

From Access to Agency:



**Building Indigenous-Led Capital
Pathways Through Angel Networks and
Aligned Investment Models**

Why We're Talking About This

★ **More people are talking about investing in Native founders**

→ But access still isn't evenly reaching communities

★ **“Impact Investing” is a growing space**

→ But not always aligned with timelines or values

★ **More founders are building**

→ But many are still navigating capital without clear pathways

★ **There's a shift happening**

→ Native people are shifting from recipients of capital to architects of it

→ Capital is becoming more visible

but not necessarily more accessible or aligned.

What's Changing in Capital Right Now

- ★ **Native entrepreneurship is growing**
→ More Native Founders are building scalable, investable business across sectors
- ★ **More people are questioning traditional capital models**
→ Communities are asking who controls capital, who benefits, and what success could look like
- ★ **Investors are paying more attention to Indigenous economies**
→ But still lack cultural understanding, relationships, and long-term alignment
- ★ **Native - led investment infrastructure is emerging**
→ Indigenous funds and ecosystem builders are creating new pathways

A Structural Gap that Native Entrepreneurs Face

Underrepresentation in Venture Capital

- Native founders receive only a very small share of venture capital investment.

Lack of Native Investors

- There are still too few Native-led funds and Indigenous decision-makers participating on the investor side of capital.

Relationship-based economies vs Extractive timelines

- Many traditional investment models prioritize rapid growth and exits, while Indigenous communities often prioritize long-term stewardship, relationships, and sustainability.

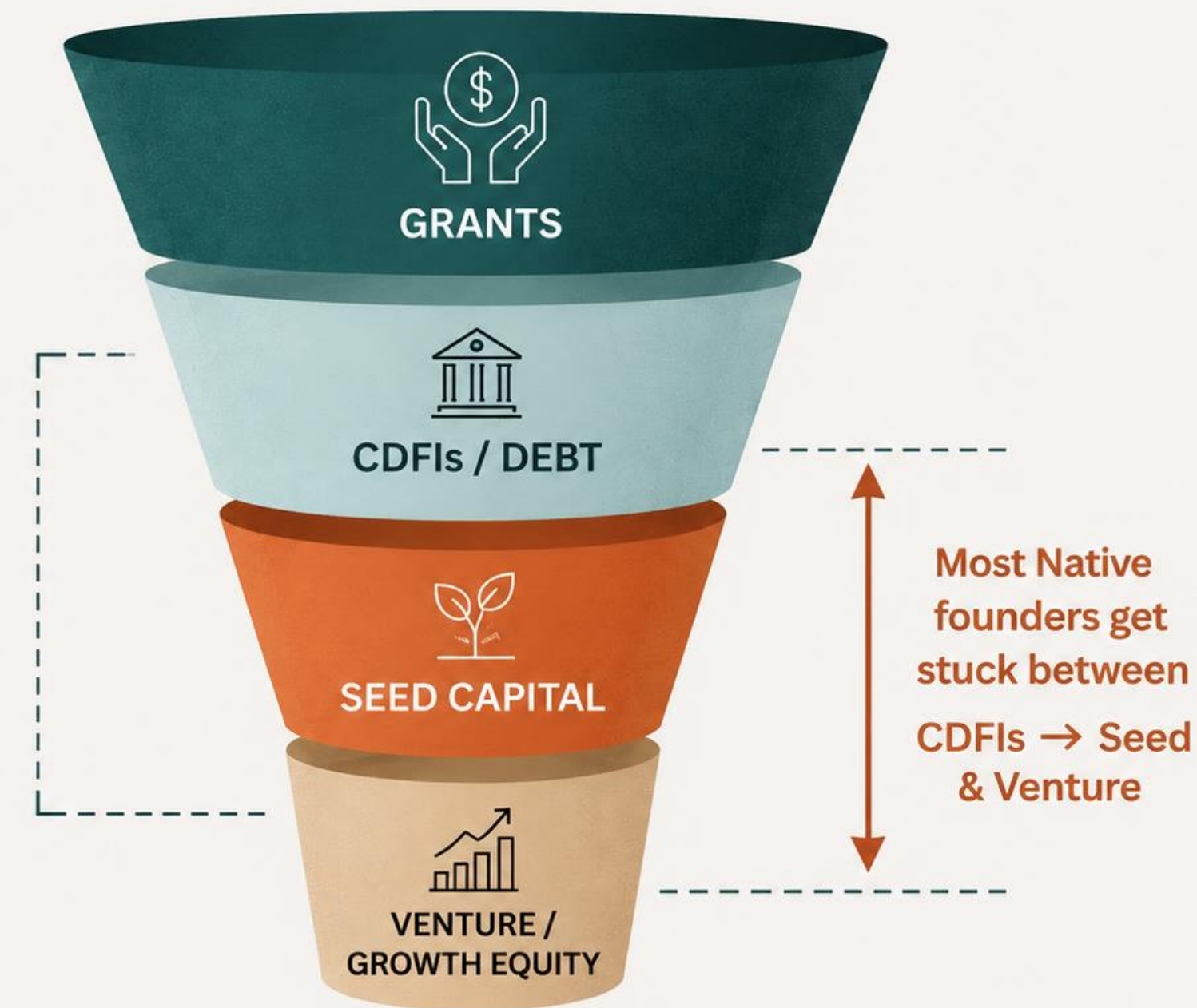
Collateral and Wealth Gaps

- Generational wealth disparities and land ownership complexities can limit access to traditional financing and early investment opportunities.

Geography & Network barriers

- Many Native entrepreneurs build outside major venture ecosystems, limiting access to investor networks, mentorship, and visibility.

THE CAPITAL GAP

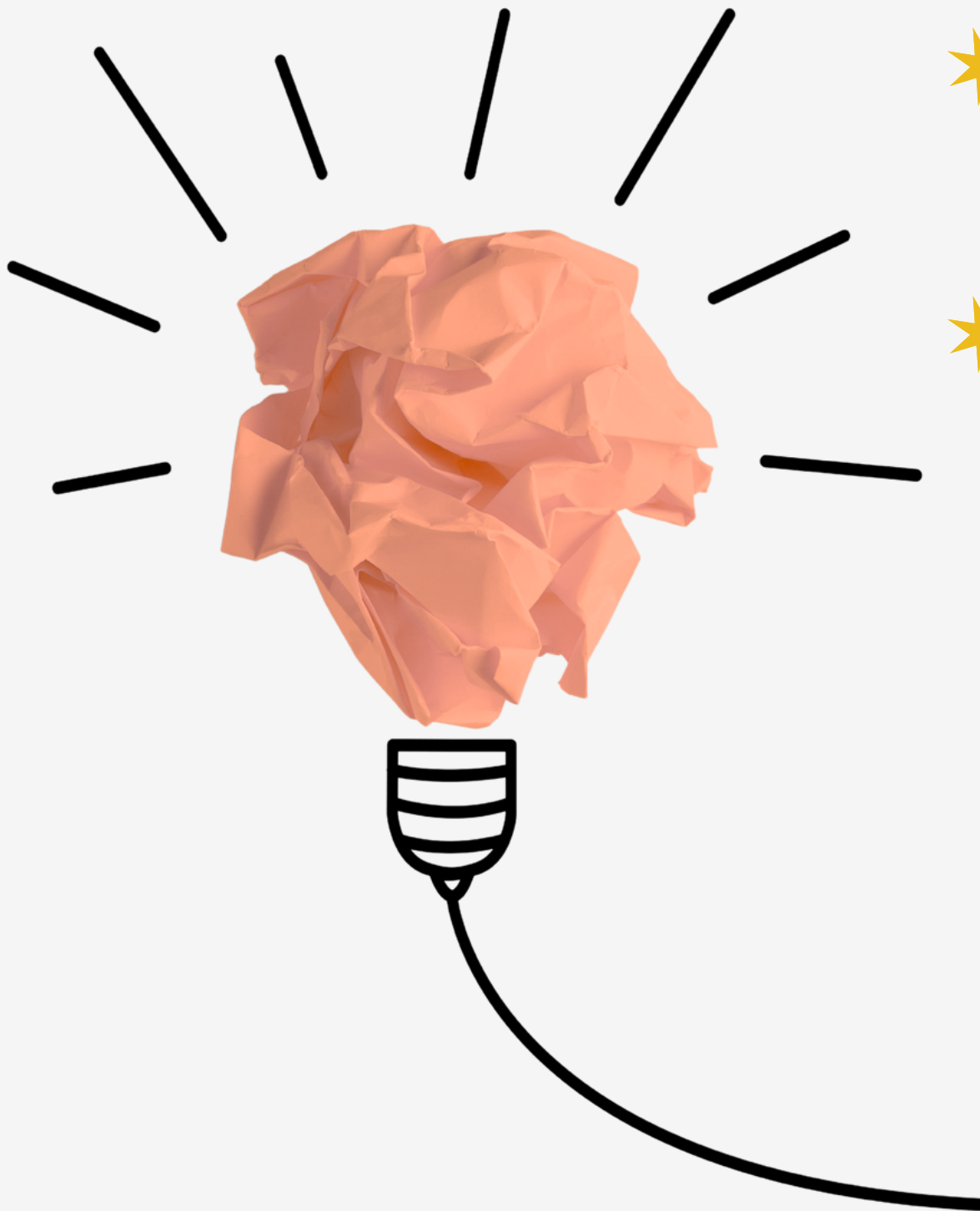


Too early for traditional financing.

Too different for conventional VC.

Too often overlooked.

Reframing the Investor Lens



- ★ **Capital conversations can feel unfamiliar**
For many Native founders, navigating investment spaces can feel like entering systems that were not designed with Indigenous communities in mind.
- ★ **Traditional capital language can create barriers**
Terms like **valuation**, **cap tables**, **dilution**, and **term sheets** can make the process feel inaccessible even when founders already have strong businesses, traction, and vision.
- ★ **Indigenous-led capital changes the conversation**
When Native investors, funds, and ecosystem builders are part of the process, founders are more likely to experience:
 - relationship-centered support
 - cultural understanding
 - pathways grounded in community impact

Moving from “Access” to “Agency”

The goal is helping Native founders access capital
+
Build Indigenous-led systems that govern, deploy, and circulate capital differently

Traditional Framing *(Accessing Existing Systems)*

-  Preparing Native founders to fit existing systems
-  Transaction-based relationships
-  Short-term return expectations
-  Outside decision-makers
-  Growth at all costs
-  Capital flowing into communities without shared ownership

How do founders gain access?



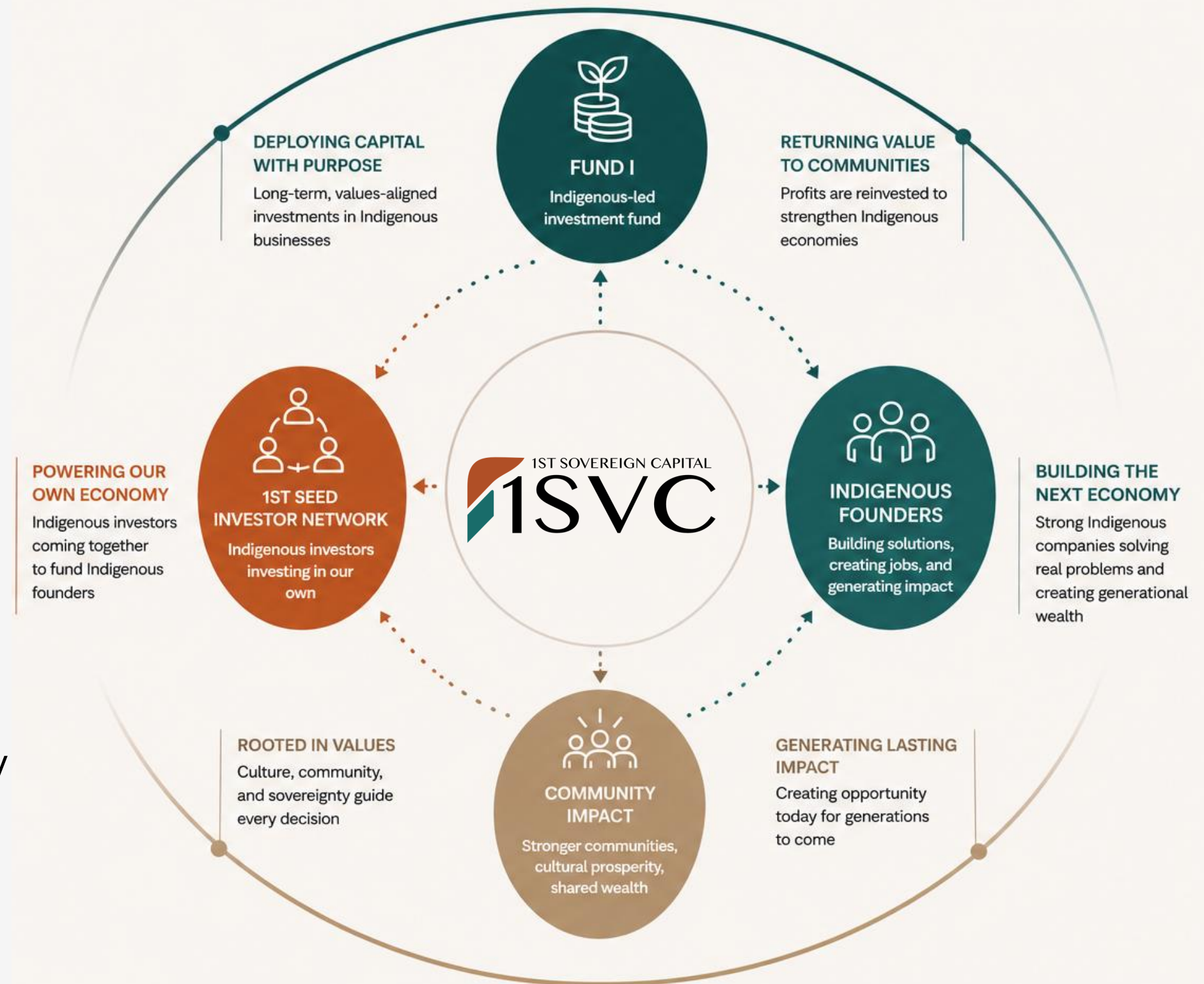
Indigenous-Led Framing *(Building Indigenous-Controlled Systems)*

-  Building Native-controlled capital infrastructure
-  Relationship-centered investing
-  Long-term stewardship
-  Community accountability
-  Shared prosperity + ownership
-  Capital circulating within Native economies

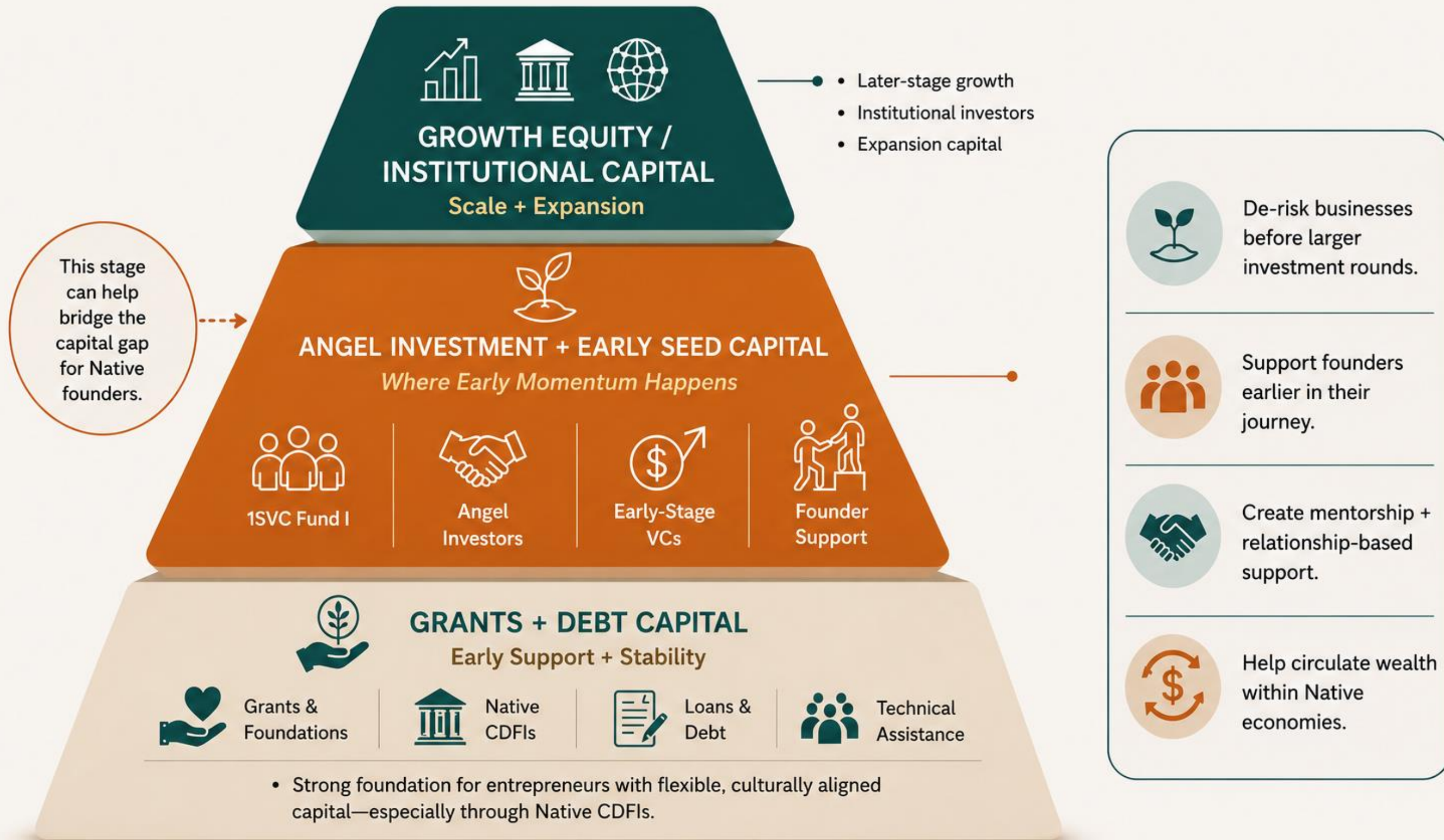
How do communities build agency?

Investing in the Next Indigenous Economy

- Native investors, founders, and communities all play a role in strengthening the ecosystem
- Capital alone is not enough; relationships, trust, and alignment matter
- Long-term prosperity requires ownership, reinvestment, and community accountability
- Strong ecosystems connect founders to capital, mentorship, networks, and opportunity
- Indigenous-led systems can help circulate wealth back into Native economies



Why Early Investments Matter



- De-risk businesses before larger investment rounds.
- Support founders earlier in their journey.
- Create mentorship + relationship-based support.
- Help circulate wealth within Native economies.

Strong ecosystems require multiple forms of capital working together

What Can Culturally Aligned Capital Look Like?

Financial return and community impact are not mutually exclusive.



Building with Capital Tools

Flexible tools can help founders and investors align around growth, ownership, and long-term impact.

★ SAFEs (Simple Agreement for Future Equity)

- Founder-friendly early-stage financing
- Delays valuation conversations until later growth
- Often used for early traction and relationship building

Supports momentum before larger investment rounds

★ SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicle)

- Allows multiple investors to participate together
- Creates pathways for Native investor engagement
- Helps build collective ownership opportunities

Expands participation on the investor side

★ Fund Structures

- Organizes how capital is deployed and managed
- Can support long-term reinvestment strategies
- Creates accountability and governance structures

Builds systems beyond individual transactions

Why This Matters

These tools can help:

- align capital with community realities
- create more flexible pathways for founders
- support Indigenous ownership and participation
- strengthen long-term ecosystem development



Native Participation on the Investor Side Matters

★ Ownership Matters

Native communities should have opportunities to participate not only as founders and borrowers but also as investors and decision-makers.

★ Wealth Circulation Matters

Indigenous-led investment systems can help circulate wealth back into Native economies and communities.

★ Decision - Making Power Matters

Who deploys capital often shapes:

- what businesses are funded
- what timelines are prioritized
- and what outcomes are valued

★ Representation Matters

Native investors and fund managers bring cultural understanding, relationship-based approaches, and long-term community perspective.

★ Narrative Change Matters

Indigenous participation on the investor side helps shift the narrative from exclusion toward ownership, agency, and ecosystem leadership.

Questions We Can Ask Ourselves:

- Do investors understand the community being served?
- Are growth expectations aligned?
- Does the relationship support long-term vision?
- Who benefits from the value being created?

Ecosystem Alignment and Partnerships

This Work is Not Meant to Replace Existing Systems

- 🍃 multiple forms of capital
- 🍃 aligned partnerships
- 🍃 long-term collaboration
- 🍃 Indigenous leadership across sectors

Can support innovation, capacity-building, and ecosystem gaps traditional capital may not fund.

Help founders bridge early traction and relationship-building stages.



Realities of Building Indigenous Investment Structures

Lessons from our work so far -

★ **Trust Takes Time**

Building Indigenous investment infrastructure is deeply relationship-based.

Communities, founders, and investors all need time to build trust, alignment, and shared understanding.

Transactions move quickly. Trust does not.

★ **Education Must Happen on Both Sides**

Founders are often expected to become “investment ready,” but investors also need deeper understanding of Indigenous economies, timelines, and community realities.

Investor readiness matters too.

★ **Ecosystem Build is Long-Term Work**

Strong Indigenous capital ecosystems require:

- aligned partnerships
- governance structures
- patient collaboration
- long-term commitment

This work extends beyond individual deals or funding cycles.

Infrastructure is built over time, not overnight.

What We're Seeing at 1SVC

From conversations with founders, investors, and ecosystem partners, a few themes consistently emerge.

★ Founders don't lack vision, they lack access

Many Indigenous founders often navigate systems without:

- warm investor networks
- aligned capital pathways
- visibility within traditional ecosystems

The issue is often access, not potential.

★ Many Founders are further along than they think

For Indigenous founders, traction may include:

- strong community trust
- recurring customers
- regional market leadership
- cultural relevance
- sustainable growth

Progress does not always look the same across ecosystems.

What stands out to us:

- Clarity matters more than perfection
- Alignment matters more than hype
- Strong founders know what they are building toward & what they are not willing to compromise
- Relationship-building remains foundational
- Long-term thinking creates stronger ecosystems

At **1SVC**, we look for **alignment**, **long-term** potential, **community understanding**, and founders building with intention.

Key Takeaways + Reflections

★ **Capital Gaps**

What capital gaps exist in your ecosystem for entrepreneurs?

★ **Participation**

Where are Native investors missing from the ecosystem?

★ **Alignment**

How can we align capital with culture?

★ **Agency**

What would Indigenous-controlled capital systems look like locally?

From access to agency means building systems where Indigenous communities participate not only as founders, but also as owners, investors, and decision-makers

Ahéhée'!

Thank You So much!

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