



**INDIGENOUS  
YOUTH COALITION  
OF PINON:**

**IYCP STRIVES TO  
EMPOWER YOUNG  
PEOPLE WITHIN  
THE CONTEXT OF  
TRADITIONAL DINÉ  
(NAVAJO)  
PHILOSOPHY TO  
PREPARED THEM IN  
ADDRESSING THE  
MANY CHALLENGES  
INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES FACE**

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# Sustainable Living: Reclaiming our Traditional Knowledge

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## Cultivating the Seeds of Change

Since time immemorial Indigenous peoples have developed highly specialized farming techniques and building practices throughout the western hemisphere that has sustain the land and themselves. The ancestors created a way of living in which we depended on each other as families and communities for our survival and livelihood.



Dineh dryland farming

The Hopi and Dine people in the Southwest developed a rich agricultural based societies that subsisted from many varieties of corn, beans, squash, melons, pumpkins, animals and medicinal seasonal plant foods. The health and nutrition depended on our deep intimate knowledge of our homeland and our relationship with the spiritual forces of nature. In this way we live in accordance to the original and spiritual instructions of our elders. We see this process as a spiritual growth and our health and nutrition adapt to it.

Although some of the people continue to practice traditional farming, many have been forced to rely strictly on grocery stores and government commodity food. The dignity of our people has been compromised by foreign food markets that practice exploitive means in both farming and animal husbandry. We believe that there is a correlation between our health disparities to the unhealthy western food systems. The foods which have sustained our people for thousands of years are a type of spiritual nourishment that enables us to understand our purpose and help us grow into productive human beings.

Cultivating the Seeds of change was a ten-week summer learning project that engaged, trained, and inspired Hopi and Dine youth from the communities of Pinon and Kykotsmov, located on traditional Hopi and Dine homelands in the region known as Black Mesa. It was designed to encourage interest in cultivating heirloom varieties of vegetables and fruits, learning traditional stories and knowledge which comes with planting and car-

ing for crops, building small projects using local materials as well as learning about the social justice issues surrounding food security.

It incorporated traditional farming and building techniques as well as applicable principles of permaculture, bio-dynamic farming and natural earth building into this unique learning experience. Participating youth gained hands on knowldge by incorporating diverse teachings and techniques with the help and guidance of experienced farmers, builders and community members in and around Black Mesa.



**Objective 1 & 2: Recruit local Native youth from the Hopi (Kykotsmovi) and Dineh (Pinon) communities to participate in a ten week summer program. Engage, train and inspire them to learn and promote Traditional Ecological Knowledge associated with farming, natural earth building, permaculture through hands on training workshops led by experienced farmers, builders and community members in and around Black Mesa**



participate in this project. They received educational and hands on training in implementing this project. They all stayed involved through the entire project, which enabled them to get the most of what the program had to offer them.

the funds really late, we were able to network with individuals and organizations to help provide training and even donated some tools. Setting up permaculture systems does require lots of time but we manage to set up water catchments systems

presentations on traditional farming and hands on permaculture techniques. These training provided us with skills to rehabilitating 2 local fields along with maintaining 3 others. We were also able to help local elders and farmers with their fields.

Implementation

We have successfully recruited 7 Navajos and 5 Hopi youth to

Challenges

Our challenge was funding and time. In spite receiving

Accomplishments

We were successful in bringing in speakers to give

**Objective 3: Schedule and Conduct three meetings with parents, youth and organizers to enable feedback, recommendations, communications and strengthen families and communities to assume leadership roles in support of youth**



Implementations/ Accomplishments

We help conduct two spring workshops with NAU Health Sciences. They were intended to encourage families to do small gardens and fruit tree planting. We also did one meeting with the parents to inform them of the summer activities during the planting day celebration we hosted. They were very supportive of the project and encouraged their kids to stay involved through out the summer. We also had one harvest festival with the community where we shared our summer experience.



Challenges

The challenge was finding a date and time to involve the parents. Most are working and don't have time or had other things already schedule. Food was what finally brought most of them together. NAU team also were very helpful. Their recommendations was to keep the project going, which we plan to do.

**Objective 4 & 5: Organize an introductory meetings and weekly to inform the youth about the expectation, goals, and objectives to be achieved and provide youth a forum to voice their expectations of the organizers. Youth will evaluate their experiences, prepare a presentation and present the outcomes to the community.**



we had our planting dinner. That was followed by weekly meeting to help the participants become aware and prepare for their weekly activities.

Challenges

The challenge was the reserve culture of the community. The youth were pretty quiet. It took some time for them to adjust to the group and the project. In their evaluations, they all agreed to have had a positive experience.



Implementation/Accomplishments

The meetings were conducted. The introductory meetings took place when



# Project Outcomes

## How has your project contributed to youth preserving, strengthening and renewing cultural values?

Dine and Hopis are agricultural base societies. The teachings, ceremonies, and roles are embedded within agricultural activities. This project was able to provide not only hands on training but also educational workshops to connect the cultural teachings to our efforts in revitalizing, supporting and strengthening local food systems. These goals, sessions and activities enable the youth to begin thinking about ways to apply the cultural values and teachings to address issues such as food security.



## How has your project contributed to youth having new or more opportunities for exploring, understanding, and practicing their spirituality?



We brought in local elders and farmers to give presentation on the cultural and spiritual connections of our traditional foods throughout the project. We also had a local elder prepare corn pollen, held very sacred by our people. One parent also volunteered to conduct a sweat and it was well received by the young men. The participants had a deeper appreciation for traditional teachings after the project because they now understood what it takes to keep these practices going. Some have gone on to have their own ceremonies while others are talking about meeting to learn more ceremonial songs. These outcomes will be supported.



## How has your project contributed to youth having greater sense of pride?



The most evident sense of pride came from economic empowerment and the idea of being self-sufficient. We collaborated with Native Movement Collective on this project and they were able to secure some stipends for the participants. When they got paid towards the end, the youth were so excited and their parents were so thankful. Most of

them come from families that don't have much monetary wealth and this was their first time having a job. It made them feel so good to be able to buy their own school clothes while working towards rebuilding the local food systems and strengthening traditional knowledge.



# Project Outcomes

## Has your project made efforts to involve Native youth activities that include family members? If so, what activities were implemented?

We did some workshops with local Headstart on garden development, open to the parents and the community members. They were well attended. During the summer, the parents and community members would also stop by to see what we were doing. They were encouraged that their kids were doing something productive and traditionally important. During our harvest festival, many came to hear the presentations and encouraged us to continue the project. Other community members wanted to know how to get their kids involve.



*Kids learning to prepare soil and building their own garden at local Headstart center*



## How has your project contributed to more youth knowing their Native traditional Knowledge?

Some aspect of the Native traditional knowledge this is still strong, due to isolated nature of the community. This project came in to provide opportunities for the youth and strengthen these traditional systems through create farming. We also visited several different fields and had our host explain how these places use to be farmed. Lots of traditional knowledge there and we integrated that into our approach with the fields we worked with. The hands on and educational training helped the youth better understand that traditional knowledge does holds the answer to lots of community issues such as food security.

## How has your project contributed to youth having a sense of place within the community?

The project sites is very visible and most community members know of the project. Many were encouraged to see young people out in the fields again. During the harvest festival, many community members strongly encourage us to continue the project and congratulated the participants in being able to take on project. They understand it takes lots of work. This gave the youth a sense of pride, knowing that what they did in the summer had a positive effect on the community and most want to participate this year again.



## How has your project contributed to youth having a sense of place in the world?

During the educational workshops, we provided presentations on how the current food systems is structured and depends on petrochemical. Most of the youth do understand where the world is at with it's over consumption of fossil fuel and its global social and environmental impact. We host the world's largest private coal company and see its impact on the local environment and people. Through this they understood that there is a need for change. Through this project, they were able to better understand how Indigenous knowledge can help address some global, national and local issues such as food security.



# Program Outcomes



*Young men working to restore a traditional field.*



## What are some social issues in your community addressed by your project?

Crime of poverty: Youth violence and substance abuse has been on the rise on the reservation. This project brought in some teen at risk and were given alternative and productive activities for the summer. The parents were the first to see how much they have improve in these areas. It can be stated that there are not enough empowering opportunities besides government programs to integrate them into the larger American society, which they usually ended up at the bottom of the American class one off the reservation. This project gave the participants a positive outlet and help them retain traditional knowledge.

Food Security: The traditional systems and knowledge are at risk of being lost because of the pressure for individuals to integrate into the American society. Even tribal leaders are not aware of their own polices they create to make way of these changes. It is evident in food systems. We are seeing fast food chain and corporate grocery stores popping on the reservation, making the communities dependent on unhealthy and non traditional foods. This in return has lead to the diminish healthy traditional lifestyles and increase to food related diseases such as diabetes. This project introduce a new way of looking out food systems and searched for solutions into traditional systems and teachings.

## What aspect of the projects has the community participated in your work?

We created partnership with several local organizations to carry out these projects. It allowed us to be more out in the communities. We conduced several garden development workshops with NAU Healing Garden in several communities. We also participated in several "Slow Foods" community dinner in different locations. We had some really good community turn out. We also hosted a community harvest feast with presentations of our work. Finally we partnershiped with Headstart and Pinon WIC through NAU Healing Garden and helped conduct workshops with parents and WIC clients. They too were open to the community

## Rain water harvesting through setting up water catchments systems



# Program Outcomes

## What partnership has been created?

Native Movement	Center for Sustainable Environment
The Food Project	Forest Lake Headstart
Natwani Coalition	Indigenous Community Enterprise
Pinon WIC office	NAU Healing Garden Project
Sheep is Life	Dine Community Farm (Dine Inc.)

## In implementing your project, what are some lessons learn so far? Is there anything you would do differently based on what you have learned

Permaculture systems do take time and its best to work at it year round. It takes lots of energy but once set up, not so intensive. This was our first time setting it up and had limited time on formal presentations. For one thing, we did not have our materials created. This time, we have gathered materials to give a more formal presentation. It also takes more one experienced organizer without burning out. We are working with the first group so they can take up some leadership position this year.



*Youth helping with harvesting corn and learning how to making steam corn to be used for the coming winter*



# Financial Report

	<b>NYCF Funds</b>	<b>NAU Health Science</b>	<b>Native Movement</b>	<b>Oxfam Youth Parliament</b>	<b>Seventh Generation Fund</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Trips and Training</b>	<b>3,500</b>					<b>3,500</b>
<b>Guest Speakers</b>						
Farmer				\$250		\$250
Natural Earth Builder	\$500					\$500
Permaculture Practitioner	0	\$250				\$250
2 Local College Intern	\$2,000		\$3,500		\$500	\$6,000
9 Stipends (\$1500 each)			\$13500			\$13,500
2 Organizer (\$4000 each)			\$12000			\$12,000
<b>Materials</b>						
Community Harvest	\$650	\$150		\$200		\$1,000
10 shovels (\$50 each)	\$500	\$250				\$750
10 garden hoes (\$50 each)	\$500	\$250				\$750
100 T fence post (\$5 each)	\$500					\$500
5 field fence (\$100 each)	\$500				\$300	\$800
Fruit Trees tools	\$300					\$300
Chain Saw	\$300				\$200	\$500
3 Barb-wire (\$60 each)	\$200					\$200
Plowing	\$300					\$300
Corner Posts (Juniper)	\$150					\$150
2 wheel barrel (\$50 each)	\$100	\$100				\$200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>		<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>