



A Year of Braiding

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Welcome



Aloha mai kākou,

As CEO of Nia Tero, I am thrilled to share our 2025 Annual Report.

Nia Tero is a global facilitator of direct funding, technical training and organizational strengthening in support of Indigenous Peoples' guardianship everywhere possible on Earth.

Why? Because the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss threaten us all. The science is clear: the healthiest places left on Earth are still cared for by Indigenous Peoples who have always known how to safeguard their lands and waters.

And more than that, Indigenous Peoples' guardianship is the only time-tested solution for a livable planet.

Braiding and weaving happen across cultures - from grass and bark to wool and even hair. It's a practice that is both modern and evolving but rooted in ancient wisdom.

Here at Nia Tero, we weave as well. Braiding hands-on support with traditional knowledge and contemporary mechanisms to forge a better future than the path we are on.

Please enjoy our annual report to find out more about our work with partners and allies in 2025.

Mahalo,

'AULANI WILHELM (Kanaka 'Ōiwi, Hawai'i)
Chief Executive Officer



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Kia ora and hello Nia Tero supporter,

Whether you're an Indigenous partner, donor, advocate, ally or other stakeholder in our work, I thank you for taking the time to learn more about Nia Tero's footprint in 2025.

Fittingly, this year's "Braids" theme offers an opportunity to see how all our work and Five-Year Strategy are interconnected by an important and consistent throughline - advancing Indigenous Peoples' guardianship.

Our planet needs Indigenous knowledge now more than ever to guide us through the crises that threaten the health of the world we leave behind for future generations. The work our Indigenous partners are doing across the globe is rooted in the understanding that living in reciprocity with the places they call home is the only time-tested and effective pathway forward.

Next year marks our 10th anniversary as an organization. To succeed in supporting our Indigenous partners now and for years to come, we need your help. Again, thank you for joining us on this journey.

JOE WILLIAMS (Māori, Aotearoa)
Nia Tero Board Chair



Vision

Enable Indigenous Peoples' guardianship everywhere possible on Earth as part of a just and vibrant future.

40% of the world's remaining large, intact ecosystems are found within lands and waters sustained by Indigenous Peoples.

40%



Mission

Directly support Indigenous Peoples' guardianship and elevate the role and influence of Indigenous Peoples as essential to ensuring planetary health and habitability.

2025 - A Year of Braiding

Nia Tero continued the important work of interlacing People, Places and Policy in 2025 to strengthen and grow Indigenous Peoples' guardianship globally.

The braid derives its power from our Five-Year Strategy, which launched at the beginning of 2025 and includes three simple but ambitious goals:

FIRST STRAND

Assemblage of Partnerships

- Guardianship of Place
- Regional Networks & Hubs
- Organizational Strengthening

SECOND STRAND

Influence & Amplify

- Integrated Communications
- Policy & Advocacy
- Research & Evaluation

THIRD STRAND

Strengthen Nia Tero

- Program Delivery
- Fundraising
- Management



Assemblage of Partnerships

Guardianship of Place • Regional Networks & Hubs • Organizational Strengthening

The first strand of Nia Tero's braid originates in the regions where we work and from the people and partners we engage.

We call this strand the “Assemblage of Partnerships.”



NIA TERO KEY REGIONS
We partner with Indigenous Peoples across the Pasifik, Amazonia, North America and Africa.

WAYFINDERS CIRCLE
We collaborate with Indigenous Peoples from 15 territories around the globe, connecting communities dedicated to protecting their lands and waters.

Amazonia

\$14M+
IN GRANTS

69.8M
HECTARES

64
PARTNERS

Nia Tero works with our partners to advance Indigenous Peoples' guardianship of the Amazon – home to the world's largest tropical rainforest and a biome nearly the size of the contiguous United States.

2025 HIGHLIGHT
With financial, technical and policy support from Nia Tero, the Indigenous Peoples of the Kaxuyana-Tunayana communities won an important 20-year battle for official recognition, or “demarcation,” of traditional territory under law in Brazil and the announcement dominated news at COP30 in Belém. [READ MORE](#)

“The future of the Amazon is inseparable from the futures of the Indigenous Peoples who have shaped it for generations. Nia Tero stands alongside them, and is inspired and guided by their leadership and vision.”

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

DANIELA LERDA —
Amazonia Lead



Casa Maraká serves as a place for Indigenous Media Makers to gather as well as create and own their stories. (2 mins.)

Pasifik

 **\$2.8M+**
IN GRANTS

 **9.2M+**
HECTARES OF
LANDS AND WATERS

 **29**
PARTNERS

Nia Tero works with partners in the Pasifik whose guardianship has protected their ancestral lands and waters for millennia.

2025 HIGHLIGHT

The International Court of Justice issued a landmark ruling affirming that countries have a legal obligation to address climate change. This historic victory was shaped by Nia Tero partner Blue Ocean Law, with decisive support from Vanuatu's Minister of Climate Change, Ralph Regenvanu, a member of Nia Tero's Advisory Council. [READ MORE](#)



VIDEO HIGHLIGHT

The Islands Knowledge Institute convened leaders to discuss Indigenous Constitutionalism. (3 mins.)

“

The Pasifik is vast and diverse, with thousands of largely majority-Indigenous islands with distinct knowledge, languages, cultures and customs. Nia Tero's work with Indigenous Peoples of the Pasifik is rooted in an understanding that they are the best time-tested guardians of their territories.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

LYSA WINI —
(Solomon Islands)
Pasifik Lead



Portrait by Alex Robinson (Nansemond) / Nia Tero

North America

 **\$1.7M+**
IN GRANTS

 **22.6M**
HECTARES

 **10**
PARTNERS

Nia Tero partners with Tribes, First Nations and Native-led organizations throughout North America to strengthen their guardianship in ways that respect Indigenous sovereignty.

2025 HIGHLIGHT

The Heiltsuk Nation in northern British Columbia, Canada merges Indigenous knowledge with contemporary marine science to monitor marine ecosystems, enforce stewardship laws and protect critical habitats. [READ MORE](#)



VIDEO HIGHLIGHT

Blackfeet ECO Knowledge embarked on an extensive Virtual Reality project to share generational knowledge. (3 mins.)

Portrait by Alex Robinson (Nansemond) / Nia Tero

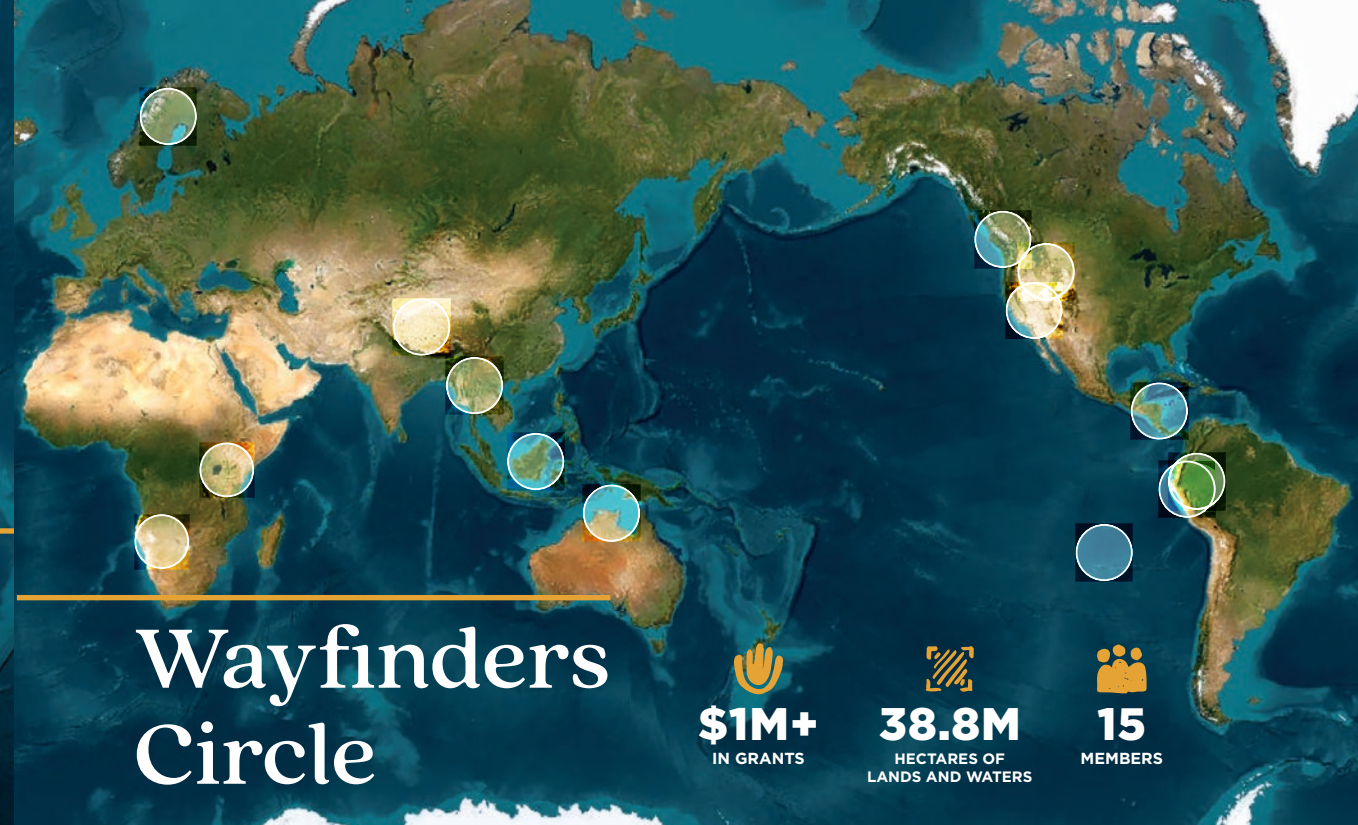
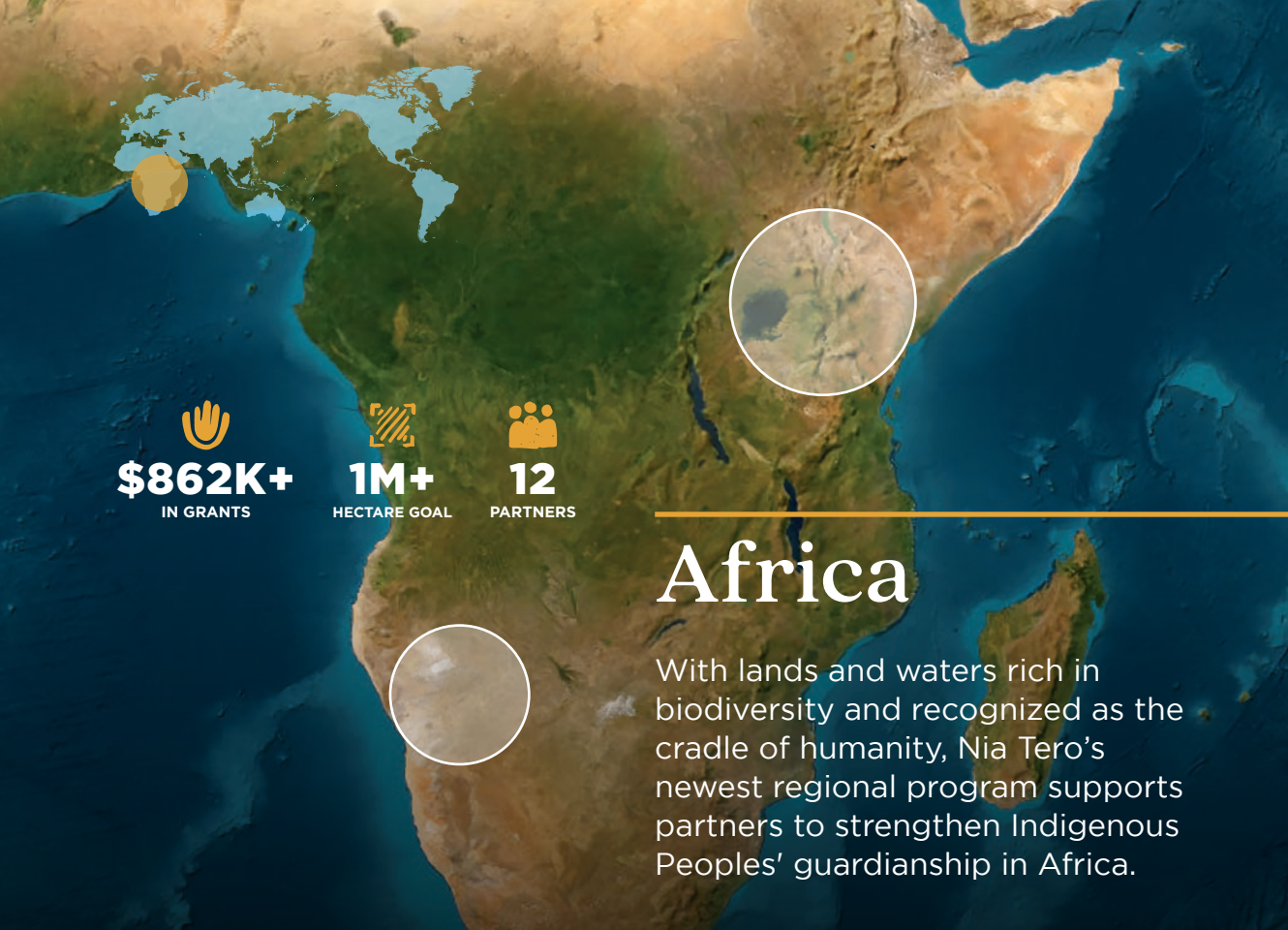
“

Nia Tero works with key partners to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' guardianship in North America by reinforcing tribal sovereignty, supporting cultural revitalization, undoing the harms of colonialism and more. Guardianship is a multifaceted action plan amplified by these key partnerships.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

NICHLAS EMMONS —
North America Lead





“

Our Africa program approach begins with understanding the interconnection of Indigenous Peoples and the places they call home. We work with partners to strengthen their guardianship of ancestral lands and waters in a way that respects Indigenous Peoples' self-determination.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



— KENDI BORONA
Africa Lead

2025 HIGHLIGHT

Nia Tero established a new Africa program in 2025 to focus on growing partnerships, strengthening communities and strategic storytelling with the goal of ensuring 1 million hectares of homelands are under the guardianship of Indigenous pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. [READ MORE](#)



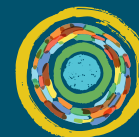
An excerpt from the upcoming short documentary made in partnership with the Gabbra people. (3 mins.)

Wayfinders Circle

The Wayfinders Circle is a global network of Indigenous Peoples committed to caring for Earth. It is supported by Nia Tero, the Pawanka Fund and the World Union of Indigenous Spiritual Practitioners.

2025 HIGHLIGHT

Wayfinders Circle members gathered in the village of Sungai Utik in Indonesian Borneo to experience daily life, practice ceremony and discuss the vital transmission of knowledge from elders to youth. [READ MORE](#)



WAYFINDERS
CIRCLE

Learn more at
WayfindersCircle.org

— MARIANA LÓPEZ
Wayfinders Circle
Facilitator



In 2025, the Wayfinders Circle marked five years as a successful initiative. (4 mins.)

“

The Wayfinders Circle first convened on Zoom because of the pandemic. Now, five years later, it is a close-knit network of Indigenous Peoples from around the world sharing ancestral wisdom that is essential for addressing today's most pressing problems.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Influence & Amplify

Integrated Communications • Policy & Advocacy • Research & Evaluation

The second major strand in our Five-Year Strategy weaves Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship into the fields of conservation, development, philanthropy and social justice to influence decision making and amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples globally.

We call this strand of the braid “Influence & Amplify.”

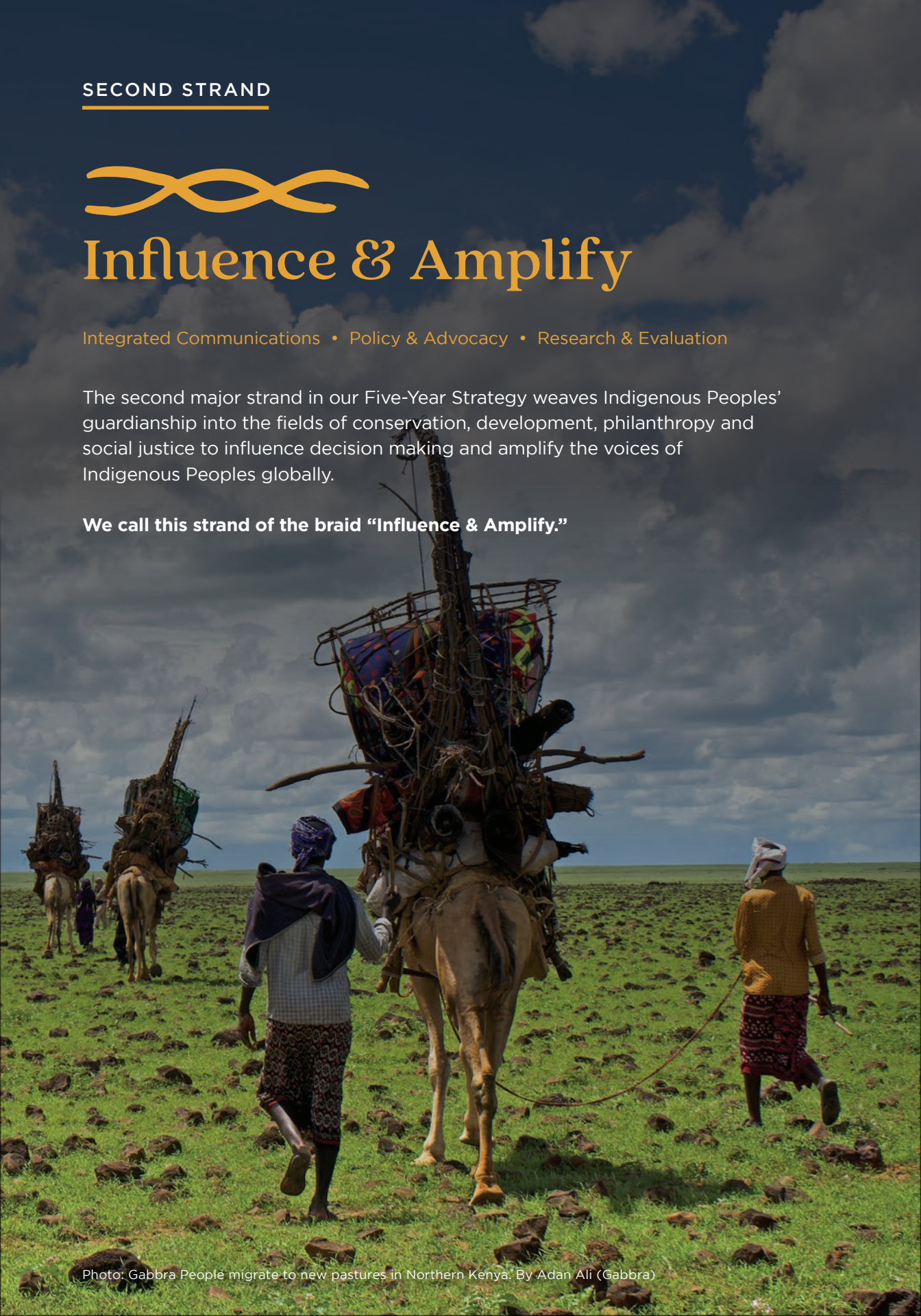


Photo: Gabbra People migrate to new pastures in Northern Kenya. By Adan Ali (Gabbra)

Integrated Communications


103
FILM FESTIVAL
SCREENINGS GLOBALLY


1,200
SOCIAL MEDIA
POSTS


5.1M
IMPRESSIONS

Nia Tero premiered the award-winning feature documentary “Remathau: People of the Ocean” at the Hawai’i International Film Festival, where the film took home one of the top prizes.

Nia Tero brings its unique capacity to multiple platforms, including premiering the feature documentary “Remathau: People of the Ocean” at HIFF, where it took home the coveted Pasifika Award. [READ MORE](#)



A quick look back at the integrated communications team’s success in 2025 (1 min).

“

We collaborate with our Indigenous partners and their allies to co-create powerful content that has the potential to reach broad audiences. Our collective goal is to tell the rich variety of stories about the people and communities leading the charge to protect their homelands and waters.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BRYAN COLE —
Director of Content and Communications



Policy & Advocacy


20
TRAINING
SESSIONS


7,500
REGISTRANTS


100
COUNTRIES/
TERRITORIES

Nia Tero lowers barriers Indigenous Peoples face in policymaking by amplifying Indigenous voices in regional, national and international policy arenas.

2025 HIGHLIGHT

Nia Tero’s Policy Team and partners held more than 20 hybrid training sessions to strengthen Indigenous Peoples’ representation in global forums with 7,500 registrants representing 100 territories – a new record. [READ MORE](#)



The “Promise” campaign calls attention to the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship in protecting Earth’s biodiversity. (4 mins.)



Indigenous Peoples’ rights must be respected in global policy forums because they hold up our planet for all of us. Yet, they face constant existential threat. That is why Nia Tero is committed to advancing effective Indigenous representation in policy spaces where decisions are made that ultimately affect Indigenous Peoples’ futures.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

CARMEN GUERRA —
(Kankuama, Colombia)
Nia Tero Policy Manager



Research & Evaluation

Across fields of study, research supports a foundational universal tenet of Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship – that reciprocity-rooted relationships with our planet’s lands and waters are vital for our collective health. Investing in research and measuring the impact of Indigenous knowledge and lifeways is a key part of our Five-Year Strategy.


\$1.1M
INVESTED
IN 2025


9
INDIGENOUS
ACADEMIC AUTHORS


4
INITIAL INSTITUTIONAL
PARTNERS

Nia Tero’s Research Team focused in 2025 on: Laying the groundwork for Indigenous Peoples’ Guardianship as a recognized field of study; Amplifying Indigenous voices in academic research and publications; And increasing the visibility of Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship with partners including the American Museum of Natural History, Arizona State University and the California Academy of Sciences. [READ MORE](#)



Despite countless threats to their lives, rights and the places they call home, Indigenous Peoples have long held up the planet for all of us. (3 mins)



There is growing consensus that Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship is vital for our planet’s health and habitability. This is not anecdotal. The research on this is increasingly clear.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

CHRIS FILARDI —
Chief Research Officer





Strengthen Nia Tero

Program Delivery • Fundraising • Management

Nia Tero’s weave of global impact depends upon our strength as an organization and our relationships with our partners, allies and donors.

We refer to this third and final strand of our work as “Strengthen Nia Tero.”

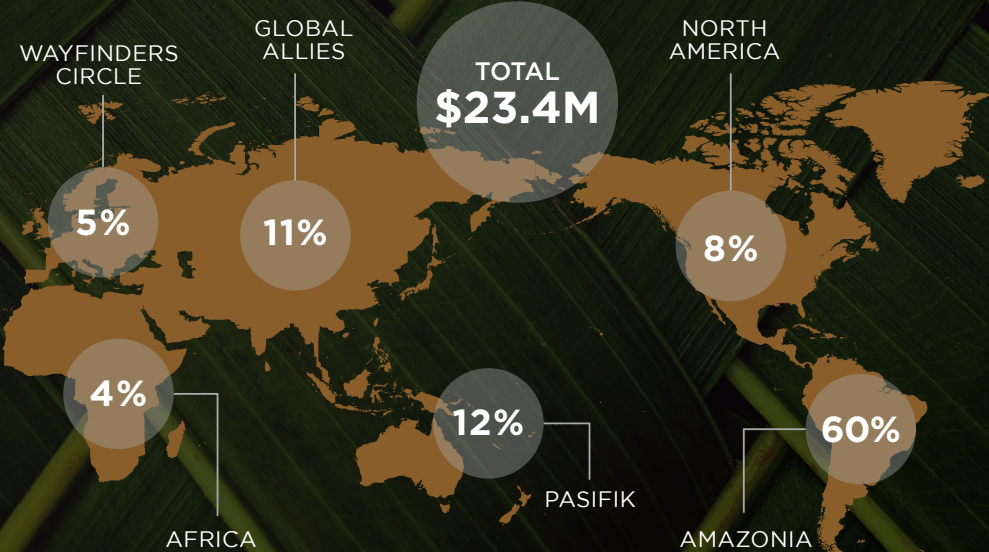
FINANCIALS

This strand ties together our financial commitment to our partners in the form of direct funding and technical support with our program delivery and management. All supporting Indigenous Peoples’ guardianship everywhere possible on Earth.

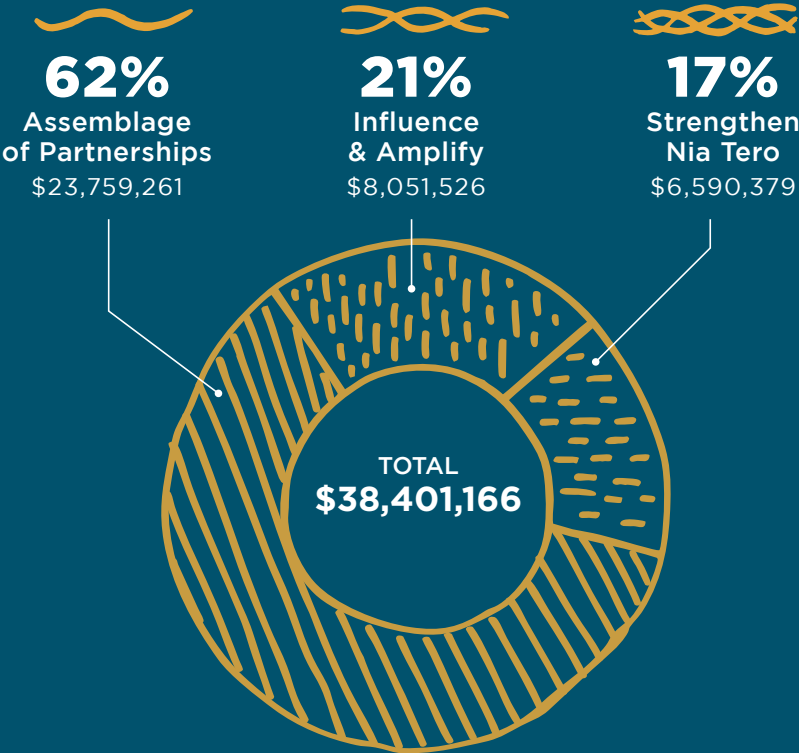


GRANTS BY REGION

Grants also weave into our commitment to organizational strengthening by helping build regional hubs and networks for Indigenous-led organizations and their allies.



Expenses by Strand



2025 NIA TERO’S BRAID OF GLOBAL IMPACT

274
Distinct Indigenous Peoples

236
Grants (Includes Multi-year Grants)

90
Organizations Awarded Grants

130M+
Hectares of Lands and Waters Under Indigenous Peoples’ Guardianship

46
Biocultural Settings Supported

24.4
Gigatons of CO₂ Sequestered

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Statement of activities and changes in net assets for the year ended December 31, 2025.

	2025			2024	2023
	Without Restrictions	With Restrictions	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
SUPPORT AND REVENUE					
Contributions & Grants	5,993,005	27,773,298	33,766,303	31,017,971	23,443,794
Interest & Investments Loss, Net	2,748,732	-	2,748,732	3,445,932	3,928,539
Other Revenue (Loss)	(3,794)	-	(3,794)	215,368	62,805
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	(9,509)
Net Assets Released from Donor Restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Other Gain/(Loss)	-	-	-	(1,197,187)	-
Total Support & Revenue	8,737,943	27,773,298		33,482,084	27,425,629
TOTAL EXPENSES					
PROGRAM SERVICES					
Place-Anchored Partnerships	23,759,261	-	23,759,261	23,816,044	22,602,409
Amplification and Scaling	8,051,526	-	8,051,526	8,642,126	10,761,046
Science and Learning	-	-	-	1,178,721	1,037,440
Programs Overall	1,277,526	-	1,277,526	2,896,293	2,284,660
Total Program Services	33,088,313	-	33,088,313	36,533,184	36,685,555
SUPPORTING SERVICES					
Management and General	4,404,173	-	4,404,173	4,729,818	5,403,454
Fundraising	908,680	-	908,680	1,069,972	835,137
Total Supporting Services	5,312,853	-	5,312,853	5,799,790	6,238,591
Total Expenses	38,401,166	-	38,401,166	42,332,974	42,924,146
Total Changes in Net Assets	(29,663,223)	27,773,298	(1,889,925)	(8,850,890)	(15,498,517)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	58,532,975	16,424,559	74,957,534	83,808,424	99,306,941
Net Assets - End of Year	28,869,752	44,197,857	73,067,609	74,957,534	83,808,424

Leadership

Nia Tero is headquartered in Seattle in the U.S., with our Executive Team based in the Pasifik and North America.

Our Executive Team and Board of Directors include Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders with expertise in a variety of fields. The Board’s Indigenous representation includes the Cherokee, Māori, Miskita, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, Quinault, Kankanaey Igorot, Waorani and Wayana Peoples. The Board provides oversight and sets policy for the entire organization.

Our global Advisory Council, comprised of Indigenous leaders and allies from around the world, provides additional guidance and wisdom to our executives and Board.

EXECUTIVE TEAM **‘Aulani Wilhelm** (Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, Hawai’i), Chief Executive Officer
Chris Filardi, Chief Research Officer
Jessica Schroeder, Chief Administrative Officer
Kāwika Riley (Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, Hawai’i), Chief Communications and Engagement Officer
Lauren Guzauskas, Chief Development Officer
Margarita Mora, Chief Program Officer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **Anne Marie Burgoyne**
Brenda Toineeta Pipestem (Cherokee, U.S.)
Fawn Sharp (Quinault, U.S.)
Joseph Williams (Māori, Aotearoa)
Jupta Itoewaki (Wayana, Suriname)
Michael Crow
Myrna Cunningham Kain (Miskita, Nicaragua)
Nainoa Thompson (Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, Hawai’i)
Nemonte Nenquimo (Waorani, Ecuador)
Peter Seligmann
Roger Sant
Vicky Tauli-Corpuz (Kankanaey Igorot, Philippines)
Yo-Yo Ma

ADVISORY COUNCIL **Aroha Te Pareake Mead** (Māori, Aotearoa)
Dominique Bikaba (Bashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Gunn-Britt Retter (Saami, Norway)
Joji Cariño (Ibaloi-Igorot, Philippines)
Laura Hattendorf
Ole Kaunga Mali (Maasai, Kenya)
Ralph Regenvanu (Uripiv of Malakua Island, Vanuatu)
Sherri Mitchell (Penobscot, U.S.)
Stephanie Platz
Viviana Figueroa (Omaguaca-Kolla, Argentina)



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Annual Report

