



**NIA
TERO**

Thriving Peoples • Thriving Places

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

As Nia Tero approaches the conclusion of our fourth year, we are grateful for the depth of our collaborations with partners, communities, and individuals. Our purpose is straightforward: to provide lasting support to Indigenous peoples protecting their homelands from colonization and destruction; and to share Indigenous methods of care for the land with non-Indigenous communities. The ways we provide that support uplifts Indigenous leaders working in climate action, and in security and sovereignty of their territories.

Our first three years were dedicated to building Nia Tero from the ground up, establishing trust with Indigenous collaborators and forming long lasting relationships.

We needed to expand our team and our board, establish our programs, and build meaningful partnerships. We identified the regions where we could begin to form such collaborations—Amazonia, Pasifika, and Boreal—and from there we began the joint efforts which led to further initiatives such as the Wayfinders Circle, Biocultural Monitoring System, and the Blue Abadi Fund.

We've also begun threading the power of Indigenous storytelling throughout many of our strategies.

For example, we launched the Creative, Policy, and Leadership Fellowship programs. We also formed an exciting partnership with Amplifier and IllumiNative towards a national multimedia campaign interweaving

the art, history, and voices of Indigenous leaders. Looking ahead, we continue to celebrate an exciting story of growth across all our communities and initiatives.

Nia Tero's approach is rooted in reciprocity: the way of life that prioritizes a mutually beneficial exchange and sharing between all beings, human and nonhuman, seen and unseen, on Earth, our only home. Reciprocity and storytelling are both our anchors and actions in community; therefore this annual report embodies the story of our work as an organization, and intentionally tells it like one. As we conclude this year and begin dreaming

for the next, we are invigorated and resolved to continue our support of Indigenous-led efforts towards a sustainable future for all.



NOTES FROM LEADERSHIP

THRIVING PEOPLES. THRIVING PLACES.



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

The protection of Indigenous peoples' rights to their lands and territories, as well as the resources and support for their guardianship over these, are key factors in addressing climate change and ensuring the sustainability of the world's biodiversity.

This intricate connection between the respect for rights, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use is well understood by Nia Tero, and has shaped its vision, mission, and goals.

As the former UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights, and as Chair of the Board of Nia Tero, I am especially heartened by the significant inclusion of Indigenous peoples in Nia Tero's governing body, advisory council, and personnel. From its inception, Nia Tero affirmed The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a foundation for its work. Nia Tero has also supported initiatives to address criminalization and violence against Indigenous peoples.

Since much of this work is pioneering in terms of scale, approach, and reach, highlighting the challenges faced and lessons learned are important; not just for Nia Tero, but also for others who are engaging similar efforts. Informing the

public and influencing governments, donors, environmental organizations, and the business sector to become more sensitive and responsive to Indigenous peoples' realities, cannot be underestimated. Nia Tero is in a good position to do this, and I am confident we will play a convening role in bringing together these actors to have more constructive dialogues with Indigenous peoples.

I would like to congratulate Nia Tero for the work it has done so far. As the Chair of the Board, I am certain that all of the world will benefit from the expanding partnerships that Nia Tero has established with Indigenous peoples across the Earth.

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Vicky Tauli-Corpuz • Board Chair



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Kankanaey Igorot

Chair of the Board of Directors, Nia Tero



NOTES FROM LEADERSHIP

A YEAR OF MONUMENTAL ENDURANCE WORKING TOGETHER.

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

2020 will be marked as a year of monumental endurance.

Together, we've faced the advent and explosion of a global pandemic, and collectively witnessed a long overdue awakening of mainstream attention to systemic racism, injustice, and the urgency to ensure that community safeguards are not undermined by economic immediacy. At Nia Tero, the impact has been deeply affecting. Our staff, community partners, board members, and advisors, and every person and community we know, has had to withstand many struggles, sometimes with tremendous difficulty. Looking back at this year, we feel immense gratitude for what we have been able to accomplish together in solidarity.

The need to recognize and support the extraordinary work of Indigenous peoples is more important than ever. The events of pandemics, colonialism, racism, and inequality are not new stories—Indigenous peoples throughout the world have endured these injustices for centuries. In order to engage authentic support, we must acknowledge the severity of the issues and the way these histories impact our present,

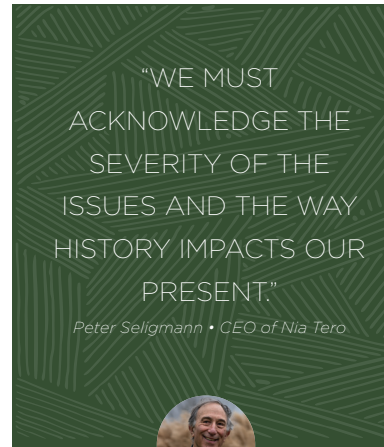
and our future. We must remain open-hearted and flexible, and committed to supporting, elevating, and amplifying the work of Indigenous peoples.

2020 was a year of organizational evolution. We adjusted our efforts to make best use of the resources we had, and could provide, to assist our partners through this difficult time. This included shifting our support towards more online engagement and community-building; not just because we didn't want to add undue risk to vulnerable communities and our team, but because we wanted to uphold the work in every way possible.

As a team, we learned to virtually nurture and maintain solidarity not just among our partners but our board, advisors, and staff as well. And we achieved a major milestone, in that nearly 50% of Nia Tero's board and

staff comprises Indigenous people, representing a diversity of cultures and communities.

This past year, Nia Tero supported a coalition of national and local Indigenous lawyers who made significant history in Amazonia, presenting several cases in federal courts to



LETTER FROM OUR CEO

protect isolated peoples. In one, the Articulation of Brazilian Indigenous Peoples (APIB) made an unprecedented—and successful—direct petition to the Supreme Court in Brazil, compelling government agencies to implement measures to protect tribes in voluntary isolation. Alongside these advances, we're supporting similar legal work in Pasifika to combat threats to Indigenous rights and sovereignty in the face of illegal logging and mining encroachment.

Nia Tero is working with Indigenous leaders securing guardianship of critical Indigenous territories to ensure that no decisions on global, national, and regional policies are made in Indigenous territories without Indigenous peoples' presence and input on those decisions. This includes global commitments to protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030 through global support of intact Indigenous territories and self-governance.

Nia Tero has been supporting energy innovations in the design and replication of solar powered watercraft that

meet the self-defined needs of our Indigenous partners in the Amazonia and Pasifika regions. These new designs and opportunities for self-reliance reduce dependency on fossil fuels, improve self-sufficiency, and involve Indigenous ingenuity in design and sustainability.

Our Storytelling team had an outstanding year of elevating and amplifying Indigenous leadership, activists, storytellers, filmmakers, and visual artists across all regions where we engage partnerships and beyond. Using the scope and strength of online platforms, social media, and social networking, Storytelling highlighted the artistry and cultural impact of our Creative Fellowship cohorts, expanded the narratives and histories of Indigenous leadership through our partner campaign with Amplifier and IllumiNative, and extended the broadcast of Indigenous stories through

the new *Seedcast* podcast and drive-in theater initiative.

Our work ahead is clear, and this fact remains: the future of all humanity is directly linked to the enduring wisdom of Indigenous peoples standing in support of Indigenous



LETTER FROM OUR CEO



governance, self-determination, and sovereignty. We must strengthen our ability to follow Indigenous wisdom and leadership in cherishing and carrying forward our collective futures.

We want to express our deepest appreciation for all the Indigenous communities who have opened their hearts to work with us, and to acknowledge the extraordinary learning we have had the opportunity to share. Our journeys are all different, and they may have different obstacles, but that is solidarity! And in solidarity we stand, towards reciprocity, our north star. We hope you will continue, alongside us.

Peter Seligmann

Peter Seligmann
CEO, Nia Tero





ABOUT US

SHARING COMMITMENTS, SAFEGUARDING OUR HOME.

OUR NAME

Nia Tero means “Our Earth” in Esperanto, a language created in the late 1800s to promote peace and harmony. Esperanto is a second language to all, first to none, allowing people who speak different native languages to communicate while retaining their own language and cultural identity. This concept of unity while upholding identity embodies the heart of Nia Tero.

WHO WE ARE

We are a US-based non-profit working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and movements worldwide. Our governing bodies, leadership and staff are of diverse non-Indigenous and Indigenous identities and life experiences. We view this diversity as a source of our strength as a bridging organization, committed to Indigenous self-determination and an inclusive culture guided by Indigenous wisdom, practices and protocols.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Indigenous peoples uphold many of the planet’s healthiest ecosystems, rich in biodiversity, and systems essential to the security of global food production, fresh water, and ultimately, the Earth’s climate.

We believe that the peoples who call these places home are the best guardians of their cultures’ vital birthplaces, and that supporting the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples, and following their leadership, is critical to the health of our planet as a whole.

OUR MISSION & VISION

SECURING INDIGENOUS GUARDIANSHIP OF VITAL ECOSYSTEMS.

We work alongside Indigenous peoples to secure their guardianship of vital ecosystems.

We understand guardianship as Indigenous peoples' right, capacity, and acceptance of responsibility to sustain vital natural systems within their collective territories.

This mission supports our vision of an Earth where Indigenous peoples defend and uphold the world's thriving forests, oceans and grasslands; where their wisdom maintains vast geographies that underpin the well-being of all humanity; and where recognition and support for Indigenous identity equals that of Nation States and others in power.

We are committed to working alongside Indigenous peoples in geographies central to the well-being of all humanity.

Our initial regions include the Pacific Islands, Amazonia, and the North American Boreal Forest of Canada, where we work with Indigenous peoples who share a collective territory and have strong governance systems in place to protect their lands and waters. By hearing and working with Indigenous leaders, we ensure their vision guides development of sound local, national and global policies.

REGIONS

PASIFIKA AMAZONIA BOREAL



NIA TERO KEY REGIONS LOCATOR

BOREAL



PASIFIKA



AMAZONIA



An aerial photograph of a tropical island. A large, rugged mountain with steep, green slopes dominates the center. The mountain has several sharp peaks and ridges. At the base of the mountain, there is a sandy beach and a small cove with shallow, turquoise water. The water transitions from a light blue near the shore to a deeper blue further out. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds, and the overall scene is bright and vibrant.

REGIONS

PASIFIKA

In 2020, we launched our Pasifika Strategy to strengthen Indigenous guardianship of Islands and Ocean, and to elevate the influence of Pasifika identity in shaping policy and action on guardianship.

Our Islands work began in solidarity with the Solomon Islands Government's **Sky Island Pledge** to protect some of the largest remaining forests in the region. Grants have been made to Indigenous partners across Sky Islands regions of Kolombangara, Guadalcanal, and Malaita, strengthening community forest protection and supporting the design of long-term financing. Work includes reconnecting youth and elders within ancestral homelands, enhancing Indigenous capability to gather and influence civil society and political leadership, and support for legal action to stop illegal logging. A Sky Islands educational and retreat center, Imbu Rano Lodge, is now revitalized; monitoring capacity is strengthening, political will is expanding, and key Sky Islands cases are in the courts.



Indigenous-led storytelling continues to inspire the scope of the Pledge. Initial partnerships in Vanuatu and Kanaky, and a developing partnership with an alliance of frontline organizations and leaders in Papua New Guinea, is supporting subnational versions of the Pledge. **Across the**

region, legal capacity is growing, emblematic cases are advancing, and people are standing up to center the sacred, life-giving force of Sky Islands.

Work on Oceans with Indigenous guardians in the Cook Islands is strengthening the Marae Moana marine domain protected area by reconnecting youth with Maori values and practice, and by designing customary and government co-management.

Despite progress towards securing the 50-nautical mile customary zones around all islands, partners are concerned about government intentions to advance deep seabed mining exploration in 2021. In response, our Pasifika Team produced a Position Statement on Deep Seabed Mining

(DSM) to guide our actions and partnerships. We will continue working with partners (Korero O Te' Orau, Cook Islands Voyaging Society, and House of Ariki) to support efforts ensuring Cook Islands communities are informed and able to put forward their views. Concurrently, we are backing a Natural Capital Standard market survey by Changing Tastes aimed at developing environmentally, socially, and culturally affirmative tuna products connected to Indigenous guardians closest to the fish.

In late 2020, a second Ocean Kinship initiative gained momentum. Key partners explored a new approach to whole-domain ocean guardianship based on rooting policy and governance systems in human reciprocity and relationships with the Ocean. **This shifts extractive legal and policy frameworks, dependent on property ownership, to models incorporating Indigenous concepts of kinship with the living world.** We are supporting a framing document to identify emblematic cases and other legal actions that can advance Ocean Kinship as a foundation for transforming failing governance of the world's largest, deepest, most thriving ocean.



Finally, our convening-based Identity stream needed to pivot due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pacific Festival of Arts and Culture, a launching point for much of our Identity work, is now scheduled for 2024. In the interim, we have invested in optimizing the use of online spaces. **Virtual talanoa** (space to converse and discuss) continued throughout the year to focus on identifying common values, voice, and policy at regional scale to amplify and secure Pasifika Peoples' self-determined vision for a thriving Pacific. A growing talanoa community is central to partnership with the Polynesian Voyaging Society's 5-year pan-Pacific voyage. This two-canoe voyage will include a virtual third canoe, Vaka Pasifika, designed as a global campaign that parallels the big ocean journey across diverse media platforms, generating Pasifika solutions for a thriving future. We are working with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, Kamehameha Schools, and Arizona State University to design and implement an education and communications platform that launches with an initial ceremonial voyage from Hawai'i to Taputapuātea and Tahiti in 2021.

REGIONS

AMAZONIA



AMAZONIA

Our Amazonia strategy strives to work in support of more than 48 Indigenous communities who maintain guardianship of 60 million hectares of thriving forest landscape—almost 150 million acres, a little smaller than the state of California—by exercising territorial rights and asserting their autonomy and wellbeing.

To achieve this goal, with the guidance of our regional advisors, we're supporting Indigenous peoples in Northern Brazil, Southern Suriname, Western Guyana, and Eastern Colombia.

In 2020 we contributed to the implementation and strengthening of Indigenous peoples' self-determined vision for guardianship. This included the support of organizations, such as Apitikaxi and Apiwa in the Tumucumaque Indigenous Land, to implement actions protecting their territories, strengthen their governance, fortify their communications, and maintain cultural continuity and intergenerational exchange. Our work also involved assisting Indigenous organizations committed to

ensuring the survival of their uncontacted relatives, such as the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (UNIVAJA), an Indigenous territory the size of Austria with the highest concentration of Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation.



Nia Tero supported a coalition of national and local Indigenous lawyers who made history in 2020, presenting several cases in federal courts to protect isolated peoples. In one case, the Articulation of Brazilian Indigenous Peoples (APIB) made an unprecedented—and successful—direct petition to the Supreme Court. This petition compelled government agencies to implement measures to protect tribes in voluntary isolation from COVID-19, and to implement actions to respond to Indigenous

peoples' health needs during the pandemic. This is of great significance, in the recognition of APIB as the first Indigenous organization that can make direct petitions to the Supreme Court.

In Amazonia, we've contributed to Indigenous peoples'

AMAZONIA

policy work, particularly on issues related to the recognition of land rights, strengthening of current rights, and upholding existing rights. For example, we supported the Association of Indigenous Chiefs of Suriname (VIDS) in their continuous efforts towards the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights. We also contributed to the Observatory of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Isolation in Brazil, with the establishment of a platform to monitor COVID-19 in their territories.

As Indigenous leaders continue to face direct threats to their lives, we've collaborated with partners such as: the National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC), Land is Life in Colombia, the Coordination of Indigenous Organization of the Brasilia Amazon (COIAB), and Fundo Brasil in Brazil, to set up **rapid response mechanisms for Indigenous peoples under threat.**

COVID-19 had a big impact on Nia Tero's partners in Amazonia. As of December 2020, there were more than one million COVID-19 cases among Indigenous peoples of the Amazon, and more than 37,000 fatalities. The disease has spread to all territories where Nia Tero works. Therefore, throughout 2020, we supported our partners' responses to the pandemic.

Finally, as Nia Tero is committed to amplifying Indigenous voices through communications and storytelling, **we are supporting the communications skills of Indigenous organizations in Brazil** through a partnership with Diálogo Brasil. This partnership involves Indigenous communicators in the process of identifying audiences and developing messages for specific campaigns. We're also supporting the development of documentaries in Brazil about the Yanomami, and about

Indigenous peoples' response to COVID-19 with the full involvement and guidance of Indigenous creatives.

WITH SUPPORT FROM NIA TERO, INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE:

- Provided health and food supplies and medical equipment to Indigenous communities affected by COVID-19.
- Developed culturally appropriate informational materials on COVID-19 prevention measures.
- Received health services and guidance from health experts such as Health Expeditionary (EDS) to respond to the pandemic in Indigenous territories.
- Established or improved telecommunications access, such as in the Rio Negro in Brazil.
- Established relationships with health officers from government agencies and other NGOs to respond to the pandemic.



REGIONS

BOREAL

At 28 million hectares, an area slightly larger than the size of the United Kingdom, the Sahtu First Nations region is one of the largest in the North American Boreal Forest. Though it is threatened by extractive industries and powerful demand for oil and gas, wood fiber, and commercial fishing, this region holds enormous potential to be a global exemplar of self-determined Indigenous guardianship. Working in solidarity with the **Indigenous Leadership Initiative (ILI)**, Nia Tero is supporting Sahtu Dene First Nations efforts to secure national support and guardianship of their customary territory.

In September 2019, Canada's Nature Fund approved initial funding of US\$1.9 million for three proposals submitted by Sahtu First Nation for the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas: Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta

Indigenous Protected Area (Ramparts), Ross River Indigenous Protected Area, and Edézhhié Dehcho Protected Area & National Wildlife Area. With secure co-financing and committed Sahtu leadership, Nia Tero is providing multi-year support for expanding Sahtu guardianship as a foundation for Dene self-determination and nationhood.

ILI is Nia Tero's main partner in the Boreal. **ILI and the Dene have made good progress in the Sahtu region in 2020 in spite of the global pandemic.** With Nia Tero's support, the Sahtu's Deline Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) proposal is now substantially complete, and the Deline Gotine Government is in negotiation with the Northwest Territories government on the terms of establishment. The Sahtu Dene's Nio Ni Pene proposal is developing more slowly but continues



to advance. Most significantly, this progress highlights how the government of the Northwest Territories is open to the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas; and federally, Indigenous-led conservation is advancing at a spectacular rate.

In early 2020, Nia Tero partnered on video production with James Cameron, Harrison Ford, Peter Seligmann, and Nainoa Thompson for ILI's Land Needs Guardians campaign. The success of this campaign lends momentum to work with the Government of Canada, ensuring Indigenous guardianship is recognized and supported within post-2020 Biodiversity, Climate, and Sustainable Development

frameworks. In September, the Prime Minister specifically highlighted Indigenous-led conservation as the way forward for Canada to meet its international targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Canada is also considering allocating long-term funding to the Keepers of the Land Program and the Indigenous Protected Areas.

CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

CONNECT, ENHANCE & ENABLE.



SUPPORT, ELEVATE & AMPLIFY **INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE,** ACTION, AND SOVEREIGNTY.

Crosscutting work at Nia Tero means we strive to implement the most effective methods in support of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous action. Crosscutting includes the amplification and scaling pathways that link and leverage efforts within our partner regions, as well as the pathways required to expand Indigenous guardianship through regional and global initiatives.

Key examples of what crosscutting looks like include strategies like storytelling, infrastructure, and Indigenous ways and means. Storytelling ensures the existence of platforms that enable Indigenous peoples to express their own stories on their own terms, while infrastructure seeks

to identify solutions that can be adjusted to different local and regional requirements or settings. Initiatives such as Seedcast and the Storytelling Fellowship and 4th World Media Lab demonstrate cross-platform storytelling between online and real-world experiences of Indigenous creatives and perspectives. **Sovereign solar transportation** is a key example of Indigenous ways and means, sharing solutions developed in the rivers of the Achuar territories to be applied differently to rivers across Amazonia and among the lagoons and waterways of Melanesia. These are just a few ways crosscutting exists to support, elevate, and amplify Indigenous knowledge, action, and sovereignty.

A woman in traditional Indigenous attire, including a woven hat and a red tunic with beaded details, stands on a grassy cliff. She holds a large, round drum decorated with vibrant Indigenous art. The background features a sunset over a body of water with a forested island in the distance.

CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

LEADERSHIP FELLOWS

The Leadership Fellows program was established in 2019 to strengthen emergent leaders from Nia Tero's place-anchored partnerships, contributing to local durable support and guardianship of territories. The program works both ways, in that communities enhance leadership development and succession, while Nia Tero strengthens its partnerships in those territories.

LEADERSHIP FELLOWS

The Leadership Fellowship program serves several meaningful purposes: it focuses on the needs of Fellows and their communities, strengthens culture and spirituality, promotes intergenerational and intercultural exchanges, involves peer groups and regional cohorts, and shares a learning-by-doing approach.

In collaboration with Indigenous elders, Nia Tero met with the first Leadership Fellows cohort in early 2020 to receive guidance on how to strengthen the program. There, it was recommended that the program take on a regional approach, modeled after Indigenous teaching methods and concepts of leadership.

The selection criteria of Fellows suggested during this meeting included the following:

- Strong connection to their territory
- Proven motivation to work with their people
- Mature—responsible and with some experience
- Emergent leaders—transition from youth to elders
- Nominated with acceptance from elders
- Considering gender balance when possible

Based on the approach to the Leadership Fellows program, we hired a **Leadership Fellows Manager** who is fully

dedicated to rolling out the program in the Amazonia, Pasifika, and Boreal regions. Though COVID-19 impacted our program's progress, we're quickly advancing on developing curricula for each priority region.



Thanks to the co-design of regional curricula by both Indigenous peoples and leadership development institutions, **the updated 2021 Leadership Fellows program will be conducted fully online with expanded regional cohorts, taking on a more localized approach.** Due to travel restrictions, the idea is for Fellows to learn from within—from community leaders and spiritual elders alike—and conduct a diverse set of exercises in their own communities. The 2021 program will pair Fellows with local facilitators and mentors, focus on mother tongue education, provide necessary seed funding for project implementation, and support Fellows

and communities with much-needed communications infrastructure for easy internet access. The updated program will also provide Fellows with the necessary soft skills to strengthen their ability to share their messages outside their territories while connecting them to networks of Indigenous leaders and others more broadly.



CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

STORYTELLING

STORYTELLING

The Storytelling team began 2020 with a retreat at Sundance Film Festival, where we hosted Nia Tero-sponsored events and attended screenings, spoke at panels and round tables, and networked with funders and field architects. The retreat presented an opportunity for the team to identify and align our collective values and vision for the coming year, setting the tone for collaboration and representation.

We have initiated several dynamic opportunities for accessible storytelling methods. We launched ***Seedcast*, a new Indigenous stories-centered podcast** highlighting Indigenous perspectives; produced substantial original content as found on our **Vimeo channel**; partnered with **drive-in movie theaters** to present Indigenous-made films; are currently in pre-production of ***Rako Pasifika*, a feature documentary film** rooted in the small island nation of Rotuma; and we've begun pre-production for a **web series** about the impacts of logging in the Solomon Islands.



We're also launching a multimedia platform and education module centering experiences of reciprocity titled **The Reciprocity Project**. For this project, we've assembled a world class team, and are beginning the series as a multimedia pilot featuring seven diverse Indigenous communities. With the pandemic in mind, we are approaching the production with extreme care, and are working with a certified COVID-19 safety specialist. Additionally, we've laid the groundwork for a robust granting initiative to support global Indigenous storytellers; and in February 2021 we launched **Kin Theory**, a website to bring together Indigenous creatives and industry professionals from around the world as part of a database later in the year.

For Indigenous Peoples' Day we partnered with Amplifier and IllumiNative to raise awareness about Indigenous leadership on racial justice issues and environmental protections. The project showcased an appreciation for the myriad of relationships Indigenous

STORYTELLING

communities have with civic engagement, and American democracy itself. To inspire conversation, we featured artwork by four Indigenous artists, reaching 1.25 million people on social media, and viewers of all ages and demographics out in the world. Artworks were projected on buildings as digital billboards across 18 states and multiple cities in the US, creating awareness of Indigenous issues and helping to galvanize a historic turnout of Native voters. In addition, over 11,000 pieces of physical artworks were distributed to 23 different Indigenous community groups

nationwide, including: Arizona, Hawai'i, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin. In order to engage younger audiences, Amplifier, IllumiNative, and Nia Tero

co-created an original 16-page lesson plan that was distributed to over one million K-12 students.

Lastly, **we launched our new Indigenous-designed Nia Tero logo, aesthetics, and visual formatting**, seamlessly

interweaving storytelling and branding together in our marketing and social media. At the end of the year, our online presence had grown to 10,000 followers and we launched our first Nia Tero newsletter. With our branding and storytelling strategies intact across all platforms where Nia Tero appears, we will continue to beautifully

and cohesively amplify the stories and the work of Indigenous partners, as well as creative and organizational leaders, who are expanding social and cultural narratives for climate action and cultural preservation.

THE NEW NIA TERO BRAND STYLE GUIDE IN ACTION.







CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

CREATIVE FELLOWSHIPS

CREATIVE FELLOWSHIPS

Nia Tero was thrilled to launch the Creative Fellowships in a year when millions of cultural workers experienced significant income loss due to COVID-19. Even as

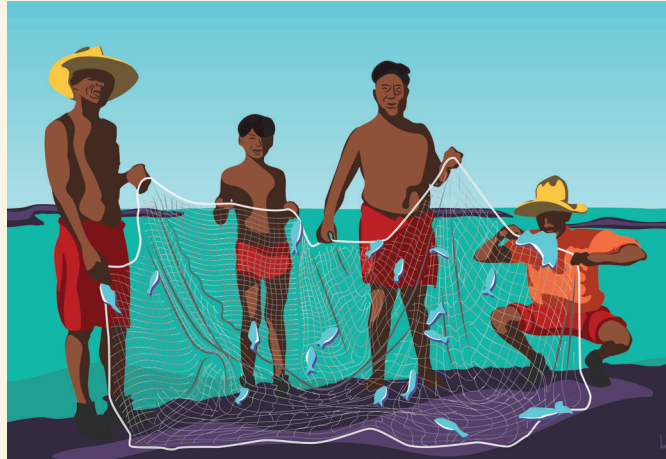
Indigenous populations are being hit especially hard by the pandemic, Indigenous cultural workers are rallying to provide solace and sustenance despite social distance. Whether through video streaming, socially distanced powwows, creative mask making, virtual beading circles, free coloring pages, or educational activities for kids; artists are finding new and innovative ways to gather us together. It is clearer now, more than ever, that art and culture are critically important to the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, which in turn ensures the health of the lands we help steward.

In February, Storytelling announced four Creative Fellowships supporting 24 artists, culture-bearers,

storytellers, and filmmakers who embody the mission of Nia Tero. We worked to collaborate with Fellows by providing supportive platforms, networking, and project development. Each individual brings new awareness to their communities and peoples in shared efforts to protect cultures, the environment, and resources.

These four fellowships include: **Storytelling Fellows**, who are a multi-genre group of experienced artists; **4th World Media Lab Fellows**, which is a cohort of emerging and mid-career filmmakers; **NativeStand Fellows**, who are experienced producers co-supported in partnership with Sundance, ImagineNative, Vision Maker-

PBS, and Pacific Islanders in Communications; and **Pacific Northwest Art Fellows**, a regionally specific fellowship of artists whose work is rooted in environment and identity.



CREATIVE FELLOWSHIPS

Storytelling Fellows (pictured left to right)



Maria Morse-Ortiz (*Pipil*), Kili Yuyan (*Nanai/Hezhe*),
David Hernandez Palmar (*Wayuu*), Mia Kami (*Tongan*),
Princess Daazhrai Johnson (*Neet'saii Gwich'in*),
John Takave (*Rotuman*)

4th World Media Lab Fellows (pictured left to right)



Ashley Solis (*Chicanx*) & Emily Cohen Ibañez (*Colombian-American*),
Asia Youngman (*Cree, Métis, Haudenosaunee*),
Regina Lepping & Georgianna Lepping (*Solomon Islander*),
Chad Charlie (*Ahousaht First Nation*), Alex Sallee (*Iñupiaq*),
Justyn Ah Chong (*Kanaka Maoli*)

CREATIVE FELLOWSHIPS

Pacific Northwest Art Fellows (pictured left to right)

Raven Two Feathers (*Cherokee, Seneca, Cayuga, Comanche*)

Ciara Lacy (*Kanaka Maoli*)

Lehuauakea (*Kanaka Maoli*)

Linley B. Logan (*Onondowaga: People of the Great Hill*)

Danielle Morsette (*Suquamish, Stó:lo*)

Sara Siestreem (*Hanis Coos*)

Jennifer Angaiak Wood (*Yup'ik*)

NativeStand Fellows

Yolanda Cruz (*Chatino*)

Sharlene George (*Ngati Maoate, Ngati*

Tamarua o Takitumu, Ngati Paerangi o Ngamaru)



POLICY

Nia Tero is working with Indigenous peoples around the world to ensure that relevant global, national, and regional policies strongly support Indigenous guardianship, and reflect and align with Indigenous spirituality and culture.

We ultimately expect to see mutually supporting global and national guardianship policies on biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development with Indigenous guardianship at the core of each. This strives to assert there will be no decisions made about Indigenous territories without Indigenous peoples' agreement and deep engagement. Additionally, global commitments to protect thirty percent of the world's land and ocean by 2030 must also require that Indigenous territories are intact, and that Indigenous self-governance is acknowledged and supported by the world.



In 2020, due to travel restrictions and public health concerns related to COVID-19, most global policy meetings scheduled for 2020 were either canceled or postponed.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) forwarded key 2020 meetings to 2021, while the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on the Sustainable Development Goals pushed through to hold its July session through video conferencing. Ongoing engagement and discussions were held and are still anticipated via online platforms for dynamic exchanges, briefings, and consultations from governments and Indigenous partners.

Nia Tero continues to support the work of Indigenous caucuses and leaders through strategy sessions, policy discussions, and preparation of policy papers.

We co-funded the Local Biodiversity Outlooks (LBO), an Indigenous-led publication that documents and analyzes the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to achieve the goals of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). The LBO was launched on 16th September 2020, and was well received by policy makers, Indigenous peoples, and civil society. Key findings from the LBO, reinforced through stories from our Indigenous partners, were highlighted in the October 29th Voices of the Landscape Plenary at the Global Landscapes Forum, an event organized and sponsored by Nia Tero on the theme “Decolonizing Conservation.”

We are taking advantage of the global travel restrictions affecting Indigenous thought leaders and partners by supporting analytical and local-level work on Indigenous guardianship. **Nia Tero commissioned a series of policy studies on all Indigenous**

regions of the world which will assess and analyze existing data, laws, and policies on Indigenous guardianship, identify gaps, and develop recommendations and strategies

to address the gaps. These studies will guide Nia Tero’s policy work, especially in Indigenous regions where we currently do not have place-anchored partnerships. Our Indigenous partners in Suriname and Guyana, the Association of Indigenous Chiefs of Suriname (VIDS) and the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA), will host Nia Tero-supported **policy apprentices**. The team will train the apprentices to engage in local, national, and global policy analysis and advocacy. Joint work is also underway with the

Storytelling Team to produce compelling visual products that will complement and amplify a policy advocacy campaign for Indigenous peoples’ participation and rights in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.



A misty, dark forest with tall, thin trees and a fallen log in the foreground. The scene is atmospheric and somber, with light filtering through the trees.

CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

CRIMINALIZATION & VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

CRIMINALIZATION & VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

With the onset of COVID-19, violence against Indigenous peoples has increased in many areas. Indigenous Peoples Rights International and Global Witness report that documented killings of Indigenous peoples have been on the rise since the Paris Climate Agreement was signed in 2015, with more occurring in Colombia, Brazil and the Philippines than anywhere else.

Nia Tero has made significant advances in assisting with measures to prevent and respond to violence against Indigenous peoples, most notably in catalyzing support for Indigenous Peoples Rights International, a new global organization focused on responding to criminalization and violence against Indigenous peoples, founded by Vicky Tauli-Corpuz and Joan Carling. **Indigenous Peoples Rights International** launched publicly in early August, and is expanding its presence in the Philippines, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the Democratic Republic

of Congo, and India. Nia Tero also supported the establishment of two Indigenous-led rapid response funds in the Colombian and Brazilian Amazon regions. In its first three months, the Colombian fund had already been deployed nine times to Indigenous peoples with urgent security needs, many of them threatened by violent armed groups.

Additionally, we're advancing physical and digital security assessment, training, and implementation assistance for our Amazon partners in Brazil. This is occurring through our support of

Escola de Ativismo together with our funding partner, the Climate and Land Use Alliance. We've completed a security assessment of key Amazon partner organizations and are carrying out a personal security assessment for a selection of Indigenous leaders. As Indigenous territories unfortunately continue to endure multiple pressures, the need for security responses to violence against Indigenous peoples also continues. Thanks to these partners' ongoing efforts, many Indigenous peoples are now better prepared to respond to security threats.

CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

INFRASTRUCTURE & INNOVATION

Our Infrastructure & Innovation strategy focuses on two thematic priorities identified by our external regional advisory councils, and our program team partners: transportation and energy, and technology. Starting with initial R&D investments in 2020, our efforts continue to mature and integrate closely with our regional strategies, as well as our crosscutting work in Program Related Investments (PRIs) and the Technodigenous initiative.



INFRASTRUCTURE & INNOVATION

Transportation/Energy: Our primary focus is to support the design and replication of solar powered watercraft to meet the self-defined needs of our Indigenous partners in the Amazonia and Pasifika regions. Our 2020 R&D grant to Kara Solar, a Quito-based NGO working in close partnership with the Achuar peoples in Ecuadorian Amazonia, has resulted in a reliable prototype that is successfully operated and maintained by local technicians. In 2021, we will test the prototype for scalability and replication with three additional Amazonia regional partners. We have initiated conversations with Pasifika-based Indigenous partners in the Solomon Islands to assess feasibility of replicating a prototype in that ecosystem. These boats offer pathways to reduce dependency on gasoline, improve our partners' transportation self-sufficiency, tap local ingenuity



in design and maintenance, and reduce hard-currency costs in the near and long term.

Technodigenous: In partnership with the Land Tenure Facility, the inaugural Technodigenous event took place in October 2020 with participants from all of Nia Tero's key regions, representing over 15 Indigenous peoples' communities. This convening offered a platform for sharing Indigenous approaches to innovation which affirm cultural practices and ways of being. The event launched a series of additional conversations about Indigenous/Technologist ways of approaching innovation.

Opportunities in 2021 will bring the co-design of practical solutions to address topics identified at the inaugural event, additional gatherings, and a compilation of prudent principles for fruitful Indigenous/Technologist relationships.



CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

PROGRAM RELATED INVESTMENTS

PROGRAM RELATED INVESTMENTS

In 2020, Nia Tero's Program Related Investment (PRI) workstream expanded significantly. Through a partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, we finalized terms for an investment in Raven Indigenous Capital Partners' first fund.

Raven provides seed funds and early-stage equity to purpose-driven Indigenous enterprises across Canada that demonstrate commercial viability, scalability, and measurable community benefit streams. As an Indigenous-led and owned intermediary, Raven is also working diligently to decolonize the investment process for Indigenous entrepreneurs, ensuring cultural relevance and safety at each stage of the process. Following the equity investment with MacArthur, we provided direct grant support to Raven to help build and pilot an impact



indicator for guardianship alongside their existing impact framework.

We anticipate future impact and grant investments with Indigenous-led and trusted non-Indigenous intermediaries and enterprises along three main pathways, including: our priority regions, innovation pilots to test novel ways to support Indigenous enterprises and collectives, and capacity-building support to decolonize impact investment processes and strengthen Indigenous-led intermediaries.

CROSSCUTTING, AMPLIFICATION & SCALING

WAYFINDERS CIRCLE

Through a joint effort with Pawanka Fund and the Council of Spiritual Elders, Nia Tero launched the Wayfinders Circle, a network dedicated to unleashing the transformative potential of Indigenous lifeways, inspiring all people to reimagine development, conservation, and the way they relate to each other and to Mother Earth.

The Wayfinders Circle highlights Indigenous leadership that manifests a time-tested understanding of human responsibility to our planet. The Wayfinders Circle currently includes 12 Indigenous communities from around the world—with the expectation that future partnerships will continue to form—including: the Qqs Projects Society (Heiltsuk Nation, Canada), Warddeken (Australia), Native American Land Conservancy (USA), Blackfoot Confederacy (US/Canada), Achuar Nation (Ecuador), Wampis Autonomous Government (Peru), Mayangna Nation (Nicaragua), Sungai Utik (Indonesia), Udege People (Russia), Sámiid Riikkasearvi (Sweden), and Rapa Nui (Chile). All of the Wayfinders Circle members have strong guardianship of their territories and are eager to learn from each other and influence decision makers through policy and storytelling.

Over the course of the year, Pawanka Fund, Nia Tero, and the Council of Elders developed a manifesto for the

initiative and the guidelines which led to the identification of the Wayfinders Circle members. Due to COVID-19, the team had to adjust the rollout of the initiative. Maximizing opportunities for virtual meetings, we met each Wayfinders



Circle member individually and in group meetings to discuss communications, storytelling, and to better understand the members' collective strengths. This led to a follow-up meeting for cultural exchange to share policy and advocacy experiences.

2021 will be an exciting year for the Wayfinders Circle, as they will be working together on collective advocacy efforts on guardianship, employing their experiences in different parts of the world. It will

also lead to advancements in storytelling approaches to amplify Wayfinders Circle guardianship contributions.

Finally, dynamic exchanges between Wayfinders Circle members will continue to foster collaborative learning and share those learnings within their territories and with other Indigenous peoples.



SCIENCE & LEARNING

BIOCULTURAL MONITORING

Indigenous peoples deserve and require the best possible, and most timely, information about their homes and lands.

One way to help meet these needs is the development of a new, world class, culturally appropriate, and secure information platform designed expressly in collaboration with, by, and for Indigenous peoples and organizations.

BIOCULTURAL MONITORING

When fully implemented, this powerful capability will empower both guardians and their allies to enable collaboration about real time guardianship activity, assisting Indigenous leaders as they inform policy making.

Since the end of 2019, Nia Tero has been working with Conservation Metrics, Terras App, and Tui Shortland—a Maori expert on biocultural metrics—on the development of a monitoring system appropriate for our place-anchored partnerships. This system aims to follow an approach that begins with connecting cultural perspectives to place-based values, knowledge, relationships, and needs; and recognizes mutual interdependence between ecological states and human wellbeing.

In 2020, a beta-version of the system was developed which enables Indigenous peoples to track how they are

thriving based on their self-determined vision of wellbeing, how their territories are thriving rooted in land-use and land-cover, and other environmental changes. In 2020,

we expanded the definition of high-level biocultural metrics and developed high-level protocols ensuring Indigenous peoples engage in the use of the monitoring system on their own terms; however COVID-19 delayed the progress on testing this biocultural approach on the ground.

In 2021 we expect to advance testing of the biocultural approach to monitoring in two Indigenous territories in Amazonia, where partners are eager to have a system supporting their territorial protection efforts. We also hope

to offer to other Indigenous partners the opportunity to access this system in 2021 to track ecosystem changes within their territories.



A group of Indigenous men are gathered around a campfire at night. The fire is bright and central, illuminating the scene. The men are shirtless and appear to be in traditional or simple clothing. They are sitting on the ground, looking towards the fire or each other. The background is dark, suggesting a nighttime setting in a natural environment.

PRACTICING RECIPROCITY

INDIGENOUS WAYS & MEANS

We look to Indigenous Ways and Means to create equitable spaces for meeting and gathering, and as a way to create opportunities and environments best suited for learning through Indigenous peoples' stories, knowledge, and sovereignty.

INDIGENOUS WAYS AND MEANS

It is our hope that the story of this annual report illustrates how interwoven reciprocity and storytelling are as guiding principles for Nia Tero. As an organization, we seek to embody these practices in all our efforts and relationships.

Another practice Nia Tero has developed, to root and infuse our principles throughout all we do, is what we call Indigenous Ways and Means. We look to Indigenous Ways and Means to create equitable spaces for meeting and gathering, and as a way to create opportunities and environments best suited for learning through Indigenous peoples' stories, knowledge, and sovereignty.

Global awareness is growing.

This year in Paris, 50 heads of state signed an agreement in support of Indigenous peoples, acknowledging the deep interconnection of climate justice with social justice. Culturally, there's been a great leap in understanding the role that Indigenous territories must play in both mitigating climate change (such as the way forests absorb carbon



from the atmosphere) and adapting to the changes that are already occurring. What we must insist upon, and persist in, is the willpower and resolve necessary to return the right of self-determination and self-governance to Indigenous peoples and the understanding that to grant these rights to Indigenous peoples is both the just and the wise commitment all nation states must make.

Going forward into 2021 and beyond, our work needs to deeply underscore the critical importance of supporting Indigenous territorial guardianship for all humanity, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Increasing our collective societal awareness that social justice is security for the natural world is

essential to combat climate change.

This is a fundamental objective of Nia Tero. We believe that it is in the enlightened self-interest of all beings who live on Earth for us, as humans, to unite around the determined efforts of Indigenous peoples to exercise their sovereign rights to protect their territories.



STRATEGY & ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

2020 FINANCES

Behind every number there is a story. Our annual reporting in finance aims to tell those stories of community, outreach, and impact in 2020.

We are grateful to have been able to continue to nurture the growth of our partnerships and programs in spite of an unprecedented and challenging

year. The local and global impact of COVID-19, and the need to organize an appropriate and effective response, dominated all aspects of our work as an organization. For example, as Nia Tero pivoted towards virtual platform gathering and planning, we decreased all expenses in Travel, Meetings, and Convenings. But we also adapted to increase financial support of our partners, and expanded the number



of our grant investments, from 70 in 2019 to a robust 164 in 2020. A total of 39 of these grants were

COVID-19 response grants. And 84% of total spending in 2020 directly supported our programmatic work and initiatives.

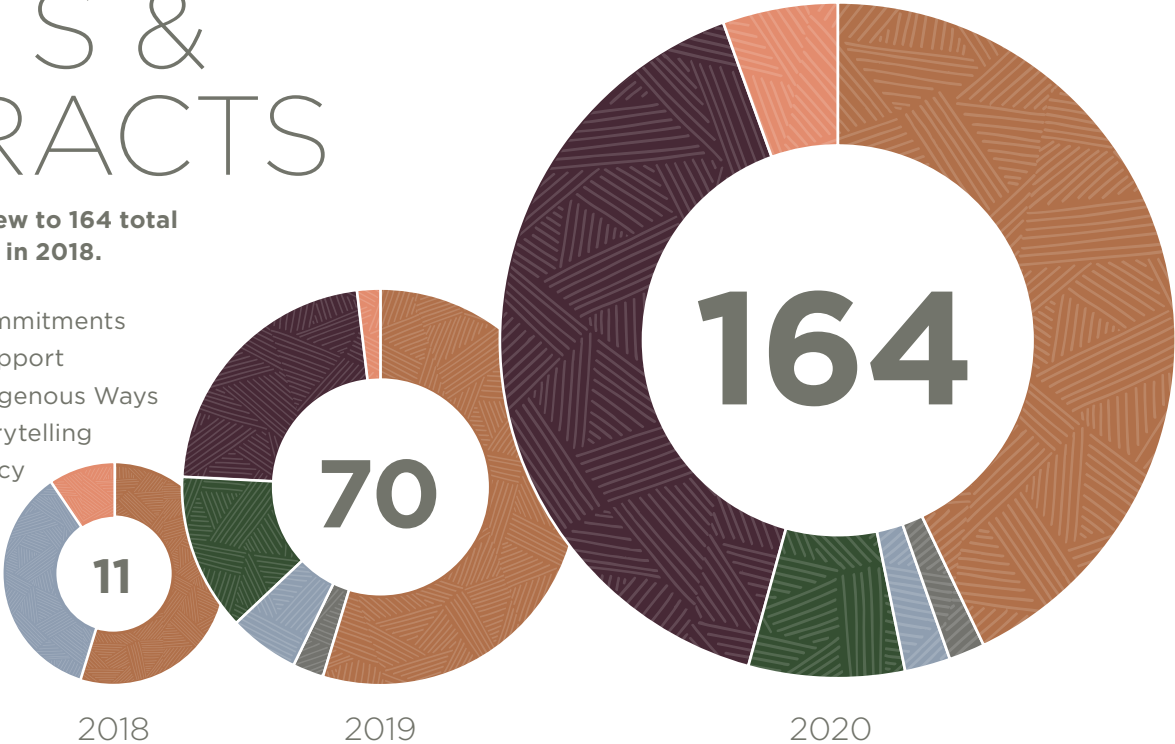
We are proud to be able to contribute this support to our partners and programs in the elevation and amplification of Indigenous-led efforts towards sovereignty and worldwide change.

Now, looking ahead, we are eager and excited to see what our ongoing collaborations bring in 2021 and beyond.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

2020 grants and contracts grew to 164 total grants, from 70 in 2019 and 11 in 2018.

- Place Anchored: Shared Commitments
- Place Anchored: Durable Support
- Amplification & Scaling: Indigenous Ways
- Amplification & Scaling: Storytelling
- Amplification & Scaling: Policy
- Science & Learning

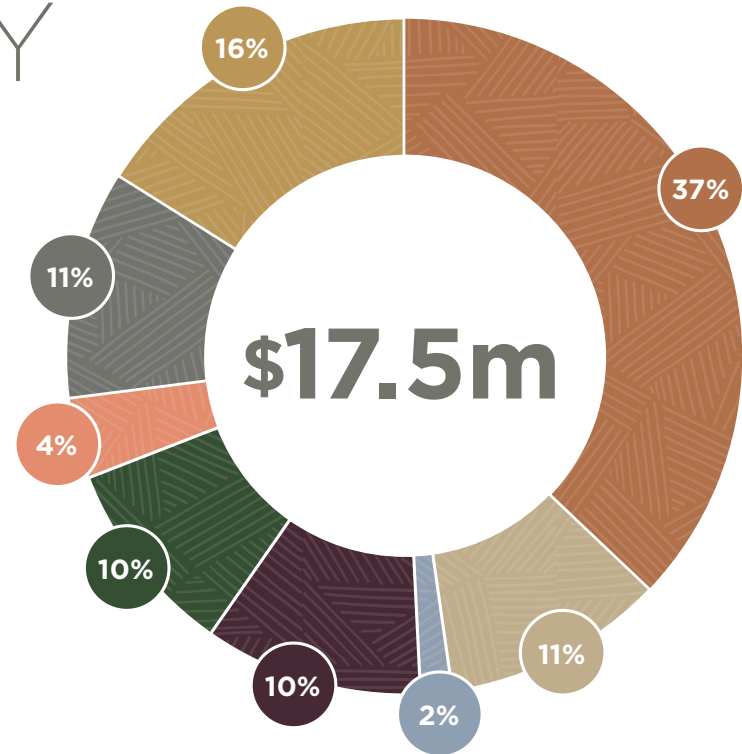


**2020 finance numbers
are pending finalization*

SUBSTRATEGY EXPENSES

Percentage of total substrategy expenses for 2020 are as follows:

- Place Anchored: Shared Commitments - 37%
- Place Anchored: Durable Support - 11%
- Amplification & Scaling: Indigenous Ways - 2%
- Amplification & Scaling: Storytelling - 10%
- Amplification & Scaling: Policy - 10%
- Science & Learning - 4%
- Program Team - 11%
- Management - 16%



**2020 finance numbers are pending finalization*

COVID-19 RESPONSE GRANTS

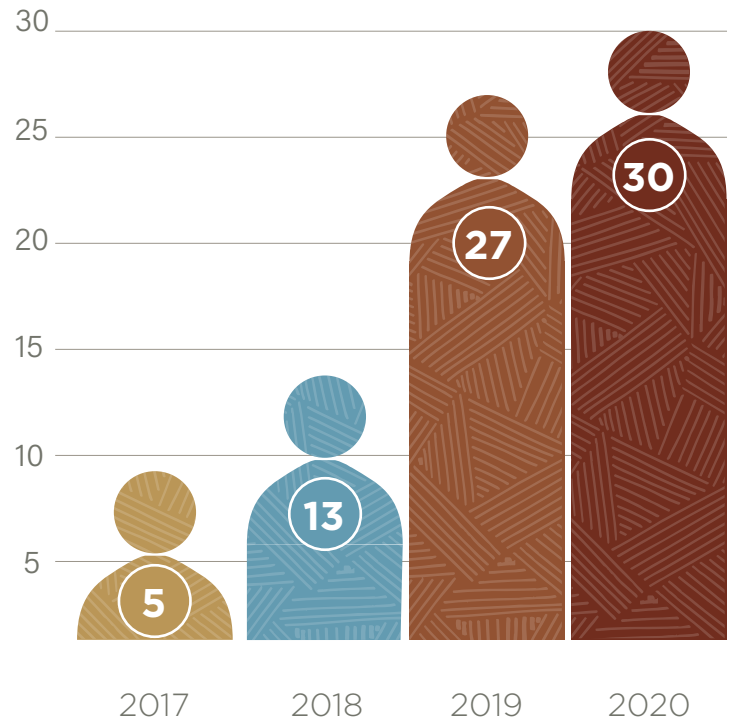
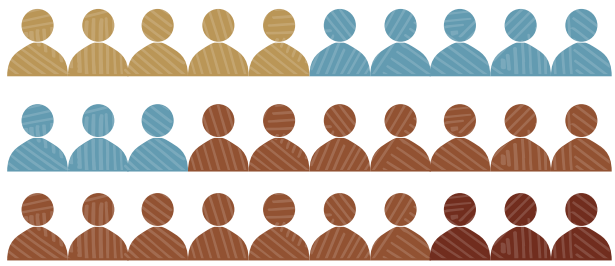
Nia Tero's COVID Response granting activity in 2020 had global outreach, spanning the three primary regions where we work, plus regional grants closer to our headquarters in the Pacific Northwest, and around the world. **Out of 164 total grants in 2020, 39 grants represent a wide range of COVID-specific responses,** from supporting communication and awareness in Pasifika, to rapid response emergency funds in Amazonia, emergency food, supply systems, and personal protective equipment.



TEAM GROWTH

From 5 to 30 in four years

In 2017, our foundational team was a cohort of only five, and now three years later we have seen our team grow to a thriving hub of 30 team members.



APPENDIX

Board of Directors (pictured left to right)



Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, *Board Chair (Kankanaey Igorot, Philippines)*

Paul Klingenstein, *Vice Chair*

Mandy Bayha (*Sahtúgot'ine, Canada*)

Michael Crow

Myrna Cunningham Kain (*Miskita, Nicaragua*)

Laurene Powell Jobs

Peter Seligmann, *CEO*

Kevin Starr

Nainoa Thompson (*Kanaka Maoli*)

Nemonte Nenquimo (*Waorani*)

Joseph Williams (*Māori, New Zealand*)

Advisory Council (pictured left to right)



Dominique Bikaba (*Bashi Tribe, Eastern Congo, DRC*)

Joji Cariño (*Ibaloi-Igorot, Philippines*)

Viviana Figueroa (*Omaguaca-Kolla, Argentina*)

Laura Hattendorf

Ole Kaunga Mali (*Laikipia Maasai, Kenya*)

Aroha Mead (*Māori, Aotearoa/New Zealand*)

Sherri Mitchell (*Penobscot/Penawahpskek, USA*)

Stephanie Platz

Ralph Regenvanu (*Uripiv of Malakua Island, Vanuatu*)

Gunn-Britt Retter (*Saami, Norway*)

About Nia Tero

We are a US-based non-profit working alongside Indigenous peoples and movements worldwide. Our governing bodies, leadership and staff are of diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities and life experiences. We view this diversity as a source of our strength as a bridging institution, committed to an antiracist and inclusive culture centering Indigenous rights, wisdom, practices, worldviews and protocols.

Mission

Securing Indigenous guardianship of vital ecosystems.

Reciprocity Definition

Nia Tero views reciprocity as the way of life that centers mutual exchange and sharing amongst all beings, past, present and future, seen and unseen, and the Earth.

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Gratitude & Credits

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