

FREE THE PEOPLE, HEAL THE LAND

NDN COLLECTIVE'S SEVEN YEAR IMPACT REPORT





NDN Collective is an Indigenous-led movement infrastructure organization dedicated to building Indigenous power. Through organizing, activism, philanthropy, grantmaking, capacity-building and narrative change, we are creating sustainable solutions on Indigenous terms.

Find us at [@ndncollective](#) // [ndncollective.org](#)

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Jessi Mischo, Smart Set Inc.

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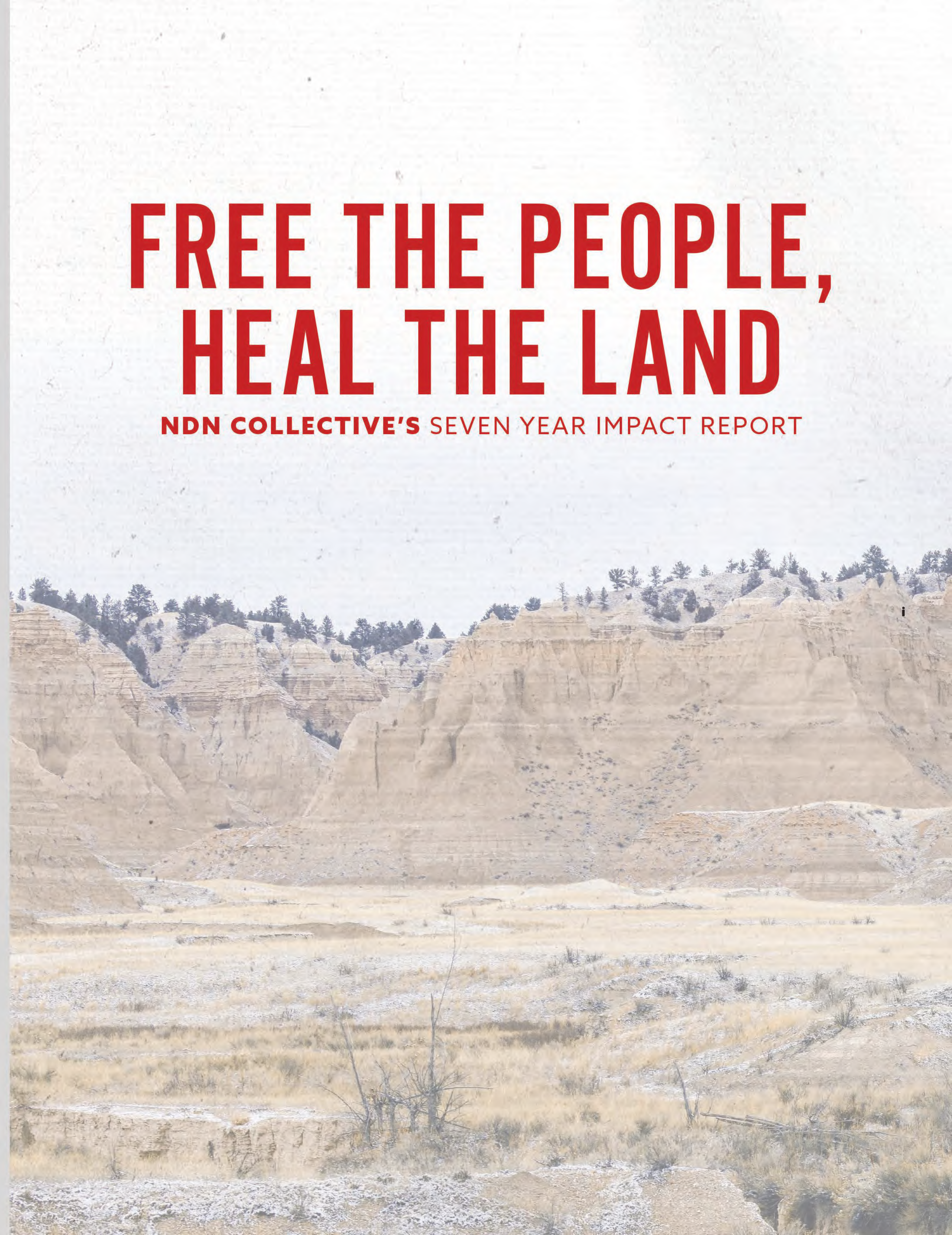
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MISSION

NDN Collective's mission is to build the collective power of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations to exercise our inherent right to self-determination, while fostering a world that is built on a foundation of justice and equity for all people and Mother Earth.

VALUES



The interconnectedness of all things



Indigenous self-determination



Equity and justice for all people and Mother Earth

CORE PILLARS

DEFEND

We must continue to defend our people, communities, and Nations against negative resource extraction that poisons our people, pollutes our water, destroys our land, contributes to climate change and violates our human rights.

DEVELOP

We must continue to develop Indigenous communities in a regenerative and sustainable manner based on our values and connection to land, culture and identity. We are doing this through regenerative community development, renewable energy investments and social enterprise development.

DECOLONIZE

We must continue to decolonize our minds, communities, and sovereign Nations. Through the revitalization of our Indigenous ceremonies, culture, languages, and lifeways we will continue to strengthen our identity and break free from the oppressive systems that disconnect us from achieving the healing, growth, and connection to spirit that is integral for us as Indigenous people.





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Throughout this report we spell Land Back as two capitalized words when referencing the larger Land Back movement. We spell LANDBACK as one all capitalized word when we are referring to LANDBACK work coming through NDN Collective.

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OPENING WORDS

NICK TILSEN

HAN MITAKUYAPI, GREETINGS, RELATIVES

I want to start off by saying Mitakuye Oyasin (We Are All Related). All people, all living things, all systems. I want to thank the ancestors who have come before and the elders who are still alive today to read this. If it wasn't for your commitment, resistance, resilience, innovation, and heart, we wouldn't be here today. Because of your sacrifices, an entire generation of us has been raised in the movement. You have instilled in us the understanding that we have the inherent right and responsibility to stand up both for Mother Earth and for all oppressed people, everywhere. Our ceremonial ways, spiritual grounding, and beliefs are strong because of you. And our work is out of respect to you: a way to show you that we will always continue to stand up for what is right in this world, as well as to help heal the people and the land.

To understand NDN Collective, you have to understand that we weren't created by institutional philanthropy assessing statistical data or politicians in a boardroom, far away from the problem. NDN grew from the Indigenous Resistance movement, from the spiritual reconnection to the Sundance, from the soil in the Porcupine community on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation that's home to my people, the Oglala Lakota. The creation of NDN Collective is on a continuum of 500 years of Indigenous resistance, of our communities fighting tooth and nail not only to survive but also to continue to rebuild our Nations, create our own solutions, and carry on our lifeways.

To be honest, we didn't have much when we started, and still don't, but whatever we have, we have always been taught to share: it's our way. The spirit of that is in all that we do. With that, I will now tell you our story.

In 2006, there was a group of us sitting outside of the Inipi (sweat lodge) in the Thunder Valley Hochoka (spiritual circle) in the Porcupine District on Pine Ridge. As we were playing horseshoes while waiting for the sweat fire to burn down, we started complaining about the way the rez is. *Why don't our leaders do this? Why don't they fix this? Why do our people live in poverty? Why is there so much negativity and suffering amongst our people?* Shortly after, we went into the sweat, and as soon as we closed the door, the spirits (ancestors) came into the lodge. They said:

How long are you going to let other people decide the future for your children? Are you not warriors? It's time to stop talking and start doing. Don't come from a place of fear, come from a place of hope, strength and power.



That call to action moved us from a place of praying for change to a place of creating the change that we seek in the world. It launched us into cultural organizing and inspired us to build an entire thriving community from the ground up. Through the Thunder Valley Regenerative Community Development project, we built a small farm, a childcare immersion school, sustainable housing, a community center, youth development programs and workforce programs for our people.

Colonized ways of thinking tell us “I’ll believe it when I see it,” but our Indigenous ways are rooted in the understanding that “When we believe it is when we will see it.” Our ceremonies have taught us that with belief, blood, sweat and tears, we can accomplish anything. Because of this understanding, the Thunder Valley Regenerative Community Development project was one example of what a just transition can look like.

As part of this work, we created a culture of learning. By positioning ourselves as students of the change we were seeking to create in the world, we were able to continually strengthen our stewardship. We constantly asked ourselves questions, such as: What does it mean to build regenerative economies instead of extractive ones? How do we meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs? These guiding questions gave us a foundation to organize from and pushed us to create solutions, jobs, and skills to support and strengthen our community. Above all, we just loved our people and knew that they deserved opportunities to help themselves on their terms.



Over time, our story began to be lifted up across the country. As our story spread, Tribes and Indigenous communities started reaching out to us wanting to do something similar to what we were doing at Thunder Valley but in the context of their own climate, culture and spirit of place. In fact, over a three year period, more than 73 different Tribes and Indigenous communities throughout North America reached out. Almost half of them actually came to Pine Ridge to learn from what we were doing. We shared both our successes and our failures and kept moving forward. While this work was happening, resistance against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) was building, and many organizers and Tribal leaders reached out to us for support during the ensuing battle.

DAPL was the latest manifestation of the oppression of Indigenous Peoples and our homelands. We had to take action against DAPL for many reasons, but one very practical one was that the water for the community we were building was coming directly from the Missouri River. One of North America’s largest rural water pipelines brings water via the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Pipeline project from the Missouri River to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and into the community at Thunder Valley. As a directly impacted frontline community, we wanted to show up and support the movement.

While we were building a climate solution at Thunder Valley, the pipeline was expediting climate change, violating our treaty rights, human rights, and putting water at risk, not only for us, but also for 18 million people downstream. The fight at Standing Rock was powerful, hard, sad and inspirational. But to win the battle, we needed to have movement infrastructure that we

could sustain over time. During our time on the frontlines of the fight against DAPL, we watched NGOs and institutional organizations descend on Oceti Sakowin Camp and we also watched them leave without creating any infrastructure for the community or the future. This needed to change.

In this way, NDN grew from our time fostering just transition, fighting transnational extractive industry, and stewarding a spiritual movement to revitalize our languages, cultures and ceremonies.

Our experience during DAPL showed us that we needed to create new movement infrastructure that challenged existing power structures, disrupted institutional philanthropy, and boldly changed the conditions in which we organize and build power. I quickly realized it wasn't about doing what we were doing at Thunder Valley everywhere or organizing the way we were organizing everywhere. Thunder Valley was an example of what happens when Indigenous self-determination is invested into; when you put the people most impacted by the challenges we are faced with into the driver's seat of change.

This is why NDN Collective's Theory of Liberation is focused on creating a multifaceted approach to do just that—and why the first seven years of NDN Collective has been such a powerful journey. Since our inception, we have launched many projects rooted in our Theory of Liberation. In collaboration with a team of Indigenous women and matriarchs, we built a grantmaking arm at NDN that has rematriated more than 110 million dollars to over 100 Indigenous Nations and 1,200 grantees throughout Turtle Island over the past seven years. Our Community Development Financial Institution has

extended 12 million dollars in lending to over 13 different projects and loan relatives. Through our social enterprise, NDN Holdings, we invested over 20 million dollars into place-based projects. We also invested over 10 million dollars into organizing and training infrastructure that has resulted in successful campaigns like catalyzing the LANDBACK Movement, freeing Leonard Peltier, and protecting sacred water in the Black Hills. Most importantly, we have developed leaders who have the skills to transform their communities from the grassroots on up. We have built a Narrative and Storytelling platform that is based on our Indigenous values of prioritizing the mobilization of Indigenous Peoples while bringing powerful Indigenous stories to the masses.

Through the NDN Changemaker Fellowship, we supported over 100 fellows throughout Turtle Island by investing into their leadership and their growth. Through our Radical Imagination Grants, we have supported 46 artists to radically imagine what the future looks like when we win. Through the Collective Abundance Fund and in partnership with the Bush Foundation, we have invested into 396 individuals creating models to close the racial wealth gap by helping families get into homes, create businesses and invest into higher education. We inspired philanthropic institutions to change their models, adopt some of our strategies, and begin to incorporate Indigenous Self-Determination into their grantmaking programs.

Although there are so many things that NDN has put out into the world over the past seven years, one of the most impactful things we did was to inspire people to believe in something bigger than themselves: to fearlessly stand up for their people, Nations, and homelands.

We here at NDN are organizers, frontliners, direct action practitioners, community developers, social entrepreneurs, storytellers, artists, creatives, land stewards and culture bearers. Our work is directly informed by being in the movement and because of that, our work always adapts, evolves and changes: that's what organizers do and how our people survive and thrive in the world. We are not an intermediary organization. Rather, we are a movement organization that is accountable to the communities in which we organize and do this work. You will find us on the streets, on the land, in the hood, barrios, reservations and homelands across Turtle Island. You will find us sitting in ceremonies, drawing plans in the sand, and laughing around sacred fires where we dream of better days for our people.

This work has not been without sacrifice: in the seven years of existence as an organization, NDN and our leadership have been under indictment for five years of it. The colonial powers that be have been threatened by the power we have built, the influence we have, and the world we are building. We have been a consistent target and have experienced political, legal and narrative repression. But we have leaned into these challenges because we are not only organizers of this generation, we are also students of the generation before us. We have learned from liberatory movements such as the American Indian Movement, the Black Panther Party, La Raza, and the Zapatistas.

We knew that when we started making change in the world, they would attempt to dismantle our movement, divide our people and come for our leaders. That strategy is as old as settler colonialism. So we organize around it, through it and lean into it. NDN will be here for the foreseeable future because resistance is required in this moment, and organizing resources and

building our skills to work towards Indigenous Liberation while fighting against authoritarianism is who we are and what we are about.

This bold work wouldn't be possible if it weren't for our donors, funders, partners, collaborators, allies, and accomplices. I personally thank you for believing in us, joining us, walking by our side, and weathering the storm. Our liberation is bound up with one another. Thank you for your support. Thank you for having the courage to not leave our side when things get hard and for being a good relative. The titles, roles, and positions that we occupy will always be changing and evolving, but we must continue to see the humanity in each other and believe that better days are possible. A Cuban revolutionary once said that "Revolution is not a bed of roses, it is a struggle between the past and the future." This message couldn't be more true at this moment in history. We are in the midst of a revolution that has been building for some time and it's important we understand this by both building the future we are fighting for while resisting the oppressive powers that want to destroy us.

NDN Collective and the ecosystem of organizations and movement infrastructure we have built is committed to our mission to "Build The Collective Power of Indigenous Peoples, Communities and Nations to exercise our inherent right to self-determination while fostering a world that is built on a foundation of justice and equity for all people and Mother Earth."

This is more than a mission statement, it is a call to action.

Mitakuye Oyasin (We Are All Related)

Nick Tilsen, Oglala Lakota

Founder & CEO, NDN Collective



NDN COLLECTIVE BY THE NUMBERS



INVESTING IN INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION IS EFFECTIVE

Our Impact Report this year is not only a reflection of 2025, but also an acknowledgement of the past **seven years building Indigenous power** around a unified LANDBACK agenda both within our He Sapa community and across Turtle Island.

Since our inception in 2018, NDN Collective has:

REMATRIATED OVER
177,000 ACRES OF LAND

TO INDIGENOUS OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL THROUGH LANDBACK PROJECTS

SUPPORTED NDN GRANTEES AND LOAN RELATIVES IN LEVERAGING OVER

\$190 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE FUNDING

GRANTED

\$111 MILLION TO OVER **1,200**
ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

INVESTED AT LEAST

\$13 MILLION IN **COMMUNITY-LED REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS** TO CREATE SCHOOLS, HOUSING, JOBS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

DEPLOYED

\$10.6 MILLION ACROSS **15** LOANS TO **INDIGENOUS-OWNED BUSINESSES**

IMPACTED OVER

1.1 MILLION PEOPLE THROUGH OUR NDN COLLECTIVE-FUNDED PROJECTS

TRAINED OVER

1,900 PEOPLE IN CREATIVE RESISTANCE, ADVOCACY, POWER-BUILDING CURRICULA, AND OTHER **ORGANIZING STRATEGIES**

SEVEN-YEAR TIMELINE

2019

MARCH

NDN Collective, ACLU, and three other organizations sued the State of South Dakota for the "Riot Boosting Act" that would have stifled free speech. The suit was successful, and the law was nullified later that year.

JULY

One of the first Community Action Grants from NDN is awarded to the Hawai'i Unity & Liberation Institute to support the protection of Mauna Kea and Indigenous relatives in Hawai'i. We then used our relationship with Navajo Power to help deliver solar power trailers to the frontlines.

NDN Collective announced its first grant opportunity, the Changemaker Fellowship. It combined funding with a year-long fellowship for Indigenous changemakers. By investing in Indigenous leadership, this fellowship supported over 100 changemakers ready to create movements in their communities.

AUGUST

Co-hosted an Indigenous Strategy Summit focused on defending Indigenous lands and communities against the expansion of the Alberta tar sands and related pipeline projects.

First convening of the South Dakota Education Equity Coalition, a new coalition that the Education Equity team at NDN Collective had a key role in launching.

FEBRUARY

The impact and investing arm of NDN Collective, NDN Fund, disbursed its first loan to Navajo Power, a majority Indigenous-owned solar electric development enterprise operating out of the Navajo Nation.

APRIL

Created the \$10 million NDN COVID-19 Response Project to provide rapid grants and strategic support to Tribal Nations, frontline Indigenous-led organizations, and individuals who are providing essential services to Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

JULY

With support from NDN Collective, Land Defenders took to Mt. Rushmore to reignite the fight for the Black Hills and the closure of Mt. Rushmore, a symbol of white supremacy and racism. The protest also demonstrated solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement and garnered national attention through awareness of the LANDBACK movement.

2018

OCTOBER

NDN Collective publicly launches as an organization on Indigenous Peoples' Day

2020

SEPTEMBER

NDN Collective purchased land in the pathway of the proposed KXL pipeline. This purchase was critical in the fight that ultimately shut down the pipeline. NDN Collective then worked with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe to transfer the land into tribal ownership in October 2021.

OCTOBER

Camp Mni Luzahan was started by grassroots efforts to ensure unhoused relatives in Rapid City had food and shelter during the harsh winter months. NDN Collective mobilized money, resources, and personnel to support Camp Mni Luzahan in housing over 350 individuals for eight months.

DECEMBER

Rep. Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) was appointed the Secretary of the Interior after advocacy from a coalition of left-wing movement groups, including NDN Collective.

2021

JUNE

Launch of LANDBACK University, a free, comprehensive, online learning platform to engage in political education and discussions on topics critical to the Indigenous movement to reclaim land and relationship to land.

AUGUST

NDN Collective announced the Community Self-Determination Grant, intended to support community-based and community-driven sustainable solutions. These multiyear grants support and invest in the long-term visions and sustainability of Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations, fortifying the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.

MARCH

NDN Collective filed a federal civil rights class action lawsuit against the Grand Gateway Hotel after the owners refused to rent rooms to Native Americans.

APRIL

Purchased Waziyata, a 67-acre parcel of land in north Rapid City to incubate the Oceti Sakowin Community Academy, the He Sapa Otipi Rapid City Indian Center, mixed-use apartments and homes, and small business opportunities.

SEPTEMBER

First day of school for the new Oceti Sakowin Community Academy! It is the first Indigenous-led school in Rapid City, where cultural identity is at the heart of everything students learn. Funded and built by NDN Collective, in partnership with NACA Inspired Schools Network, the school served about 40 kindergarten students in the first year.

2022

2023

APRIL

Launched the first episode of the LANDBACK for the People Podcast, which has since garnered over 225,000 views on YouTube and 56,000 downloads.

MAY

Launched the Collective Abundance Fund, an effort to support the rebuilding of Indigenous and generational wealth by providing \$25,000 or \$50,000 cash awards to individuals for wealth-building activities.

Hosted the first He Sapa Action Camp in the Black Hills, where over 150 people representing more than 60 Tribal Nations and territories came together in community. The week-long camp aimed to build relationships among Indigenous organizers and teach important skills necessary for direct action.

SEPTEMBER

Hundreds gathered for an action in front of the White House to demand that President Joe Biden grant Leonard Peltier executive clemency. The action, which was organized by NDN in partnership with Amnesty International, began with a caravan starting in Rapid City, SD, and ended in Washington, DC. The direct action resulted in the arrests of 35 Indigenous people and allies.

AUGUST

NDN Collective hosted their fifth annual Backpack Giveaway in Rapid City to support Indigenous students returning to school. Since it started in 2020, NDN Collective and partners have given out over 3,000 backpacks to local Indigenous students.

NOVEMBER

Finalized LANDBACK deal with the Eyak Community Land Trust in Cordova, Alaska, and transferred title to two acres of land back to the Eyak people.

DECEMBER

After organizing and advocacy by NDN Collective, local Tribes, the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance, and other organizations, the US Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), signed and approved the Pactola Mineral Withdrawal for the US Forest Service, protecting 20,000 acres of land from all mining for 20 years.

2025

JANUARY

President Biden granted Leonard Peltier executive clemency after 49 years of unjust imprisonment and decades of grassroots organizing in Indian Country, including recent advocacy and actions organized by NDN Collective.

MAY

The Protect the He Sapa Campaign started organizing to protect Pe'sla - a sacred site in the Black Hills - from exploratory drilling for graphite. In addition to destroying a sacred site, mining at Pe'sla could contaminate drinking water for Rapid City, Rapid Valley, Box Elder, and Ellsworth Air Force Base, and cause irreparable ecological damage.

JULY

Sacred Storm Buffalo, which received both grants and loans through NDN Collective's braided capital approach, announced the opening of its storefront in Rapid City, SD. Through apprenticeships in buffalo butchery, processing, and business experiences, Sacred Storm Buffalo is both creating workforce opportunities for Native youth and revitalizing Indigenous traditions and food sovereignty. Within six months of receiving their braided capital, Sacred Storm Buffalo has trained and mentored a new workforce and distributed over 50,000 pounds of buffalo meat products.

AUGUST

NDN Collective announced a transformation of the organization's structure and programming in response to the unstable sociopolitical landscape by activating the network of Indigenous Peoples. We aren't going anywhere and remain steadfast in our mission and commitment to building the collective power of Indigenous Peoples and fighting for the liberation of all people.

2024



ORGANIZING, POLICY, & ADVOCACY

BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2025

TRAINED **1,575** PEOPLE IN
ORGANIZING, POLICY & ADVOCACY

SUPPORTED **200+** PARTICIPANTS
AND **45** TRAINERS THROUGH OUR
HE SAPA ACTION CAMPS

DEPLOYED **78** TEAMS
TO COMMUNITIES

HOSTED **77** TRAININGS

LOOKING BACK

Since our inception seven years ago, NDN Collective has played a critical role in fueling the Land Back movement by supporting, resourcing, advocating for, and being on the frontlines with Indigenous activists and our accomplices across Turtle Island.

Through fighting to reconnect our people with our lands, languages, ceremonies, food, education, housing, healthcare, governance, medicines, and kinship, the Land Back movement is our generation's Indigenous liberation movement, and NDN Collective is providing the infrastructure needed for it to thrive.



2020

As a strategic partner to the Hawai'i Unity and Liberation Institute (HULI), NDN Collective supported the Indigenous resistance movement in Hawai'i to protect Mauna Kea from the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope that would desecrate this sacred site. Through this partnership, we provided grants and strategic advice to amplify their narrative, as well as partnered with Navajo Power CEO Brett Isaac and his crew to deploy a team to Mauna Kea to help build solar trailers on the frontlines of the movement.

In the summer of 2020, NDN Collective organized a strategic action to disrupt Donald Trump's visit to the He Sapa. During this peaceful action, organizers called for the indefinite closure of the national monument Mount Rushmore, and for the sacred Paha Sapa (Black Hills) to be returned to the Lakota people. Nearly 200 Land Defenders gathered for this moment that went viral across mainstream national media, and 20 were subsequently arrested, including Nick Tilsen, CEO of NDN Collective. Following this action, Nick spent years fighting for his freedom as he faced up to fifteen years in prison for participating in this peaceful protest — a targeted attack against him and NDN Collective to suppress our demands and repress dissent.

2021

For years, NDN Collective organized and supported efforts to stop the KXL Pipeline project, including by providing education and awareness, advocating for political transformation, organizing protests, and purchasing land in the path of the proposed pipeline route. Once the pipeline project was shut down by President Biden in 2021, NDN Collective stewarded the return of the land to the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Throughout 2021, NDN Collective worked alongside Indigenous leaders and Data for Progress to push for the appointment of Deb Haaland to the position of Secretary of the Department of the Interior. This was an opportunity to have a representative who holds insight into Indigenous issues and priorities, allowing organizers within the LANDBACK movement to uplift policy solutions and help fuel systemic change that benefits all people and the planet. Through a coordinated advocacy campaign, we contributed to the momentum that led to Haaland's appointment.

NDN Collective also played a key role in incubating the South Dakota Education Equity Coalition (SDEEC) in 2021. SDEEC was formed to bring parents, educators, and community partners together to organize and advocate for closing the education achievement gap for Native children in South Dakota. A key part of this work was advocacy around the creation of new models of community-based Indigenous education. This included NDN

Collective hosting and supporting a NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN) Fellow, Mary Bowman, with her school design and development project for the Oceti Sakowin Community Academy. NDN Collective also provided fiscal sponsorship to support SDEEC in the process of transitioning to an independent entity. Additionally, NDN Collective provided SDEEC with a seed grant to support the sustainability of the organization.

2022

NDN Collective filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in 2022 against the Grand Gateway Hotel in Rapid City, South Dakota after it denied service to Native Americans because of their race. In tandem with the federal lawsuit, NDN Collective organized a nearly four-month boycott of the businesses perpetuating racism and harm against Native residents in Rapid City. This boycott amplified the racism that Native community members had experienced in Rapid City and South Dakota for hundreds of years. Through this effort, our team developed political education tools and held many meetings with community members and local businesses to help them understand the harm caused while also focusing energy into tangible goals to achieve change.

In 2022, NDN Collective released the *Faulty Infrastructure and the Impacts of the Dakota Access Pipeline* special report after a year of research, analysis, and writing. This report was the first of its kind to lay out a full and factual timeline of the DAPL process. The report mapped out the depth and details of co-conspiring between the Army Corps of Engineers and the owners of DAPL, as well as illuminated the level of recklessness both parties have been willing to take in the name of profit. In addition to the development and release of this report, NDN Collective organized actions, advocated for the Biden Administration to shut down the pipeline, and supported a larger narrative and organizing strategy ensuring that everyday community members knew that the pipeline was still operating illegally.

2023

NDN Collective hosted our Inaugural Action Camp in the He Sapa, which welcomed 100+ Indigenous organizers representing over 60 Tribal Nations and Territories who trained in tactical media, creative resistance, climbing, and blockade strategies. This camp was an opportunity to support organizers in their skill and knowledge development while also bridging diverse Tribal communities around shared issues. Our hope was that those trained at camp would return to their communities and put their skills to



practice – and that happened. In the weeks and months following our camp, we witnessed camp participants immediately move into utilizing their tactical media skills to amplify Indigenous organizing efforts, continue their training journey with climbing, and deepen the relationships that they made at camp.

NDN Collective sent a delegation to Washington DC to advocate at the federal level around community-led and community-centered solutions on issues impacting Indigenous Peoples. We met with more than 25 congressional and federal offices and were successful in familiarizing policy stakeholders on who NDN Collective is and what kind of work we are doing to build Indigenous power across Turtle Island and beyond.

In honor of Leonard Peltier's 79th birthday and acknowledging the 49 years of his unjust imprisonment, NDN Collective partnered with Amnesty International on a narrative, advocacy, and direct action strategy to free Leonard. Our efforts included advocacy to the Biden administration and Bureau of Prisons, placing ads in local newspapers to reach Washington DC lawmakers, and coordinating a 70-person caravan from South Dakota to Washington DC where we held an action at the White House with 100+ supporters.

Throughout 2023, NDN Collective's local He Sapa organizing campaigns continued efforts to protect the Black Hills from mining and development. We hosted an in-person teach-in with over

200 local community members to bring awareness to the ways in which current mining projects threatened the sacred Black Hills and surrounding communities. Through our organizing, we were successful in efforts to stall and delay two gold mining projects in South Dakota, through public comment awareness, technical assistance, political educations, town halls, and teach-ins.

After three years of planning and funding partnership with NDN Collective, Mary Bowman opened the Oceti Sakowin Community Academy (OSCA) in Rapid City, South Dakota. OSCA is the first Indigenous-led school designed specifically for students in the city, with a curriculum that connects Indigenous youth to their cultures, languages, ancestral knowledge, history, and traditional ways of life. These culture-based educational components are critical for Indigenous students and they were not represented in schools in the area.

2024

In 2024, NDN Collective worked with partners and Tribal leaders to continue amplifying the Free Leonard Peltier campaign and the demand for Leonard's release from prison. We were successful in gathering the support of 115+ Tribal leaders who signed onto a letter addressed to President Biden, calling for clemency for Leonard Peltier. Additionally, we had over 15,377 community supporters sign a petition calling on President Biden to grant Leonard clemency.

Our organizing and training team spent countless hours preparing and refining curriculum for NDN Collective direct action

training. We coordinated and facilitated 15 trainings covering various topics, including non-violent direct action 101, creative resistance strategies, tactical media, and community care on the frontlines. These trainings were hosted in partnership with Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, allowing for hundreds of Indigenous community members to build and strengthen capacity in their organizing.

Our organizing team prioritized affinity group deployments, which created space for NDN Collective to deploy people to support relatives within the larger movement that were protecting their communities from oppressive forces. Our approach to affinity group deployments centered around protocol that ensured we built relationships with local organizers in these communities and followed their direction on strategies that made sense for their campaigns. In 2024, we deployed 23 times to different communities across Turtle Island, helping ensure our organizing and policy strategies were closely connected and rooted in organizing happening on the frontlines.

After nearly two years of community organizing at the local level and political advocacy at the national level, NDN Collective successfully led the effort to submit nearly 2,000 public comments to the US Forest Service in support of a mineral withdrawal in the Pactola Reservoir in South Dakota. These efforts directly contributed to US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland's decision to sign and approve the Pactola Mineral Withdrawal for the US Forest Service, leading to the protection of 20,000 acres of land in the Black Hills from mining for 20 years.



NDN Collective's contribution to the fight to free Leonard Peltier and ensure his safe transition back home to the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota was multifaceted. Over the years, NDN Collective organized and sat in on countless meetings with federal offices, representatives, and Tribal leaders. We had a thorough media strategy with the main goal of keeping Leonard's name in the news, uplifting his story, and ensuring his case made it to President Biden's desk. After 49 years of wrongful incarceration, Leonard Peltier was finally released from prison on February 18th, 2025. NDN Collective coordinated a safe transfer of Leonard from Coleman Prison in Florida to his new home purchased by NDN in North Dakota. NDN partnered with the Turtle Mountain Tribe and local community members to host a Welcome Home Celebration, honoring his return to their homelands. Our team closely coordinated social services and medical care for Leonard and supported his family in a warm hand-off of his care. Leonard is now healthy and happy, thriving in his freedom.

In response to the current political and fundraising climate, we were pushed to reduce our staff and programming in 2025, which in turn impacted the direct action work we do as a collective. As we navigated this large transition, we revisited our approach and strategy



and determined it was a good time to formally connect the thousands of people we have supported with grants, offered training to, and partnered with since 2018. We reorganized and restructured the NDN Action team to the LANDBACK Action Network team.

The LANDBACK Action Network is the network of people, organizations, and institutions that make up the LANDBACK movement. NDN Collective has been in relationship with over 5,000 Indigenous activists, organizations, Tribes, and communities that are part of the Land Back movement as well as non-Indigenous individuals and institutions who have been accomplices to our mission. In late 2025, we held

conversations with partners and deployed a survey to our community to help us design the network to best meet the needs of the Land Back movement.

Through the network, NDN Collective will provide movement infrastructure for the LANDBACK movement in the areas of organizing, political action, and resourcing. The launch of this network will allow us to support cross-movement relationship and movement building, build capacity around organizing and resistance strategies, and continue to resource people on the frontlines who are organizing for change in their home communities.

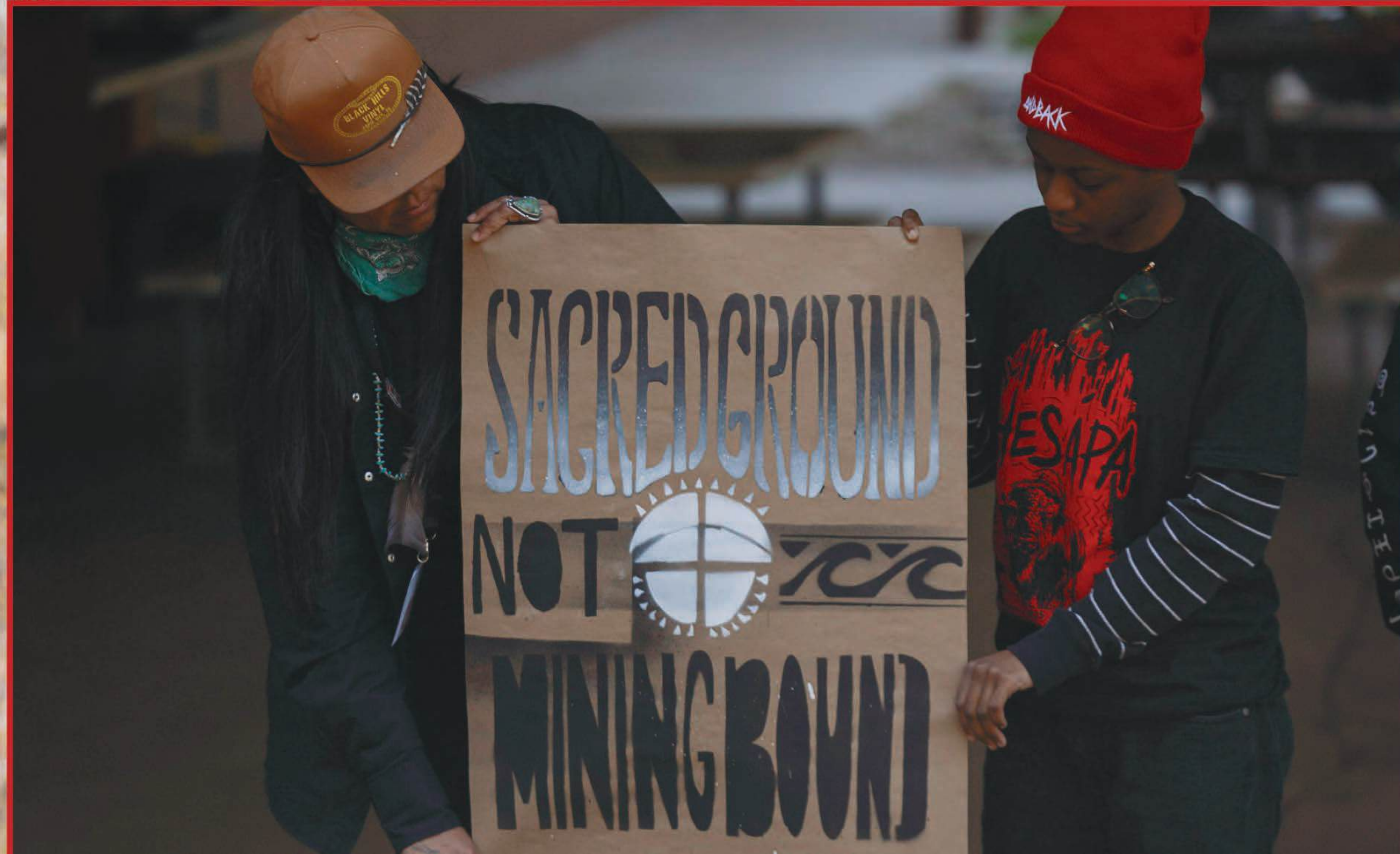


ORGANIZING, POLICY, & ADVOCACY
HIGHLIGHT
HE SAPA ACTION CAMP
IN THE BLACK HILLS



In May 2025, we coordinated our second He Sepa Action Camp in the Black Hills where we applied the lessons we learned at our first action camp to support Indigenous organizers in skilling up. The goal of our Action Camp was to build a bigger network of community allies by creating opportunities for participants to refine and develop non-violent direct action skills.

With more and more of us fighting on the frontlines, learning how to take care of one another during direct actions is critical. During the 2025 He Sapa Action Camp, our team supported first aid care for over 150 staff and participants, built out the camp-wide emergency medical





response plan, and designed and delivered the first Community Care Team (CCT) First Aid Shadow + Skillshare program to train people on street medic skills. Once selected, participants learned CCT's goals, philosophy, and the core principles of decolonized care. As part of their hands-on learning, shadow participants supported facilitation of a one-hour skillshare attended by 20

campers that was focused on the proper use of tourniquets in emergency situations. In their day-to-day roles, shadows supported the setup and organization of the First Aid station, assisted the on-call provider during assigned shifts, and helped manage logistics for CCT supplies.

Our Tactical Media team also facilitated a track for 20 participants during the camp. As part of

this track, we brought in our friends from Hawai'i— Kēhau Abad and Ryan Gonzalez "Gonzo"— to help us teach. We focused on teaching the fundamentals of Tactical Media and Digital Organizing through classes that addressed issues such as Power Mapping, digital security, FOIA filing, camera framing, filming etiquette, blog writing, field safety, and digital storytelling tools. We also demoed gear and shared videos from previous deployments.

Our Action Camp culminated in a mock action to help organizers put everything they learned into practice. The CCT First Aid Shadow + Skillshare participants also took part in the mock action as "Action Medics" to get experience in emergency response coordination and preparedness.

When we reflect on our Action Camp, what we're most proud of is how we allocated the work load across our team and were able to execute all important tasks in a timely manner. The impact was immediate, and many participants have reached out to us since the camp requesting more information on tactical media and community care.



RESOURCE REMATRIATION

BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2025

IMPACTED **1 MILLION +** PEOPLE
THROUGH OUR GRANTEE PROJECTS

DISTRIBUTED **\$111,150,000**
IN GRANTS

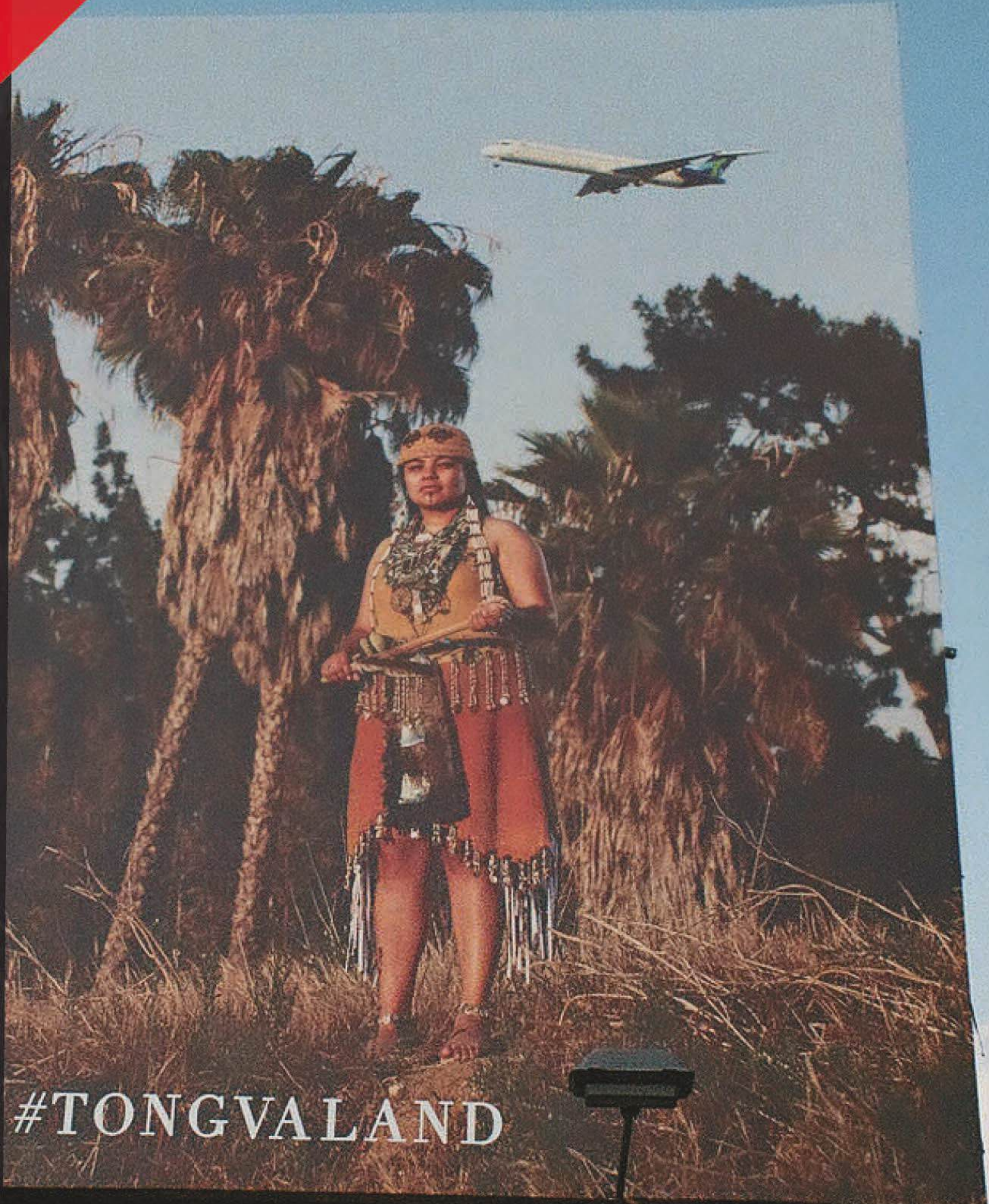
HELPED GRANTEES REMATRIATE
125,960 ACRES

SUPPORTED **400** INDIGENOUS
INDIVIDUALS THROUGH THE
COLLECTIVE ABUNDANCE FUND

18.75%
APPLICATIONS
GRANTED

81.25%
APPLICATIONS
DECLINED

8,460
TOTAL
APPLICATIONS



Over the past seven years, NDN Collective has led one of the boldest Indigenous-led philanthropic efforts on Turtle Island, now known as North America. Unapologetically grounded in Indigenous self-determination and collective power, NDN has rematriated over \$109 million to more than 1,200 Indigenous individuals, organizations, and Nations across Turtle Island.

Through grant programs designed to uphold strategies to defend, develop, and decolonize, our work has and continues to support Indigenous Peoples across the post-colonial borders of what is now called the United States, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. Island Nations. These programs include the Community Self-Determination Grant, the Collective Abundance Fund, the Radical Imagination Artist Grant, the Changemaker Fellowship, and the Community Action Fund, as well as emergency and transition response efforts as part of our COVID-19 Community Response grants. In 2020, before the federal government formulated a response, NDN disbursed nearly \$10 million to Indigenous communities, Tribes and organizations to fortify food, housing and health systems during the pandemic.



Since 2021, the **Community Self-Determination Grant** has redistributed over \$48 million to Indigenous-led organizations, Tribal Nations, and businesses, advancing community-based food sovereignty efforts, land and water protection efforts, language and cultural revitalization programs, and climate justice work.

Through the **Community Action Fund**, NDN has deployed \$2.48 million in urgent response funding to 98 Indigenous-led initiatives defending land, water, and human rights through non-violent direct action as well as climate disaster response efforts.

The **Changemaker Fellowship** supported the wellbeing, leadership and personal development of 104 Indigenous community leaders, strengthening their capacity to sustain and to grow their positive influence and effectiveness in their communities.

Recognizing the power of art to shift narratives and strengthen movements, NDN has also supported 40 Indigenous artists through the **Radical Imagination Artist Grant**, resourcing creative leaders who amplify visibility and inspire transformation.

The **Collective Abundance Fund** rematriated \$15.9 million to 396 Indigenous individuals and families across North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota, aiming to reduce the racial wealth gap and support community-developed pathways toward fortifying generational wealth such as homeownership, higher education, and small business development.



While resourcing through grantmaking rematriation has been critically important to building Indigenous prosperity, knowledge and skill sharing is also a vital aspect of our approach to power building. Over the years, NDN has developed several core curriculums, including the NDN Art of Leadership curriculum which is both a mainstay of the Changemaker Fellowship and a valuable resource to NDN staff and board. The Regenerative Community Development curriculum based on Indigenous principles of community development such as sustainable agriculture and housing construction has been the backbone of the Community Self-Determination grantee webinar offerings. And finally, the Trauma of Money curriculum and partnership has been a pillar of the Collective Abundance Fund experience. Taken together, these curriculums—as well as countless other virtual gatherings and celebratory convenings with grantee-partners—have contributed to building collective power.



RESOURCE REMATRIATION
2025 UPDATES

In 2025, we entered a new phase of our resourcing efforts focused on coalition building. Now more than ever, it is vitally important to strengthen our approach to building collective power and deepening existing partnerships and relationships that are grounded in justice and equity. In these times, we will continue to support community-based, Indigenous-led organizations and Tribal Nations who are working toward liberation by creating real, lasting solutions for all people and Mother Earth.

To that end, NDN is committed to continuing to support strong partnerships and grassroots efforts aligned with our core grant programs such as the Community Self-Determination Grant. The Collective Abundance Fund expects to expand its reach as a power-building initiative supporting individual

Indigenous people's wealth and wellbeing. The Community Action Fund will hone its focus on emergent, direct actions across Turtle Island, and the Radical Imagination Artist Grant will continue to support Indigenous artist creativity as a catalyst for movement, storytelling, and transformation. As we see a rise in authoritarianism and threats to democracy, NDN continues to adapt to the shifting landscape. Our commitment to building and sustaining movement infrastructure remains steadfast and includes a focus on training and organizing, storytelling and narrative, developing leadership, and nurturing strong, trust-based partnerships, all while continuing to resource Indigenous movements and initiatives that defend sacred lands, advance sovereignty, and cultivate healing for future generations.

GRANTEE PARTNER

HIGHLIGHT

HOPI TUTSKWA PERMACULTURE



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RESOURCE REMEDIATION

RESOURCE REMEDIATION

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TOMAS KARMELO

GRANTEE PARTNER

HIGHLIGHT

HOPI TUTSKWA PERMACULTURE

As a collective, we are honored to support Indigenous future building work from organizations such as Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture. Based in the Village of Kykotsmovi, Hopi Reservation, Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture has been planting seeds for a powerful Hopi future since 2004. They work to create resilient and healthy communities by engaging the community to revitalize Hopi culture, knowledge, and traditions. The focus of their work is to equip their community

with the tools, training, and practical experience to rebuild a vibrant community rooted in traditional Hopi values and worldview.

In addition to offering education and training in Hopi regenerative agriculture through programs such as a Land Steward Fellowship and Natural Building Internship, Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture has also developed a sustainable homeownership program. The goal of this program is to nurture stable, capable, just, resilient and sustainable individuals, clans, families and Tribal Nations through offering a community-based reciprocal financing program.

With support from partners including NDN Collective and the USDA, Hopi Tutskwa is now developing a Hopi Regional Food Hub. This hub will feature a community kitchen, gathering/feasting space, indoor/outdoor workshop space, walk-in cold storage, and passive solar greenhouse to support community culture and resilience. The hub will help to connect emergent and small businesses with the tools they need to operate sustainably. Through their commitment to healing and to decolonizing food systems, Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture shares NDN Collective's broader mission to Indigenize agriculture and restore right relation to Mother Earth.



LENDING & IMPACT INVESTING

BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2025

RECEIVED **\$212,848,012** IN LOAN
REQUESTS FROM NDN FUND
SINCE JUNE 2023

ASSISTED LOAN RELATIVES IN
LEVERAGING **\$27,746,723** IN
ADDITIONAL CAPITAL

DEPLOYED **\$10,604,915**
IN LOAN CAPITAL

SUPPORTED LOAN RELATIVES
IN REMATRIATING **23,563** ACRES
OF LAND

CREATED **199** JOBS // DISBURSED **15**
LOANS // BUILT **8** HOUSING UNITS

LOOKING BACK

Since 2018, NDN Fund, the lending and impact investing arm of NDN Collective, has emerged as a transformative force in Indigenous economic empowerment and environmental stewardship.

With a mission rooted in fostering sustainable, Indigenous-led development, NDN Fund has deployed over \$10 million in regenerative loans to support a diverse portfolio of projects that prioritize ecological balance, cultural preservation, and long-term community prosperity. These initiatives are designed to honor the Indigenous principle of planning for the seventh generation, ensuring that resources, land, and opportunities remain viable for descendants seven generations into the future.



NDN FOUNDATION
**NON-REFUNDABLE
 GRANTS**

NDN FUND
**LOW-INTEREST
 LOANS**

HANDS-ON
DEEP ASSISTANCE

BRAIDED CAPITAL MODEL:

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FINANCING

At the core of NDN Fund's strategy is its innovative braided capital model, which combines grants from the NDN Foundation with low-interest loans to create flexible, accessible financing for Indigenous-led projects and businesses. This approach reduces financial barriers for communities that have historically been underserved by traditional banking systems, while also aligning capital deployment with Indigenous values of reciprocity, sustainability, and community wellbeing. By blending non-repayable grants with affordable loans, NDN Fund ensures that its investments are both impactful and regenerative, fostering economic systems that prioritize long-term ecological and cultural health over short-term profit.

Since its founding, NDN Fund has financed 15 Indigenous-led projects and businesses, each carefully selected for its alignment with the organization's mission to create equitable, sustainable, and culturally grounded economic systems. These initiatives span renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, and Indigenous entrepreneurship, collectively contributing to a vision of prosperity that extends to "grandchildren's grandchildren."

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS AND IMPACT

In the face of escalating climate crises, systemic inequities, and the urgent need for Indigenous self-determination, NDN Collective has positioned renewable energy and Indigenous entrepreneurship as cornerstone investment areas for the NDN Fund. These priorities are especially critical now, as they empower Indigenous communities to combat environmental degradation, foster economic independence, and reclaim control over resources amid ongoing colonial legacies. By channeling resources into these sectors, NDN Fund directly fuels the organization's vision to defend Indigenous lands, waters, and rights from exploitation; develop sustainable, community-driven economies that build long-term prosperity; and decolonize oppressive systems by centering Indigenous knowledge, leadership, and innovation for true sovereignty.

RENEWABLE ENERGY: POWERING COMMUNITIES WITH EQUITY

NDN Fund has prioritized investments in renewable energy projects that not only provide clean, sustainable power but also center Indigenous leadership and community ownership. A flagship example is the Navajo Power solar equity program, which delivers affordable solar energy to Navajo communities while creating jobs, reducing energy poverty, and preserving land and water resources. This initiative exemplifies NDN Fund's commitment to

clean energy solutions that honor the seventh-generation principle by ensuring that future generations inherit a healthy environment. By supporting projects like Navajo Power, NDN Fund is helping to redefine energy development as a tool for Indigenous sovereignty and ecological resilience.

INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BUILDING CULTURAL ECONOMIES

NDN Fund's portfolio also includes investments in Indigenous businesses that blend cultural preservation with economic innovation. The Tocabe Indigenous Marketplace, for example, creates a platform for Indigenous food producers and artisans to reach broader markets while celebrating Native culinary traditions. Similarly, the Native Conservancy, the first Native-led land trust in Alaska, works to protect Indigenous lands and waters while fostering sustainable economic opportunities. These ventures demonstrate how Indigenous entrepreneurship can drive economic growth while reinforcing cultural identity and ecological stewardship.

In 2025, NDN Fund's investments in regenerative agriculture focused on restoring traditional Indigenous food systems while addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Projects like Indian Township Enterprises' (ITE) American Unagi eel franchise, Anawakalmekak's Chief Ya'anna Learning Village, and Sacred Storm Buffalo are revitalizing soil and water systems through sustainable practices that align with Indigenous lifeways. The American Unagi initiative, for instance, promotes aquaculture that respects ecological limits while creating economic

opportunities for Passamaquoddy Tribal members. In 2025, ITE expanded its operations into its own eel facility, with Wabanaki Unagi taking the lessons from its partnership with American Unagi to the next level of Indigenous ownership and control.

Similarly, Anawakalmekak's Chief Ya'anna Learning Village—a 12-acre rematriated land site in Los Angeles returned to the Gabrielino Shoshone Nation—fosters ecosystem restoration, youth-led community science research, and decolonization efforts. In 2025, Anawakalmekak officially hosted

its first cohort of international Indigenous visitors to the Tuatukar Eco-Cultural Center, where Indigenous students and elders collaborate on reforestation, climate mitigation, and cultural education to regenerate urban landscapes. This is now a global model for regenerative Land Back efforts.

Sacred Storm Buffalo restores bison populations—a keystone species critical to prairie ecosystems—while supporting Indigenous food sovereignty and cultural practices alongside training and workforce development tied to buffalo stewardship. In 2025, Sacred Storm

Buffalo opened its first physical location, providing both access to fresh buffalo for the first time in Rapid City, SD, and a market for a new generation of Indigenous food producers. These projects not only regenerate degraded landscapes but also strengthen community resilience and cultural continuity for the future.

LOAN RELATIVE
HIGHLIGHT
**CHUGACH REGIONAL
RESOURCES COMMISSION**



In September 2025, NDN Fund announced the closing of a LANDBACK loan with the Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC)—an inter-Tribal fish and wildlife commission authorized as a Tribal consortium 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

CRRC serves the seven Tribes spanning from the Lower Cook Inlet through the Prince William Sound and east to the Lower Copper River: Chenega (Caniqaq), Cordova (IiyaaGdaad), Nanwalek, Port Graham (Paluwik), Seward (Qutal-leq), Tatitlek (Taatiilaq), and Valdez. This partnership operates the Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute, an

innovative mariculture technical center that protects dozens of species of shellfish, grows kelp seed for the state’s growing kelp industry to preserve this endangered sea plant, and conducts research and development related to sea life.

The loan from NDN Fund allows CRRC to own the 1.52 acres the organization’s current building sits on, as well as to expand their facility and programming. The loan also allows for co-stewardship of natural resources among the seven Tribes, and the use of the Bureau of Indian Affairs 105(l) leasing program under the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 5324(l) to

reimburse CRRC for facility operating costs. A 105(l) lease used in this way not only can serve as a model for other LANDBACK efforts across the globe, but also helps CRRC invest in sustainable resource management and community wellbeing for their Tribal citizens.

The NDN Fund loan follows three previous grants from NDN Collective to fund CRRC’s innovative mariculture work. This “braided capital” model enables the Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute to play an integral role in carrying out the mission of CRRC by supporting food security, ocean health, economic development, and Tribal sovereignty in the seven communities they serve.





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2025

MAINTAINED **\$29,500,000**
IN CURRENT ASSET VALUE

RETURNED **477** ACRES
OF LAND TO TRIBES OR
COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

HOSTED **24** GROUPS AT THE
HE SAPA RETREAT CENTER

FACILITATED **12** COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



NDN Holdings is a for-profit holding company, wholly owned by NDN Collective, that exists to build assets and get land back by transitioning land, real estate, and building ownership through strategic land acquisition opportunities.

Over the years, NDN Holdings has modeled a radical and bold alternative to traditional for-profit businesses. By taking on development projects that directly support our mission and values, our bottom line is determined by the positive impact our projects have for our people. Over the years, some of these projects have included:



OCETI SAKOWIN COMMUNITY ACADEMY RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

In the fall of 2022, we welcomed the first class of kindergarten students to the Oceti Sakowin Community Academy (OSCA). In 2024, the school taught students at an additional three grade levels. In partnership with NDN Collective Education Equity team and the OSCA, NDN Holdings developed the Lakota-led school in Rapid City, which is built on a foundation of Lakota language, culture, and philosophy.

For the first time in 2024, school facilities were located on NDN Holdings-owned land, with the successful installation of sustainable modular classrooms. NDN Holdings formed key partnerships with OSCA and He Sapa Otipi, the Rapid City Indian Center community development project, as part of advancing this vision. In close proximity to OSCA, the Rapid City Indian Center will serve as an additional resource and place-based project for Indigenous community members. As the lead developer for this initiative, NDN Holdings is playing a pivotal role in this process, and will donate land directly to He Sapa Otipi so they can construct the physical buildings for this project.



HE SAPA RETREAT, MNI LUZAHAN RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

NDN Holdings opened the doors to the He Sapa Retreat Center, a three-story gathering space intentionally positioned in the Black Hills near NDN Collective headquarters. The safe and secure location sits on approximately 16 acres of land. The retreat center can accommodate large groups and host NDN Collective gatherings, trainings, and team and organizational retreats, as well as Indigenous power-building and community events. The center also includes a house with a conference room, a warehouse for storage, and an on-site ceremony area. It is meant to be a sanctuary where visitors feel nourished in mind, body, and spirit so they can focus on planning, strategizing, and doing the work for our people. In addition to internal NDN Collective strategy meetings, the He Sapa Retreat Center was honored to serve as the host site for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition when they visited Rapid City to conduct oral history interviews with boarding school survivors in the community.



EYAK LAKE LANDBACK CORDOVA, ALASKA

In November 2024, NDN Holdings successfully returned approximately two acres of land along Eyak Lake in Cordova, AK to the Eyak community. This was one of the entity's first-ever LANDBACK deals which was supported by the Eyak Community Land Trust (ECLT). There is a property onsite that will serve as the Sea Otter Island Retreat. Developed in partnership with the Native Conservancy, this retreat space will host culture, ecological, and restoration workshops for the Eyak people.

Moving forward, NDN Holdings and the ECLT are in the final stages of returning more Eyak lands to their rightful stewards and restore the Sea Otter Island Retreat project to the ECLT in late 2025. This project demonstrates how NDN Holdings can play a pivotal role in LANDBACK projects, effectively facilitating land transfers and helping incubate local community-based land trust models. Now, the Eyak people will get to enjoy their sacred lands for generations to come.



HIGHLIGHT

WAZIYATA: BUILDING THE FUTURE, HONORING THE PAST

At Waziyata, a transformative community development project in Rapid City, South Dakota, culture thrives, families flourish, and community bonds are strengthened. Led by NDN Collective, Waziyata is more than just buildings and infrastructure; it's also a vision for a brighter future, deeply rooted in Indigenous values and a commitment to empowering the community.

In Lakota, Waziyata means "North," reflecting its location in the northern part of Rapid City, where a vibrant Native community resides. NDN Collective acquired this 67-acre site in 2022 to create a space that addresses critical needs identified by the local community.



At the heart of Waziyata is the Oceti Sakowin Community Academy (OSCA), currently a K-2 school, with plans to grow into a K-12 school, where over 100 students learn traditional Lakota teachings and language. OSCA is not only a school but also a cultural immersion where young minds connect with their heritage.

With Waziyata, our vision is to continue to build assets aligned with our values, fostering a positive impact for all. These assets include:

- ▶ **Affordable Housing:** Over 150 units of mixed-use housing, including apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes.
- ▶ **Community Hubs:** He Sapa Otipi and the Rapid City Indian Center will find a new home here. We are also planning to build a Center for Indigenous Power Building onsite.
- ▶ **Economic Opportunities:** Spaces for small businesses and entrepreneurship to flourish.
- ▶ **Support Services:** Vital access to local resources for the Indigenous community.
- ▶ **Shared Spaces:** Outdoor areas that encourage community engagement and cultural connection.

NDN Collective is committed to making a real difference. This project grew from years of community organizing, aiming to address specific needs with solution-oriented approaches. We're creating opportunities for economic growth, living-wage jobs, and safe spaces for our youth.



COMMUNICATIONS & NARRATIVE

BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2025

GREW OUR AUDIENCE TO **451,000**
FOLLOWERS ACROSS **7** PLATFORMS

HAD **105,210** PODCAST DOWNLOADS

DEVELOPED **350** VIDEOS

WROTE **177** PRESS RELEASES

PUBLISHED **165** BLOG POSTS

PRODUCED **54** PODCAST EPISODES

The NDN Collective Communications and Narrative work is something that truly sets us apart from the status quo of non-profit communications. Moving beyond the standard tactics of traditional media, newsletters, and non-profit marketing, we break the mold as an Indigenous-led organization by Indigenous-ing our communications and narrative strategies to serve our unique needs as a diverse collective.

When NDN Collective publicly launched in October of 2018, we rolled out a comprehensive communications strategy, which included social media platforms, a new website, a blog, a press strategy, and the While Indigenous podcast. We eventually expanded our multimedia storytelling strategy to include three more podcasts—Sko Vote Den, In Our Power, and LANDBACK For the People— as well as created inventive, engaging, and accessible webinars, shortform videos, reels, documentaries, and livestream content from the frontlines of the movement. Our dynamic and multidimensional communications also include concerts, photography, columns, op-eds, and a press strategy that involves national and even international press coverage. With a social media reach of nearly half a million followers, we are celebrated in the movement both for our powerful graphic design and our comprehensive and insightful analysis.

Over the years, the Communications & Narrative Team has been comprised of talented and seasoned Indigenous storytellers, artists, creatives, narrative change strategists, and media-based organizers who collaborated with, supported and served the NDN Collective ecosystem as a shared support service. The Communications & Narrative Team created and lifted up stories of Indigenous movement-building, disrupting false narratives and building Indigenous power to shift culture, all while staying connected to our communities and our homelands.

In the face of a dominant society that still invisibilizes Indigenous People by portraying them as inferior or irrelevant, NDN Collective has devoted the past seven years to telling an entirely different story. We lifted up our own unapologetic narratives— by and for Indigenous People— to illuminate the many inherent gifts, strengths and capabilities that live within our Nations and our communities. Our work focused on amplifying the impact of our grantees and loan relatives, partners, and programmatic work.

Earned media highlights included articles mentioning NDN Collective's work in CBS News, Indian Country Today, New York Times, and Chronicles of Philanthropy, where journalists and media outlets began to recognize NDN Collective as a leading voice in the Indigenous movement community.

In 2025, we continued to build on our work. This included developing narrative and press strategy for large organizing moments at NDN as well as building partnerships with publishers and outlets to expand the reach of our stories. Some of these accomplishments included:

Deployed a multimedia storytelling strategy to lift up the story of the clemency of Leonard Peltier

After a decades-long fight, the release of Leonard Peltier was a huge moment in the history of Indigenous resistance and movement work. NDN worked hard to ensure that this news was lifted up in a respectful way. This included a multimedia storytelling strategy that comprised original blogs, livestreams, photo documentation, social media, press management, and even a short film entitled “GIIWE: Bringing Leonard Peltier Home.”

Launched a monthly column in *YES! Magazine* entitled “Self-Determined”

We expanded NDN Collective's audience through a collaboration with YES! Magazine. From March to May, staff from NDN Collective authored three articles for YES! Magazine that discussed topics such as Indigenous climate resilience, how foundations can better support systemic change, and why Indigenous sovereignty is critical to protect in this political climate.



Launch of Season 3 of the *LANDBACK For the People* Podcast

LANDBACK For the People Podcast came back for a third season with a total of 15 episodes recorded and released in 2025. Topics included everything from how different organizations are bringing buffalo back to Indigenous communities in South Dakota to nuns giving land back to a Tribe in Wisconsin.

NDN Collective will continue to lead narrative work to uplift stories from across the NDN Collective ecosystem. Moving forward, we will also be working more closely with members of the LANDBACK Action Network to share stories and narratives that highlight Indigenous movement work and LANDBACK wins from across Turtle Island and beyond.



COMMUNICATIONS & NARRATIVE
HIGHLIGHT
LANDBACK
FOR THE PEOPLE
PODCAST

2025 saw the launch of Season 3 of our popular LANDBACK For the People Podcast. **With more than 56,000 downloads across three seasons**, our LANDBACK For the People Podcast remains an invaluable way to not only connect with NDN's network but also to share stories of LANDBACK, foster political education, and amplify updates from across our ecosystem. In our current media environment, creating our own podcast is especially important. It's one tool we have to make sure that we are telling our own stories and sharing critical messages and learnings with our audience. Episodes are available across podcast platforms as well as recorded on NDN's YouTube channel.



This past year, guests included Indigenous comedian Joey Clift (Cowlitz), longtime Water Defender Dr. Liliias Jarding, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, and activist Leonard Peltier. From conversations on organizing mutual aid campaigns to healing intergenerational trauma, LANDBACK For the People Podcast delves into past and present LANDBACK struggles across Turtle Island and the Indigenous world.

The success of Season 3 even led to an article series about the LANDBACK For the People Podcast in partnership with the publication Nonprofit Quarterly. Launched in late 2025, this series highlighted key podcast episodes with the goal of continuing to grow our network of community allies.

WEALTH LIBERATION

In 2024, many movement infrastructure organizations like NDN challenged the field of philanthropy to raise up and meet the moment. Despite persistent calls for philanthropy organizations to extend sustained funding to match the scale of funding from 2020-2022, institutional philanthropy failed to show up. This year in particular, we saw slower funding, drastic funding cuts, and risk adverse grantmaking. The field as a whole took too long to respond to the crisis caused by federal funding cuts, and initiatives that were once “popular” to fund suddenly became the reason we had to convince funders to continue supporting us.

Although these immense challenges did significantly impact our budget, we also saw big wins in 2025. In January, our team launched the For the People Campaign, which resulted in \$8 million in major support coming from our partners at the Northwest Area Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, and Kresge Foundation. Developed in response to our current administration’s authoritarian tactics, For the People is a call to action for individuals and institutional philanthropy to support Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous-led movement infrastructure, and community-based organizations. The For the People Campaign is designed to provide critical resources through our current grantmaking programs and organizing work to strengthen our movement, enhance the resiliency of frontline actions, and catalyze transformative change under this authoritarian regime.

Throughout 2025, we continued to both seed and to sustain impactful relationships with individual donors, many of whom were ready to stand with us and increase their support to our work. These individuals understand that NDN Collective’s commitment to fight on and to fund the frontlines means we are well-positioned to support our relatives organizing for climate justice, water protection, human rights, and Land Back. We are excited about the ways we worked together this year to rematriate resources to communities from across our ecosystem and are committed to sharpening our focus in the coming year.

Finally, we launched the Feed the People Campaign and raised over \$75,000 to distribute buffalo to our communities in light of the freeze on SNAP benefits this year. This campaign’s success was a direct result of institutional philanthropy and individual donors actually seeing the value of supporting community-led initiatives through self-determination and long-term solutions.

Despite the difficulties our collective weathered this year, we are encouraged about the direction the field is turning toward. We remain steadfast and unapologetic in our efforts to liberate our people, and hopeful for continued wealth liberation in the year ahead.



NDN'S TRANSFORMATION IN 2025

REFLECTING ON
SEVEN YEARS
OF NDN

As this Impact Report affirms, **our seventh year as an organization presented a powerful opportunity to reflect.** In Lakota and other Indigenous cultures, seven is recognized as a sacred number. We see it show up in various teachings — whether that is the seven directions we are taught (North, East, South, West, Above, Below, Center), our seven generations principle, or the seven grandfather teachings we impart on our children. And so, this time signifies both a cycle of reflection and renewal for us.

Our seventh year began with generational organizing wins, such as the Pactola Mineral Withdrawal to protect sacred sites and clean drinking water in part of the He Sapa against mining threats for the next 20 years, as well as the successful campaign to release Leonard Peltier after almost 50 years of unjust incarceration. But we also witnessed the devastating effects of rising authoritarianism and democratic backsliding in the United States, and the chilling impact it has had on free speech, basic human rights, dignity, and community resources.

NDN Collective's unapologetic stances and transformational work have put us in the crosshairs of institutions and individuals who wish to silence our voice. In this past year of mass destabilization, we've withstood significant funding challenges that have threatened both our budget and organizational sustainability. Faced with rapidly changing terrain, it became clear to us that we had to make major strategic organizational shifts.

Constant emergent threats to our lands and livelihoods have us well-versed as an organization in adapting as the moment calls for it. We recognize our responsibility in this particular moment to evolve to meet the current needs of the movement for Indigenous self-determination. This is why our strategies have always included defend, develop, and decolonize. We must keep defending against negative actions that impact our communities while still developing as sovereign Nations. Throughout it, decolonization is the throughline: when we create spaces to renew and reclaim our

culture, we can simultaneously heal from the past and imagine a future that others will be inspired to fight for. Because of this, our work will continue to support the defense, development, and decolonization of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island and globally, while reinforcing and strengthening our organizing roots. We plan to pour our energy into activating the widespread network of empowered Indigenous People we've built since our inception in order to mobilize when it matters most.

But these changes come at a cost. This has been a heavy year for us – we've had to make difficult decisions regarding programmatic shifts, eliminate certain bodies of work, and lay off some of our team members. Despite these difficulties, we are now heading into the next seven years of our work with a sharpened spear and renewed clarity on how our work can be a part of the ongoing and intersecting fight against fascism.

These shifts motivated us in 2025 to update our Theory of Change to our **Theory of Liberation**, because our mission and vision extend beyond simply change. Our Theory of Liberation (see pg. 82) depicts how our mission of Indigenous self-determination and approach of rematriating Indigenous lands to Indigenous Peoples contributes to our vision of a world that is just and equitable for all people and Mother Earth. A key assumption of our theory is that all flourishing is mutual: when Indigenous Peoples and Mother Earth flourish, all people and living things also flourish.

OUR THEORY OF LIBERATION

A key assumption to our theory is that all flourishing is mutual – when Indigenous Peoples and Mother Earth flourish, all people and living things also flourish.

VISION

A world that is just and equitable for all people and Mother Earth.

IMPACT

Indigenous Peoples are connected to our lands, languages, and cultures and able to live in wellness, safety, and liberation.

Land, water, and natural resources are sustainably and regeneratively protected and stewarded.

OUTCOMES

Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations, Nations, and accomplices have collective power to win efforts to:

DEFEND and protect our land, air, water, natural resources, and inherent rights;

DEVELOP Indigenous communities and lands in a regenerative and sustainable manner based on our values and connection to land, culture, and identity; and

DECOLONIZE Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations revitalize our ceremonies, cultures, languages, and ways of life.

Indigenous Peoples exercise our inherent right to self-determination.

Water, land and air are protected from harm.

Indigenous Peoples have access to our lands, languages, and cultural practices.

OUTPUTS

Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations, Nations, and accomplices working to D, D, D are connected to one another and aligned in their efforts.

Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations, Nations, and accomplices are equipped with the political education, skills, and people power to run effective campaigns to D, D, D.

Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations, and Nations, are financially resourced to run effective campaigns, actions, organizations, and build wealth.

People and institutions move significant resources to support Indigenous self-determination.

He Sapa Initiatives learn from direct experience in LANDBACK efforts and share lessons and resources with LBAN.

Indigenous Peoples have water, land and mineral rights and mining stopped in the He Sapa.

Lands in the He Sapa/Black Hills are returned to the Lakota people.

Bison return to the He Sapa at an unprecedented rate.

ACTIVITIES

ORGANIZING

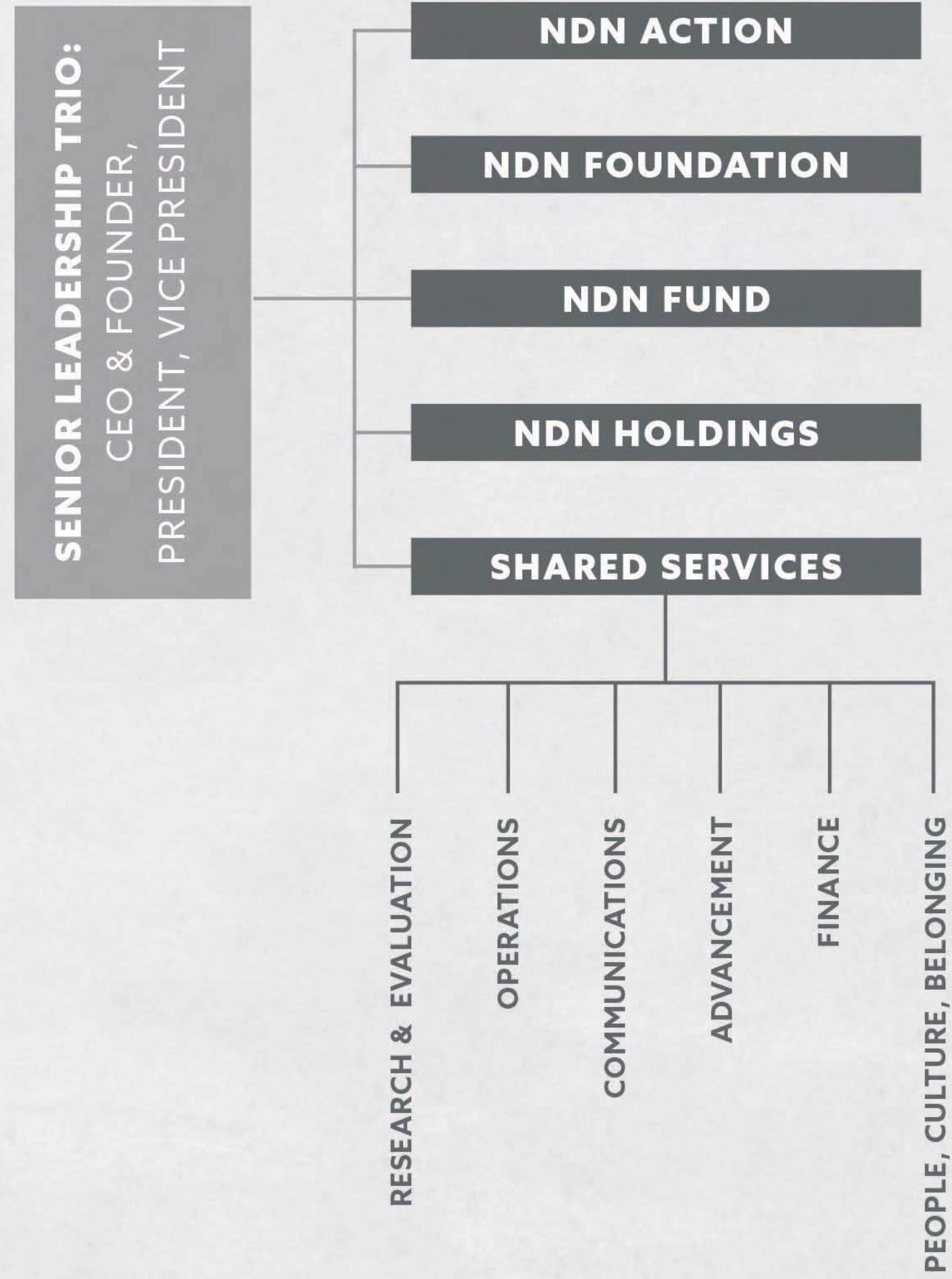
POLITICAL ACTION

RESOURCING

LANDBACK CAMPAIGNS

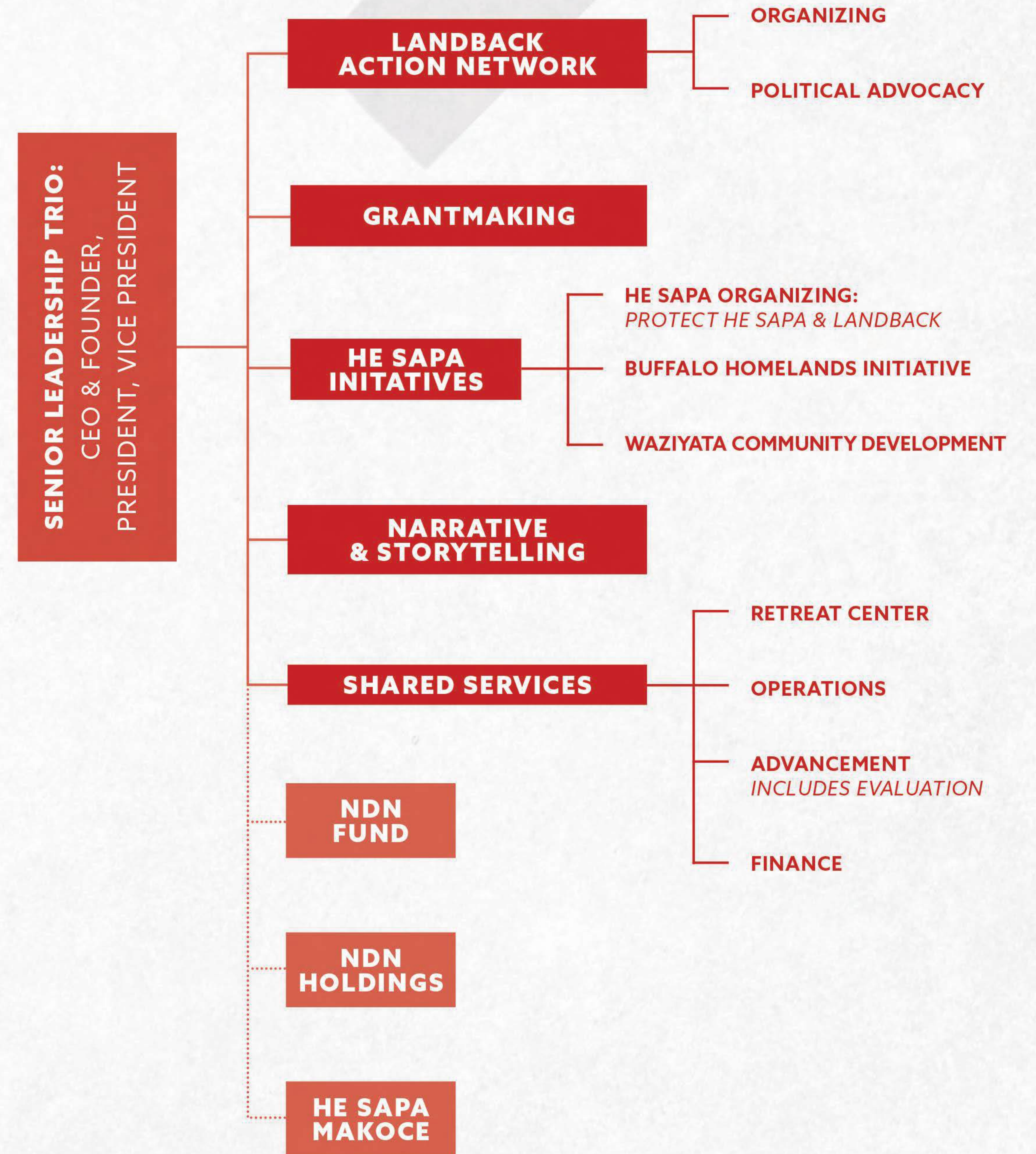
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

PREVIOUS STRUCTURE



Our 2025 approach evolved from a focus on moving resources at scale to base-building and community organizing for the Land Back movement at scale—both internationally across Turtle Island and in our home community of the Black Hills.

NEW PROGRAM STRUCTURE



PROGRAM RESTRUCTURE

As part of advancing our Theory of Liberation, our 2025 approach evolved from a focus on moving resources at scale to base-building and community organizing for the Land Back movement at scale—both internationally across Turtle Island and in our home community of the Black Hills.

Our work is now structured into 3 program areas—LANDBACK Action Network, He Sapa Initiatives, and Narrative & Storytelling—with Shared Services as our support system. Below is a brief overview of these program areas.

LANDBACK Action Network

This program area comprises infrastructure to support the Land Back movement for Indigenous Peoples and our accomplices across Turtle Island. It includes the following activities:

- ▶ **Organizing:** Leadership development, trainings, direct action, community organizing, digital campaigns
- ▶ **Resourcing:** Grantmaking streams for Indigenous organizations and individuals, NDN Legal Fund, donor organizing work
- ▶ **Political Action:** Political agenda setting, political education, affinity group deployment

He Sapa Initiatives

This program area comprises organizing and community development for LANDBACK and land protection efforts in the He Sapa and surrounding communities. It includes the following initiatives:

- ▶ **Protect the He Sapa:** Organize to stop all mining and extraction activities and protect water, land, and mineral rights in He Sapa. The goal is to secure legal protections with a full mineral withdrawal of the Black Hills.
- ▶ **He Sapa LANDBACK:** Work towards the return of all the Public Lands in the Black Hills back to the Lakota through organizing and advocacy in support of the federally recognized Lakota Tribes and treaty councils.
- ▶ **Buffalo Homelands Initiative:** Create the largest prairie grasslands conservation project in North America. This will be a bison homeland that connects over 300,000 acres of traditional territory lands from Wind Cave across Lakota territory to the Missouri River.
- ▶ **Waziyata Community Development:** Create a robust and thriving community development project at Waziyata, a 67-acre parcel purchased by NDN Collective in north Mni Luzahan (Rapid City).

MOVING FORWARD

Narrative & Storytelling

This program area is committed to building Indigenous power through uplifting stories from the LANDBACK movement and disrupting false narratives. We do this through a multimedia storytelling approach that includes:

- ▶ **LANDBACK.org:** A multimedia storytelling site to house NDN Collective's original content, stream live events, and share stories from partners across the LANDBACK Action Network.
- ▶ **LANDBACK For the People Podcast:** With over 50,000 downloads, this podcast is where we share important updates, education, and stories of LANDBACK work and Indigenous self-determination happening across Turtle Island and beyond.
- ▶ **Tactical Media:** This branch of our work focuses on creating effective and current media content by documenting front-line actions, conversations, and solutions in real time. We trust and uplift the stories and solutions of the people who are closest to the issues we seek to address and approach storytelling as a cultural practice.

Moving forward, it's our intention that these reorientations and restructures will support us in our mission to:

- ▶ **Formalize and continue to resource the LANDBACK Action Network**
- ▶ **Create a shared political agenda among Indigenous Peoples**
- ▶ **Continue on-the-ground activism and organizing for LANDBACK and regenerative community development in the He Sapa**
- ▶ **Deepen and broaden our relationship with funders**

2025 was a time of profound transformation. As we share our learnings from our first seven years, we invite you to join us in shaping this next chapter of NDN Collective.



CLOSING WORDS

TRANSFORMING THROUGH BREATH

When I reflect on the last seven years of NDN Collective, I think of a word in my language: Ea. Ea is life, breath, respiration. It also signifies sovereignty and independence. The work we've done as a collective—such as building schools, reclaiming and restoring homelands, supporting language revitalization, fostering cultural practices, and developing values-aligned economic initiatives—are all in service of Ea. To decide how we want to raise our children and what they learn in school: this is Ea. This is what it means to breathe.

For the first five years of NDN, we worked with communities across Turtle Island, the Pacific, Mexico, and so-called Canada in order to defend, develop, and decolonize. Our projects spanned power building projects to lifeways and LANDBACK initiatives that fortified the foundation for the bold work we continue to do to this day.

After those first five years, we took time as an organization to process and reflect. We made a conscious shift to focus on NDN Collective's home in the heart of Rapid City and the He Sapa, the Black Hills. For us, this shift relates back to what we call kuleana in Hawai'i. Kuleana is a framework that encompasses the right, responsibility, and obligation we have to live in deep relationship with the land. As a collective, we had to consider our kuleana to our

people—and to our place. How do we operate across such vast territory while staying grounded in community?

Energized by this question, we have honed our attention over the course of the past two years toward deepening our relationships with our partners and the people, organizations, and communities that they work with. This has translated into prioritizing the Protect the He Sapa, He Sapa LANDBACK, and Rapid City vs. Racism campaigns.

Although our work now is more grounded in place, we are still building capacity in our staff and partners from across our ecosystem to transform the lives of Native Peoples. In 2025, we deployed our team of creative resistance trainers to communities from as far as Waiawa on the island of O'ahu to Nome, Alaska, in order to share skills to support power building in their homelands. We showed up in support of our 2024–2026 NDN Changemaker Fellowship, and continued to create Indigenous-led media for liberation.



These commitments return us to the concept of kuleana, and to the belief that place is both what grounds us and gives us the ability to reach beyond our immediate circle. NDN was created in part to bring the lessons and learnings of the Pine Ridge community to the broader community. Our collective is an example of the necessity of knowledge sharing, Indigenous self-determination, and steadfastness within liberation and resistance movements.

Now we are seven years into this work. This year in particular, we have seen a rise in authoritarianism and an ongoing campaign against diversity, equity, and inclusion. Confronting these challenges has required us to adapt to the moment, share relationships, resources, and ideas, and stay grounded in our mission to defend, develop, and decolonize. There is no template for the times we are in and no manual for the work we are doing: NDN has always forged our own path. And so, we will continue to take bold, courageous stands in support of justice and humanity as we work to further Ea for our peoples, our future generations, and Mother Earth.

Camille Kalama,
NDN Collective Board Member

FOUNDATIONS

WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2025

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We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our supporters in 2025, including the foundations listed here and the **countless individuals** whose names are not included.



TO SUPPORT OUR WORK, DONATE AT
[NDNCOLLECTIVE.ORG](https://ndncollective.org)



NDNCOLLECTIVE.ORG

NDN Collective is an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to building Indigenous power. Through organizing, activism, philanthropy, grantmaking, capacity-building and narrative change, **we are creating sustainable solutions on Indigenous terms.**



TRANSFORMATION