New ways of organizing

TribalDAO

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This article explores TribalDAO, a Decentralized Autonomous Organization designed to empower Indigenous communities by providing tools for collective governance and decision-making.

Introduction

Who They Are / Where They Are Based

TribalDAO is a unique form of Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO) aimed specifically at Indigenous communities. It is rooted in the principles of collective governance, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. The concept is primarily developed and promoted by the Mātou Collective, which operates out of New Zealand, aiming to provide a digital platform for Indigenous peoples to manage their resources and make decisions collaboratively.

History

The idea of TribalDAOs emerged from a need for Indigenous communities to have a governance structure that respects their cultural practices while utilizing modern technology. It allows for a flexible, community-centered approach to decision-making that can adapt to the needs of the community over time. The Mātou Collective has been pivotal in laying the groundwork for this initiative, fostering an environment where traditional practices can coexist with contemporary governance tools.

Context

In a world increasingly driven by technology, Indigenous communities often find themselves at a crossroads—between preserving their heritage and adapting to modern systems. TribalDAOs provide a way to bridge this gap, offering a platform that enhances transparency, inclusivity, and community control without undermining traditional practices.

Mission / Objectives

The mission of TribalDAO is to empower Indigenous communities by providing them with the tools and frameworks necessary for self-governance. This entails:

- Promoting community control and ensuring every voice is heard.
- Enabling transparency in decision-making processes.
- Supporting cultural practices and values through adaptable governance structures.
- Facilitating collective action to achieve shared goals and aspirations.



Scope / Product / Services

TribalDAO offers various services tailored to the specific needs of Indigenous communities, including:

- **Resource Management**: Tools for managing land and other resources in a transparent manner.
- **Governance Frameworks**: Establishing systems for making collective decisions.
- **Cultural Preservation**: Mechanisms for protecting Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.

- **Community Engagement**: Platforms for facilitating discussions, proposals, and voting among community members.

Why a DAO as Organizational Construct

Choosing a DAO structure allows Indigenous communities to:

- Maintain control over their governance processes, as opposed to traditional hierarchical structures.
- Ensure that all members can participate in decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.
- Utilize blockchain technology for transparency and security, ensuring that all decisions and actions are recorded and accessible to the entire community.

Implementation

Permissions

In a TribalDAO, permissions are structured to allow for varying levels of participation, from general members to trusted leaders or kaitiaki (guardians). This ensures that while everyone has a voice, certain decisions may require more specialized knowledge or responsibility.

Governance & Decision-Making

TribalDAOs implement governance rules that reflect the community's values and tikanga (customs). This includes:

- **Voting Systems**: Mechanisms for members to vote on proposals, ensuring that every decision reflects the community's consensus.
- **Proposal Rules**: Clear guidelines on how proposals can be submitted and what criteria they must meet to be considered.
- **Kaitiaki Roles**: Designated members who oversee specific areas and ensure that governance adheres to cultural practices.

Community & Participation

Engagement is fundamental in a TribalDAO. Members are encouraged to:

- **Gather the Right People**: Initiate the DAO by bringing together community leaders, whānau, and trustees.
- **Agree on Purpose**: Define the goals of the DAO collectively.
- **Onboard Members**: Ensure that all community members understand their roles and how to participate effectively.



Legal Entity Form

While the specific legal entity form can vary, TribalDAOs often operate under a framework that allows them to be recognized as non-profit organizations or community trusts. This structure supports their goals while adhering to local laws and regulations, ensuring legitimacy and accountability in their operations.

Technology & Tools

TribalDAO utilizes a variety of technologies and tools to facilitate governance and collaboration, including:

- **Blockchain Technology**: For secure and transparent record-keeping.
- **Decentralized Platforms**: Tools that allow for proposal submissions, voting, and managing resources online, such as Aragon or DAOstack.
- **Communication Tools**: Platforms like Discord or Slack to facilitate discussions and organize community engagement.

Impact & Outcomes

TribalDAOs have shown tangible impacts in several areas:

- **Whenua Management**: Enabling communities to make transparent decisions regarding land use and management.
- **Whānau Trusts**: Coordinating trust decisions effectively, ensuring all beneficiaries have a voice.
- **Cultural Projects**: Supporting initiatives that preserve and promote Indigenous culture and knowledge.
- **Social Enterprises**: Helping to run businesses that align with community values, creating economic opportunities while respecting cultural practices.

Challenges & Learnings

Despite their potential, TribalDAOs face several challenges:

- **Digital Literacy**: Ensuring all community members are comfortable with digital tools.
- **Cultural Sensitivity**: Balancing the use of technology with respect for traditional practices.
- **Sustainability**: Maintaining engagement and funding over the long term as communities grow and evolve.

Future Vision

The future of TribalDAOs is promising, with aspirations to:

- Expand their reach to more Indigenous communities, fostering a global network of TribalDAOs.
- Continue refining governance models to better fit diverse cultural contexts.
- Leverage advancements in technology to enhance the capabilities of the DAO structure and improve user experience.

References

- Mātou Collective: Introduction to TribalDAOs: https://docs.matou.nz/learning/tribaldaos/intro
- Contact: Mātou Collective for inquiries and further information.