

# Woniya icağa kiŋ: Lifeways

*To begin a cooperative journey together*



Mniyayapi: Water Routes

Wičo Itančapi: Steering Committee

Odewayatapi: Pre-feasibility Research

 Tokatakiya: The Future

Woečun Kağa kiŋ:  
Business Development

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Wo-okiničiyapi:  
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Bdote: Confluence

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Ikčičunze: Commitment and Wiŋpiya: Fundraising

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Wičoti: Cooperative Camp

Itanča: C.E.O.

Tuwe Kičupi: Staff

Itunħaŋ: Outcome

*"The land teaches about our language. In turn we minister to the land through our language in ceremony."*

-Dakota Scholar Vine Deloria, Jr.



# Key Notes

## Mniyayapi: Water Routes

Prior to colonization the Dakota people successfully utilized their knowledge of their ancient waterways to commence trade and commerce of their goods and services with other Indigenous nations on Turtle Island and eventually with French and British fur traders.

## Wičo Itančapi: Steering Committee

The guiding voice of leadership in directing what waterway-route to consider that is the most efficient for future economic, trade and business endeavors.

## Odewayatapi: Pre-feasibility Research

Actively searching out strengths and weaknesses inherent in the cooperative project such as debt and equity.

### Tokatakiya: The Future

We pause here and ask, “Will this decision preserve the inherent cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, social, political, and economic way of life for the generations yet to come?”

## Očeti Šakonwí: Incorporation

The Dakota political, social, economic, and spiritual nationhood depended on the creation of Seven Council Fires, that burned in constant reminder of the obligation to one another, with language being the integral connection to the elements that sustained them throughout time, thus inheriting and developing complex business practices.

## Bdote: Confluence

Creation and creativity began here with equal amounts of spiritual understanding that gave birth to a nation of water and life cannot exist without it, just as a cooperative idea cannot come to life without first adhering to principles rooted in cultural-based business practices of trade and commerce.

## Wita: Island

As the river separates surrounding an island, a sacred fire is lit. Traditionally, the islands of the Dakota people were birth places for Dakota women. The power of the water protected the island, and the sparks of the fire signaled to the spirits of the land that a new life was about to enter this world from above. Thus, a sacred event was blessing the nation once again, guided by fire and protected by water. These are the foundations that must be upheld in everything we do, and it takes cooperating with one another to continue lighting that sacred generational fire in order for us to prosper.

## Woečun Kağa kin: Business Development

### Wo-okikipi Awayakapi: Feasibility Analysis

Validating the ability to carry out a design based on the possibilities within a business strategy that has been assessed according to Indigenous based practices and decision-making methods. In the past our ancestors would go out on the land and fast without food or water for many days to get answers to current problems that were challenging the people's livelihood. Although our realities are much different than our ancestors, the lived experiences have not changed much, and we still seek those visions needed to understand what is needed to prosper cooperatively.

### Tokatakiya: The Future

We pause here and ask, “Will this decision preserve the inherent cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, social, political, and economic way of life for the generations yet to come?”

## Ĥtanikiyapte: Business Plan

Developing a sound vision that solidifies the research, outcomes and ideas that flow from the spirit of the language and gives power to the words that will be used to establish grounds of trade and commerce. The act of changing the English language back to its original Indigenous one is a form of resistance to the economic sanctions and demeaning imposition settler society has over us.

### Tokatakiya: The Future

We pause here and ask, “Will this decision preserve the inherent cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, social, political, and economic way of life for the generations yet to come?”

## Wo-okiničiyapi: Cooperative Association

Building trust with cooperative members is crucial for an economic resurgence to be established that challenges Euro-centric business practices of division. Indigenous values will be used to enhance the important concentric philosophies Indigenous people used to structure economic growth while reinforcing traditional knowledge as a tool for education.

## Wowakan: Dakota Values

Woinina: Listening	Wowaditake: Courage	Oğarwašte: Generosity
Wowičake: Honesty	Wowauŋšida: Compassion	
Woksape: Wisdom	Wowohbada: Humility	

Creating by-laws with an Indigenous value-based infrastructure as a training component and incentive for members who are in the process of decolonization, with equity being the thought and praxis behind fair business practices, communication and fundraising strategies.

## Wiḥpiya: Fundraising

In some tribes, a blanket is laid down during a community event, ceremony or pow-wow. This blanket may represent a family in need or travel money for relatives who traveled a long distance to witness an event. Money is placed on the blanket from anyone who wishes to donate. Our elders told us, the more you give, the more blessings you will receive in return. This tradition transcends conventional methods of corporate fundraising, but the teaching of giving is the same. Framing this tradition to fit into a cooperative business structure is essential to culturally restoring our Indigenous tradition and practice of gift giving and fundraising.

## Ohoyeya ihdučapi: Communication

Voices of reasoning was an important virtue among our nations when decisions had to be made for the good of the people. An eloquent orator spoke on behalf of his/her society or clan as others listened to reason objectively. It took clear and precise understanding of the subject matter to make a decision that often wasn't made instantly although times called for it. These cooperative methods are imperative to establishing an Indigenous-led lead cooperative, that adheres to sound economic judgement.

## Wayaway: Education

English is predicated on nouns and is primarily obsessed throughout its colonial linear history of naming things, places and people after their predatorial ancestors- while Indigenous languages are primarily predicated around verbs, thus, your actions being inherent in the concentric world view.

## Ikčičunze: Commitment and Wiḥpiya: Fundraising Equity Drive

**Ikčičunze:** During cultural, spiritual, social and economic decisions, many tribes vowed to commit their loyalty, not just for themselves, but for the wellbeing of the nation. It is a life investment based on cooperative practices that lasted for generations and enshrined in mutual values, translated into many languages and carried out with an in-depth understanding according to their current commerce and trade virtues that transcended contemporary business alliances today. The cooperative goal is to reconstruct, reimagine and revitalize those traditional models and mold them into a sound business venture for everyone!

**Wiḥpiya:** This tradition transcends conventional methods of corporate fundraising, but the teaching of giving is the same. Framing this tradition to fit into a cooperative business structure is essential to culturally restoring our Indigenous tradition and practice of gift giving and fundraising.

### Tokatakiya: The Future

We pause here and ask, “Will this decision preserve the inherent cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, social, political, and economic way of life for the generations yet to come?”

## Wičoti: Cooperative Camp

One voice among the collective is the equity driver for members. Traditionally there were many headmen and clan mothers who played an integral part to the functioning of societies or clans that made up the community.

## Itančča: C.E.O.

Thinks from the heart and not the head in the best interest of the people.

## Tuwe Kičupi: Staff

Like minded collective who has been through the value-based educational and language training.

## Ituḥḥan: Outcome

Traditionally, the giveaway system was essentially the banking system of many Indigenous nations, where an equal distribution of wealth among tribal members was dispersed as a show of gratitude and appreciation by families, societies and clans on a continual basis throughout the year.