

# Restoring Balance for the Wellbeing of Humanity and the Environment

A GLOBAL INDIGENOUS COLLABORATIVE

---

*Strategic Plan 2023-2024*



# Indigenous Communities Know the Way Forward

Indigenous identities and knowledge systems, in all their diversity, are intricately woven within and across our ancestral lands and waters. They are the means upon which our cultural, physical, and spiritual survival depends. Because of this interconnection, climate change is disproportionately impacting Indigenous wellbeing.

In 2022, Red Star International, Inc. (Red Star) formed the *Restoring Balance Collaborative*, a global multi-sector practice community. The *Collaborative's* purpose is to advance Indigenous-led systems transformation to meaningfully address health and critical responses to ecosystems under threat.

Now is the time to deconstruct the systems and practices that reinforce colonialism and perpetuate inequities. Indigenous-led knowledge systems are needed to inform legal, regulatory, policy, and practical approaches to ensure an abundant future.

Join us as we journey in partnership with Indigenous Nations, organizations and communities to heal, reclaim and transform systems to ensure a healthy future for the coming generations.

Aleena M. Kawe, MPH (Yoeme)  
*President & CEO*

*“Indigenous resilience for a sustainable environment – the diversity that sits amongst the collective group and shared experiences – it all has value – it is a recognition of Indigenous values and laws.”*  
- Collaborative Member





# About the Collaborative

Indigenous Peoples are leading systems change within their own communities and there is great value in coming together as a global practice community. The Restoring Balance Collaborative is a global multisector community that connects, expands, and strengthens local, regional, and national networks by creating a space for idea exchange.

Red Star serves as the backbone organization – the coordinating body – that works to lead a synchronized effort towards our shared aspirations and goals. Guided by an international advisory council, the *Collaborative* provides a shared space, or ‘hub’, for people to:

1. Generate and explore ideas in a collaborative environment.
2. Solve challenging problems through dialogue and exchange.
3. Connect with people who share similar aspirations.
4. Create new, mutually beneficial opportunities to network.
5. Contribute individual strengths to support collective impact.

Although our local contexts are different, our communities face similar challenges and we can draw strength from each other.

*“We know the value of a local collaborative. A global collaborative elevates and supports our local efforts, while building confidence that we are on the right path.”*  
- Collaborative Member



## Advisory Council listed in order of appearance:

- Kelley Lehuakeapuna Uyeoka (Kanaka ‘Ōiwi) Executive Director, Huliauapa’a, Hawai’i
- Judith LeBlanc (Caddo) Executive Director, Native Organizers Alliance, U.S.
- Julia Bernal, (Pueblo/Yuchi-Creek), Executive Director, Pueblo Action Alliance, U.S.
- Ken Paul (Wolastoqey) Lead Fisheries Negotiator and Fisheries Research Coordinator, Wolastoqey Nation, Canada
- Keria Ponga and Turama Hawira, Te Pou Tupua (Face and Voice of the Whanganui River) Aotearoa/New Zealand
- Shannon Seneca (Haudenosaunee-Kanyen’kehà:ka), Assistant Faculty, Center for Indigenous Cancer Research, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, U.S.



# Why Indigenous-Led Systems Change



Indigenous Peoples are inherently sovereign and have the right to determine their future. *(UNDRIP\*\*)*



Natural areas managed by Indigenous Peoples are declining less rapidly. *(IPBES\*\*\*)*



Indigenous Peoples protect 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity. *(The World Bank)*



Indigenous Peoples contribute the least, but are impacted most by climate change.

*(United Nations)*



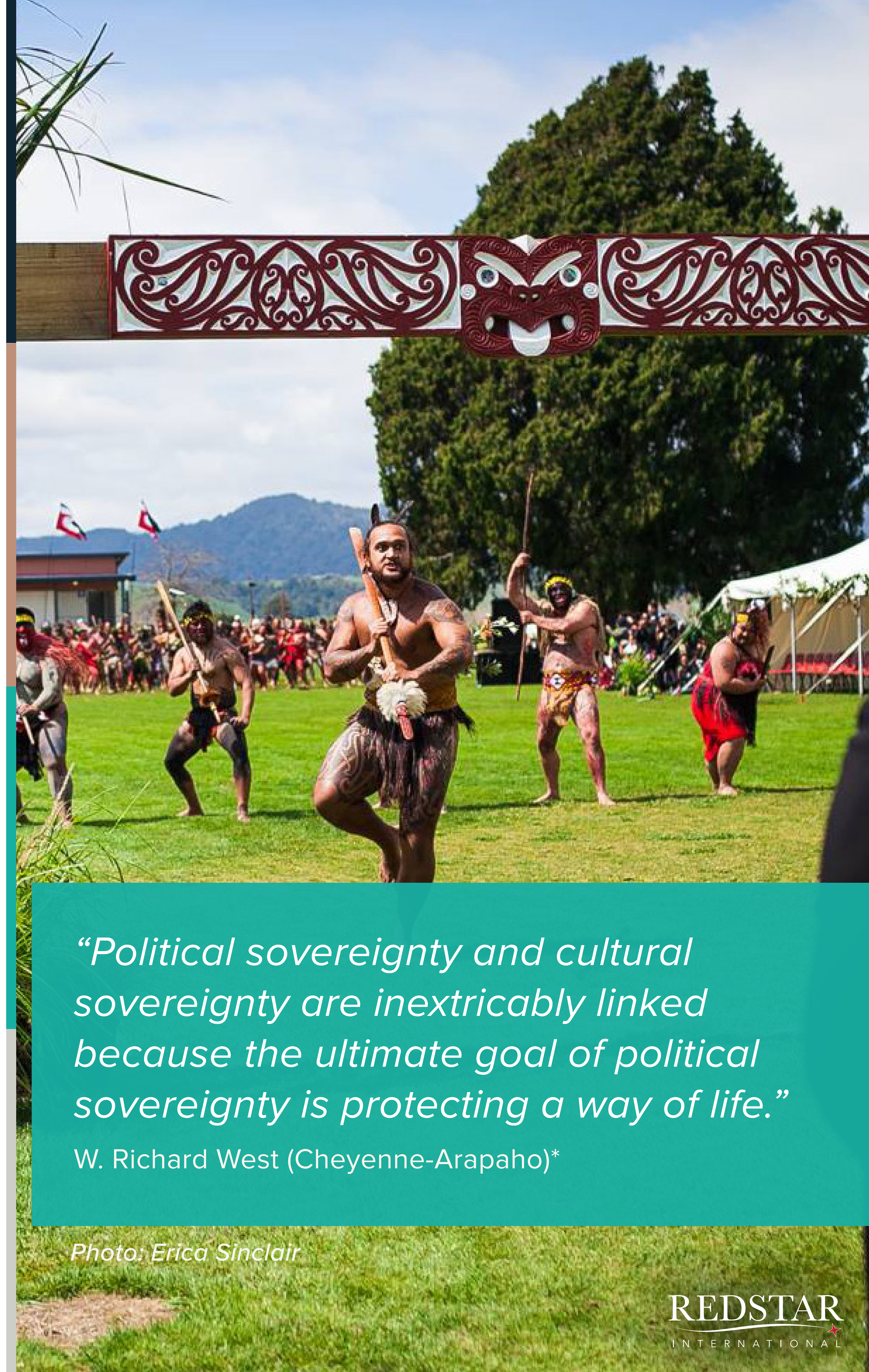
Indigenous knowledge systems are key to designing a sustainable future for all.

*(International Institute for Sustainable Development)*

\* Cited by Michelle Hibbert, Galileos or Grave Robbers Science, the NAGPRA and the First Amendment. 23 American Indian Law Review (1998/1999).

\*\* United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

\*\*\* Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services



*“Political sovereignty and cultural sovereignty are inextricably linked because the ultimate goal of political sovereignty is protecting a way of life.”*

W. Richard West (Cheyenne-Arapaho)\*

*Photo: Erica Sinclair*





# Challenges at the Interface

Systemic and institutional barriers severely limit Indigenous peoples' ability to sustain and transmit traditional knowledge and practices. Barriers include restricted access to traditional territories, exclusive policies and programs, and limited investments in capacity.

Other common barriers found at the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems include:

- **Failure to recognize sovereignty**
- **Impact of colonization**
- **Lack of collaboration**
- **Dismissiveness**
- **Differential investments**



# Restoring balance through Indigenous-led systems transformation

## Vision

Healthy and vibrant Indigenous communities.

## Mission

To advance Indigenous self-determination for the wellbeing of humanity and the environment

## Values

**Self-Determination:** Respect Indigenous peoples' right to determine their future.

**Indigenous Wisdom:** Prioritize local knowledge, values, and practices.

**Relational Accountability:** Nurture relationships built on mutual respect and cooperation.

**Collective Will:** Uphold shared aspirations through dedication and perseverance.

**Guardianship:** Protect and care for the well-being of humanity and the earth.





# **Our Focus** **Building A** **Practice** **Community**

1

## **Indigenous Agency**

Indigenous-led space for learning, sharing and strategizing.

2

## **Multidirectional Learning**

Facilitate learning with allies to advance equity and ecosystem resilience.

3

## **Global Connections**

Highlight local Indigenous-led systems change.





*Photo: Mauna a Wākea with host Mauna Kea Education and Awareness*

1

# Indigenous Agency

Sharing diverse knowledge systems generates an enriched understanding of the issues, broadens the array of solutions and supports decision-making at multiple levels.

- **Connect people** who might not otherwise have the opportunity to interact.
- **Introduce collaborative processes** to encourage the free flow of ideas and exchange.
- **Create collaborative partnerships** to address shared aspirations.
- **Leverage resources**, training, and materials to take the work to the next level.





2

# Multi-Directional Learning

Indigenous-led spaces shift power dynamics and facilitate opportunities to create ethical space to engage non-Indigenous allies within an Indigenous context, worldview, and values.

- **Support innovative approaches** to address health and environmental vulnerabilities.
- Convene **virtual gatherings** to discuss and explore strategic topics.
- **Enable dialogue** to explore possibilities and solve challenging problems.

*Photo: Arizona Tribal Leaders in front of Hairini Marae, Tauranga, New Zealand. Photo: A. Cheromiah*





3

## Global Connections

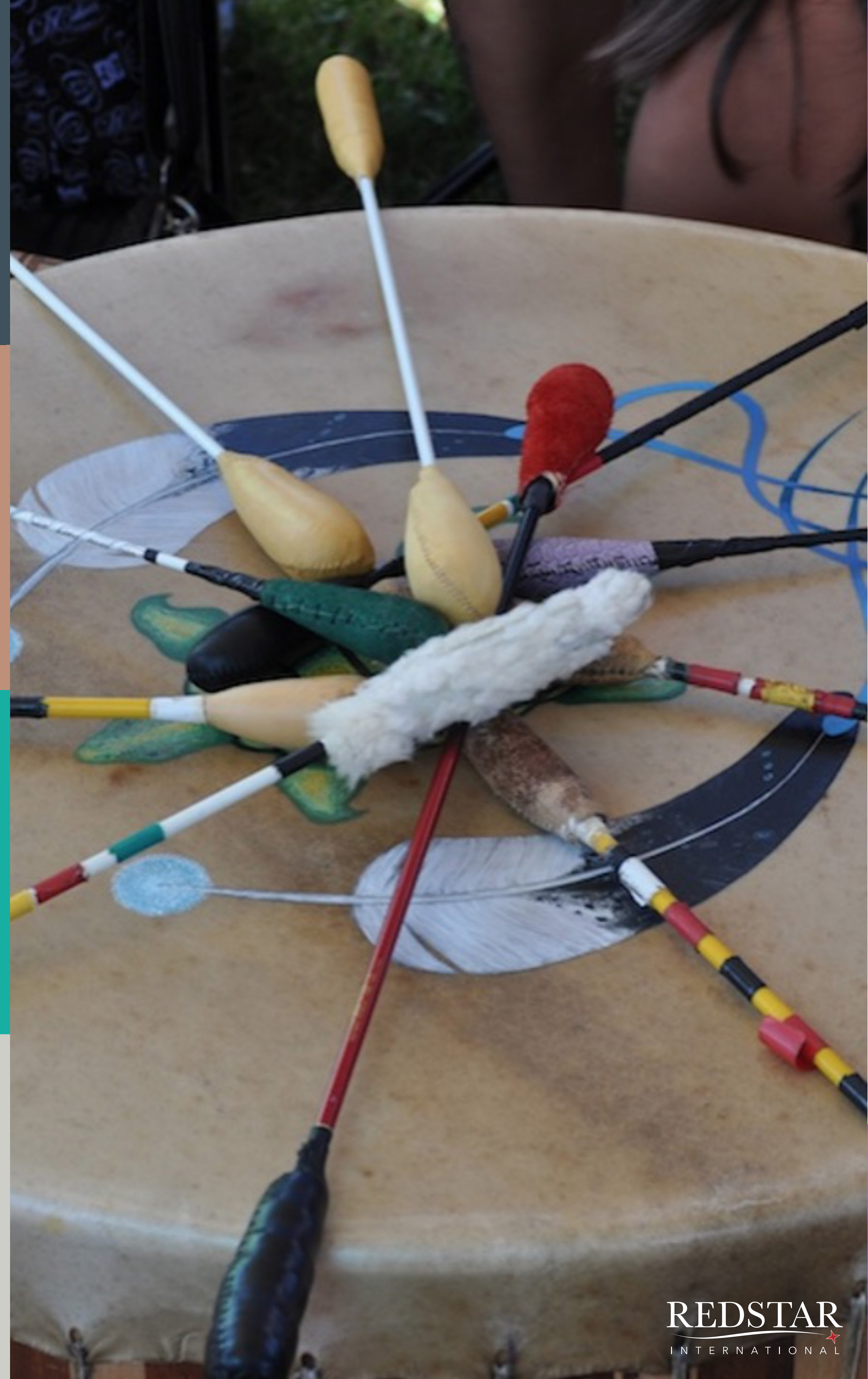
*Photo: A Meeting of Sacred Waters at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, AZ. Photo by Joel Angel Juarez, The Republic*

Provide a platform to amplify Indigenous voices and solutions. Coming together as a global community deepens our understanding of the issues, helps us to think differently and sparks innovation.

- **Utilize multi-media** to create awareness and increase representation of Indigenous perspectives on health equity and climate.
- Convene **global gatherings** highlighting Indigenous agency and impactful practices.
- **Reinforce Indigenous worldviews and values** focused on inter-generational impact.



**“When we speak all  
together, we are  
more powerful.  
Future generations  
will benefit.”**







# Realizing Indigenous Aspirations.

Join us!

[info@redstarintl.org](mailto:info@redstarintl.org)  
[redstarintl.org](http://redstarintl.org)

