

*Ilana Berlowitz*

Title of project:

*Substance Dependence Treatment: An Exploratory Study of the Psychotherapeutic Potential of Traditional Medicinal Practices of the Peruvian Upper Amazon.*

Abstract: Ilana is conducting her project towards a doctoral degree in Psychology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. She is interested in the therapeutic potential of traditional Amazonian treatment methods using a multimodal approach. Specific aims are (i) empirically deriving an epistemological description of Amazonian conceptions of substance dependence and its treatment and (ii) identifying the main effective treatment component amongst the traditional Amazonian techniques. On the basis of naturalistic data, she further aims to empirically assess the therapeutic potential (iii) of the identified core treatment component and (iv) of the overall treatment. Qualitative data concerning the Amazonian medicinal understanding of substance dependence, its etiology and treatment is being collected by means of semi-structured interviews from a sample of traditional medicinal practitioners. Additionally, using a naturalistic field design, quantitative data concerning therapeutic effects on a variety of clinical variables is being collected from a sample of residential patients of the Takiwasi treatment center. She also investigates the specific effects of dietary jungle retreats, the traditional Amazonian intervention identified in the qualitative study as core treatment component.