

# Lighting the Lower Nine

Sankofa Community Development Corporation Founder and CEO, Rashida Ferdinand, is a Black woman who grew up in the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood of New Orleans and returned home to her community to spearhead revitalization efforts after it was devastated by flooding following Hurricane Katrina.

Our team is deeply rooted in the Lower Ninth Ward and brings over a decade of experience creating and implementing environmental justice innovations in the Lower Nine.

- The Lower Ninth Ward is a predominantly Black area deeply impacted by environmental injustice but possessing deep wells of innovation and mutual aid.
- Community safety is a persistent struggle for residents as blight, chronic disinvestment, and the lingering impacts of Hurricane Katrina have created large areas of darkness and depopulation. Lots are distributed with occupied houses mixed with vacant and blighted properties, as well as hundreds of unlit street lights as a result of pervasive neglect.
- In response to these challenges, Sankofa has begun a “Neighborhood Greenways” initiative that will incorporate community-based design and participation strategies that will increase safety by reducing blight and disinvestment in the northern portions of the Lower Ninth Ward

