and sustainable development in Tlamacazapa with environmental programs that are focused on a greener environment, clean and sufficient water, and adequate sanitation and include training, local employment and follow-up.

Except for the demonstrations and classes using the ecological rocket stove, this program has been on a back burner since 2010, due to 1) undermining of Atzin’s construction of dry toilets with tanks by a government program that built more than 500 badly designed and poorly functioning dry toilets in Tlamacazapa; and 2) lack of funding. A proposal was submitted to a NAPECA community projects grant competition in August 2015 that has yet to be announced.

E. SPECIAL PROJECTS DURING 2015

1. Book publication by Atzin: Iguatlanseti Here comes the dawn. Atzin’s new 56 page book is called Iguatlanseti Here Comes the Dawn. It describes the precarious lives of the women weavers and their families in Tlamacazapa and their gradual transformation, through the art of A. Aranda and R. Dirks;
photographs by R. Cruz; authentic village women’s stories; and written text by S. Smith. ISBN 978-0-9877177-2-6. December 2015. To obtain copies: atzincanada@gmail.com

2. Art and Palm Exhibition on Tour: “We are your Future: Creativity and Resilience among Women Weavers of Palm, Tlamacazapa, Mexico.”
"We are your Future" is Atzin’s third touring exhibition. Against a backdrop of the daily reality of basket weavers, the exhibition portrays the struggle of village women to recreate a sense of worth and identity. More than 50 high quality palm weavings accompany 25 original paintings and prints, done by two artists, a Mexican and a Canadian. Each artist captured different dimensions of village life and illustrated the essence of development with dignity.

In December 2013, the two artists, Alejandro Aranda (Cuernavaca, Morelos) and Ray Dirks (Winnipeg, Manitoba) travelled to Tlamacazapa, Guerrero where they spent time in the village, meeting with the weavers, touring the village and gathering materials (photographs, sketches, interviews) in preparation for their art work. Artists and weavers worked closely together in Mexico from December 1st -9th 2013 and then returned to their respective homes to complete their art in paint or in palm for the exhibition. Atzin was/is responsible for logistics related to transportation, food and accommodation arrangements as well as for translation, proposal writing, funding obtainment, exhibit planning and organization of participant weavers. INMUJERES of Mexico City funded the production of the exhibition.

During 2015 the exhibition opened in three galleries in Mexico, each time for at least six weeks: William Spratling Museum in Taxco, Guerrero; Fuerte de San Diego Museum in Acapulco, Guerrero; and Casona Spencer in Cuernavaca, Morelos. One additional location in Mexico City is planned for the spring of 2016. See links below:

Casona Spencer, Cuernavaca, México – Television Azteca
https://www.facebook.com/aztecamorelosoficial/videos/915017345220463/?pnref=story
Fuerte de San Diego, Acapulco.
https://www.facebook.com/MuseoHistoricoDeAcapulcoFuerteDeSanDiego/videos/956648447710033/?fref=nf

Project Phase II includes at least three exhibitions of the art work in Canada (Winnipeg, Hamilton and hopefully, Belleville and Ottawa). The schedule of the exhibitions is being determined by Atzin and project partners. Selected weavers attended the openings of the exhibition in Mexico and hopefully two to three weavers will participate in each location in Canada. Participation of artists, weavers and coordinators as well as transport costs of the exhibition are dependent on successful funding proposals.

F. 2015 INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS and VISITORS (in order of appearance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Role/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken and Carol Shipley</td>
<td>Ottawa, Canada</td>
<td>11-18 March &amp; 24 Nov-2 Dec</td>
<td>Atzin Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jutta Klass</td>
<td>Hamburg, Germany</td>
<td>12 May - 4 July</td>
<td>Return volunteer – Tihueliske Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana Benavides</td>
<td>Los Angeles, USA</td>
<td>21 July-10 Aug</td>
<td>Return volunteer – promoter training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Lee</td>
<td>Los Angeles, USA</td>
<td>21 July-10 Aug</td>
<td>New volunteer – promoter training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jenna Haugen  Calgary, Canada  22 Aug-25 Sept  (Fulltime) Resident Global Health practicum
Gilbert Tamfu  Minneapolis, USA  15 Aug-30 Nov  (Part-time) Student practicum - CEMAL
Ray Dirks  Winnipeg, Canada  20-27 Nov  Artist volunteer - Exhibition
Shelley Porteous  Hamilton, Canada  23-30 Nov  OPIRG – Atzin Canada - Inauguration

**Visitors**

Katie Dirks  Winnipeg, Canada  20-27 Nov  Inauguration exhibition
Cecilia Irazuzta  Hamilton, Canada  23-30 Nov  OPIRG - Inauguration
Kicknosway family  Ottawa, Canada  24 Nov-1Dec  Inauguration exhibition and tour

Plus numerous international and Mexico visitors arrived at Atzin House in Cuernavaca for presentations or meetings.

Note 1: Three major factors affected operations and are not discussed in this report: a) fundraising and cash flow; b) need for more technical expertise and office staff/ coordinators; and c) continued travel and general insecurity.

In summary, this was a year of a small group of Atzin personnel and village staff doing an amazing amount of mostly good work under often difficult and overcrowded circumstances.

Thank you.

Susan Smith
Executive Director, Atzin Mexico
[www.atzin.org](http://www.atzin.org)
atzinmexico@prodigy.net.mx