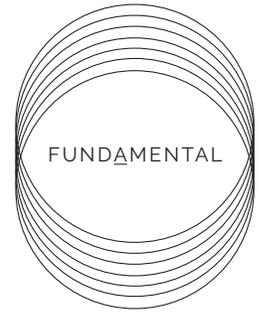




Rodrigo Niño

FUNDAMENTAL: Crowdfunding Psychedelic Research

RODRIGO NIÑO



OVER THE PAST DECADE we have seen how the power of the internet has allowed us to connect in ways we never thought possible, yet disconnect in ways we never expected. Major technological advances of our time have brought forth universal struggles, like the mental health crisis that plagues our society today. From depression and anxiety, to addiction and trauma, many of those close to us are suffering. The exciting news is that current research on psychedelics is finally reaching the mainstream. Now it is time to do something about it.

Crowdfunding has been one of the great advantages of our time. Books have been published, elections have been funded, projects have been financed, and most importantly, communities have been built. I believe, however, that the true potential of crowdfunding has yet to be reached.

Imagine if each person suffering from a mental illness or witnessing someone close to them struggling with mental health could do something about it. If dollar by dollar, we could come together as a community and spark a mental health revolution by supporting the science and bringing it closer and closer to medicalization. Today that is possible.

My name is Rodrigo Niño; I was born in Colombia and have been living in the States with my family for over 19 years. I am a real estate developer and I do crowdfunding for commercial properties in Manhattan. I believe in democratizing access to investments and believe we can also democratize access to philanthropy. I came to this realization in a very particular way.

In 2011, I was diagnosed with cancer—stage 3 Metastatic Melanoma—at age 41. After two surgeries, my odds of survival were about 1 in 3 over the next five years. Imagine yourself facing a certain death. We know we are all going to die, yet only a few of us know, when we are going to die. And even worse, we don't even know how to die well. That realization can be profoundly traumatic. It can cause terminal patients to suffer from depression, increased suicidal tendencies, and demoralization. Doctors call this fear “end-of-life distress.”

I took it upon myself to research alternative medicines for end-of-life anxiety after learning that traditional medicine couldn't do much more for me. While healing from the second surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and after many sleepless nights of online research, I came across an article

in *National Geographic* about a brew produced by an indigenous tribe in the Amazon called ayahuasca.

According to some accounts I read, I learned that ayahuasca might help treat autoimmune diseases and certain types of cancer. It may have been wishful thinking, but the very next week I was on a flight to Peru.

After sitting in a ceremony that lasted all night in the middle of the Peruvian jungle with a *curandero*, I woke up feeling that my fear of dying was completely gone. I couldn't believe it. I had to understand how.

Upon my return to New York, I went on a mission to find scientific validation to determine, if what had happened to me was some sort of placebo effect caused by the hallucinations, or if in fact, I had been physiologically cured by this mystical brew.

In January 2015, I met Dr. Stephen Ross of Bellevue Hospital at New York University. He was working on a double-blind, placebo-controlled study to treat end-of-life anxiety in terminal cancer patients with psilocybin-assisted therapy.

His research, confirming that psychedelics like psilocybin could potentially reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression associated with end-of-life distress, was exceptional. Diving deeper into the subject, I came across research from all over the world from the Beckley/Imperial Research Program to MAPS, which showed even more potential for a host of other mental illnesses. I knew then as I know now that this is some of the most important scientific work I had ever come across.

Dr. Ross and Dr. Roland Griffiths published their Phase 2 trial papers on December 1, 2016, in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. While this was taking place, Dr. Rick Doblin and MAPS received formal approval from the FDA to embark on the final phase towards approval of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD. When I saw the story featured on the front page of *The New York Times*, as well as in *Newsweek*, *TIME Magazine*, and many other mainstream publications, I knew it was time. A revolution in mental health was possible. The results of these studies were unprecedented and the public reception was profound.

The most inspiring implication to me, however, is not only the revolutionary therapeutic benefit these powerful compounds have, but the fact that it is often correlated with mystical experiences, where patients report encountering an ultimate

reality of interconnectedness with all people and things.

In my research I found that traditional sources of financing for scientific research had little interest in funding trials of these natural compounds due to stigma and a lack of financial incentive. That's when I realized that donation based crowdfunding could enable families like mine—who have witnessed loved ones suffer from fear of dying, or a debilitating mental illness like depression, alcoholism, or PTSD—to finally be able to do something about it.

The frustration and impotence I saw in my family due to my ordeal is something that I believe no one should have to go through. My hope is that in a few years we have enough evidence

to medicalize these compounds and allow doctors to prescribe psychedelic-assisted therapies to so many of those in need. To reach that point, the crowd has the opportunity to come together to fund the research and directly support psychedelic science.

In the coming months, we will all be able to fund a mental health revolution through the FUNDAMENTAL crowdfunding campaign: a campaign with the goal of engaging a community of individuals to support scientific research related to the application of psychedelic compounds, and to help solve the global mental health crisis. Through this crowdfunding campaign, my intention is to enable *anyone* to support *everyone* who has suffered from mental illness or end-of-life distress like I did.

Take a moment. Think of someone you love. Think of someone you know who is suffering. Think of someone you've lost.

Because this is not just about funding another clinical trial. This is about finally taking the opportunity to do something for them.

It's time to fund a mental health revolution. Join the movement at fundamental.nyc.

Rodrigo Nino, CEO and founder of Prodigy Network, is a leading crowdfunding expert in commercial real estate. He is the sponsor of FUNDAMENTAL, which is focused on backing government-approved studies in the United States and around the world.



FUNDAMENTAL
is a continuous crowdfunding initiative for scientific research on psychedelic-assisted treatments for mental illnesses.

Our first campaign aims to fund specific studies on End of Life Anxiety, Alcoholism, and PTSD, led respectively by **Dr. Stephen Ross, Dr. Michael Bogenschutz, and Dr. Rick Doblin.**

The Problematic

Millions of people are suffering from various kinds of mental illnesses.



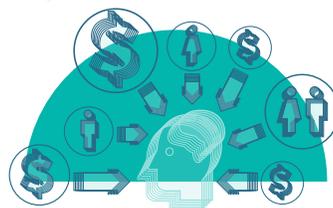
USD \$400 Billion Lost

One fourth of Americans are currently suffering from a mental issue, leading to over US\$400 billion in lost earnings and health care costs each year. Two thirds of those diagnosed will never seek treatment.

The Alternative

New studies offer promising relief for a variety of mood-altering illnesses, through an unlikely source.

A group of scientists at prestigious research institutions such as NYU, Johns Hopkins, MAPS and the Imperial College of London are conducting studies with psilocybin and other psychedelic compounds to treat issues such as cancer-related depression and anxiety, alcohol and drug addiction. So far the results are very promising, creating an opportunity for these ground-breaking treatments to be medicalized.



A FUNDAMENTAL Opportunity

Currently the research depends on the support of a few private donors and institutions, with little-to-no help from governments or pharmaceutical companies. Yet a steady stream of funding is essential to continue this research.

For the first time, thanks to technology, the friends and family of those afflicted by mental illness have the opportunity to contribute to a solution, by crowdfunding scientific research.

The FUNDAMENTAL Fund

Sponsored by Rodrigo Nino, a leading crowdfunding expert in commercial real estate, FUNDAMENTAL is focused on backing government-approved studies in the United States and around the world.

Crowdfunding is not only about funding the research.

A community of individuals united in their connection to the goal will naturally form.

Legal Structure

Each tax-deductible donation will be deposited in a Donor Advised Fund, to ensure transparency and security for the crowd. Once the crowdfunding campaign is closed, the DAF will grant the funds to the aforementioned institutions with the exclusive purpose of supporting the research.

