Heart Story Curation:

Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership and the Philanthropic Call to Action

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by

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Abstract

Of the $3.9 Billion dollars flowing within the philanthropic sector, only 0.04% goes to Native American serving organizations according to a 2019 report (NAP & Candid, 2019). An even smaller amount goes toward supporting efforts for Native American women and girls. This mixed-methods study seeks to address the dire gaps in funding within Native philanthropy and seeks to define Indigenous Feminist Justice efforts from a post-COVID-19 lens. Evidenced through this study, the research highlights Indigenous resilience, as it relates to Native Women leading healing efforts in Indigenous communities. The researcher conducted a national survey and hosted two focus groups to better understand what kinds of healing efforts are being led nationally so that that recommendations could be made through private investments, venture capital opportunities, as well as continued fund development. Through the recognition of Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership strategies, the field of philanthropy can learn best practices around trust-based giving and is an overall call to call for practitioners to fund this work.

Keywords: Indigenous Feminism; matrilineal; matriarch; kinship; cultural responsiveness; post-colonialism; Native Women; Philanthropy; trust-based giving.

Acknowledgements

Embarking on my educational journey began decades ago when I first stepped foot into my elementary classroom as a little girl. I recall my infatuation for learning and being inspired with the world of knowledge. My eyes glistened as I quickly scanned each learning space, I was a part of, visioning where the path would take me.

There are so many contributors who have been so generous with their time, energy, as well as the safe spaces that they created for my learning. I am indebted to their love for teaching that was shown to me with such sweetness, but also with fierce rigor that has built me into the Native Woman Warrior that I am today. Ny'tra ~ Many thanks to my dissertation committee— Dr. Michelle Montgomery, Dr. Robin Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn, and Dr. Diana Franco for all the insights and countless reviews of drafts.

I look back at my adolescence and can't help but express gratitude for the love and nurturing support that the late David "Davee" Herrera and also the late John Grimley shared with me during my time working under the Cochiti Keres Language Revitalization Program in my hometown community of Cochiti Pueblo. I had so many wonderful Native Women mentors in the tribal programs space as well that still continue to guide my learning as an adult, including my biggest cheerleaders— Diane Williams, Ann Ka-hee, Laura Taylor, Celeste Naranjo, Dr. Valerie Grimley, Dr. Maria Williams, Naomi Chavez, Phoebe Suina and countless others in the Indian education sector for whom I am grateful for.

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Dr. Samuel E. Suina, Herman Suina, Bernard Suina, Donald Suina, and Gene Ka-hee. All of you have been so impactful on my upbringing and I am grateful for all you have taught me at different points in my life. There are also countless sisters and brothers for whom this work would not be possible without your support including my sister and best friends— Corina Hodges, Daphne Coriz, and my late sister, Tanya "Szee'ah'chatz" Suina. I would not be in such academic or healing circles without the guidance of my sister and dissertation committee member, Dr. Diana Franco who has continuously uplifted me since I met her in 2007. Many thanks to my Compadre A. Darrell Vallo for all the check-ins and reminders to keep moving forward. Bry— thank you for all the encouragement and love that you have shared with me during the most challenging time of my life and career. I would not be where I am without the support of such extended kinship circles.

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Dedication

Thuu'sii'szetz. I'm here. I made it.

Figure 1 Grandmother's Seeds

This dissertation is dedicated to my Maternal Grandmother and to all my Ancestors whose strength and resilience is a part of my DNA. Here's to our healed future generations- may we know them, may we be them, and may we raise them.

Researchers Positionality Statement

Drawing from the power of a granule of corn and its role in Pueblo prayer, love, and being in good relationship with the past and present, the future is birthed into existence. This spiritual transference of connection allows us to carve pathways between dimensions to allow for the inheritance of cultural teachings. Such teachings allow for the metaphysical weaving of generational threads and this is what has allowed me, as the researcher, to do this work. As an Ecofeminist Indigenous Scholar, I come to this work by always keeping these three critical elements in mind: 1) land, 2) body, and 3) spirit.

The focus of land and body sovereignty also directly correlates to addressing the historical violence against Indigenous Women, beginning with contact, interspersing the federal Indian Boarding School era, to today's present statistics regarding the number of Indigenous women who go missing or are murdered. Violence on the land- through climate change can be also viewed as a metaphor for what is happening to our women. So many fellow Native women have the same or a very similar story as mine— they can't grow their business because of the lateral oppression in their local circles, they cannot get ahead financially because of the lack of flow of capital and even for some— they cannot leave their abusive relationship because they have nowhere to go, often leaving them feeling helpless and living in fear of being shamed by their own community. I position myself in this research as a survivor and I want these women to know that I stand beside them, I walk in solidarity with them, and I believe in them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This manuscript puts forth reasonable suggestions for the requirements to obtain a doctorate degree and to move through a rite of passage within the field of academia. Beyond fulfilling degree requirements, this research is intended to be a love letter of healing to all Indigenous People. The unfolding of pages is a deep connection with ancestral knowledge and a counternarrative to all the forces that threaten that information. There is intentionality in the ideas that have been nourished, requiring an understanding of our ancestors' pain. The remedy in this document is to promote healing from the symptoms of trauma and to rematriate our Indigenous communities.

Western science cannot teach about the limitless opportunities to call upon the nonliving kinfolk and the ways in which our Indigenous medicines teach us how to find healing. This kind of healing that I am referring to is prophetic. It is the experience of being able to taste fresh blood because you have bitten your tongue for too long and are tired of being silenced. It is the tears that well up in your eyes in learning that another sister has gone missing and that #MMIW[1] is not going to fade away anytime soon. As such, this is an exploration of many visions and prayers that will allow the reader to rise from dormancy with the intent to capture how we return to ancestral ways of knowing. It is the purposeful winnowing of cornmeal and corn pollen to send out prayer signals to the holy ones as a reckoning to announce one's readiness to contribute to their own healing. It is a becoming… a becoming that grants one permission to revel in our Ancestors' critical consciousness to acknowledge the sacred feminine as the lifeline of all living things.

[1] The acronym MMIW references Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women which is a movement to bring awareness to the backlog of FBI cases surrounding missing and murdered Native American and Alaska Native Women and girls.

This becoming will be threefold. It will require the collective confrontation of patriarchal violence and colonial imposition by honoring the matriarchal symbolisms in Indigenous culture in all its forms, shapes, and sizes. Reconciling the past will allow for the planting of seeds that are soaked in forgiveness and liberation. This coming full circle may leave one breathless, exhausted, and depleted, but the undoing of colonial damage will prove itself fruitful in further demonstrating the power of human self-determination and self-love. What will follow will be the planting of trees of protection for which, in this lifetime, we will not feel its shade and comfort on a hot, sunny day. Nor will it provide branches for us to climb because its future stature will benefit the children who have yet to be born, along with their children and their children's children.

This becoming will require a hopeful re-awakening that tugs at the present-day lateral oppression that pins sister against sister. Dismantling jealousy while uprooting rotted pungent bulbs that went rogue in their nascency will also involve peeling back at the skin, eliciting the reclamation of our whole selves including the good, the bad, the trauma, and the sweetness. It will remind us of every time we encountered forced intimacy, violent relationships, and burned feelings. It will be an ugly, itchy, tightness that will pull at the curves of our spirit and test our every self-doubt. It will ask us to soul search into the depths of neurological manila files that we do not want to open because they will force an outpouring flood of tears and unresolved pains that our blood memory helps us to separate during ceremony.

In rematriating back to our mother, back to the land, we must remember that before we make the cosmological birth journey, through the endless valley of stars and into the present time and space, it is believed that we are forever bonded to the spirit world. Here, the galaxy greets Grandfather Sun and embraces life through the supersonic beams of warmth and light. This in

itself is ceremony and it is reflected in the first breath we take in this earth world, marked by our cry and gasps for air. This is an acknowledgement to our ancestors that we made it. Ma'shra chay'ch ~ enlightenment and blessings are welcomed. You made it. We made it.

The process to prepare in writing this dissertation began with an offering and a prayer to ask my grandmothers and ancestors that I may have permission to write so freely about this topic in a way that sheds light on the resiliency of the experiences of Indigenous Women. I come to this work as a Pueblo Indigenous Woman who seeks to uplift our communities and to support healing efforts that revitalize epistemologies surrounding gender roles. I do this through honoring all of the sacrifices that our Grandmothers and Grandfathers collectively shared during shifts of colonial imposition and peaceful attempts to maintain traditional Indigenous life, with a special focus on the experience of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, or what is now known as the occupied and unceded territories of the United States (Fletcher, 2011; Gilio-Whitaker, 2019).

These shifts of power, away from matrifocal teachings are the result of several layers of colonization, including how Spanish Colonial and United States Federal Indian Policy have redefined the role and voice of Indigenous women (Suzack, 2017). I carry the strength and the prayers of my Indigenous relatives to counter today's statistics surrounding violence, incarceration, substance abuse, and suicide, so that breaking cycles becomes the new norm for Indigenous Communities to fully thrive. Such labels have become perpetuated as tribal enrollment and mixed Native identity has perpetuated a culture of othering (Montgomery, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Recognizing the ways in which Indigenous Women have had to learn how to protect and provide for themselves in a colonial world, my hope is that this work inspires rematriation

through the curating of our heart stories. Heart stories can be best defined as healing narratives that counter colonial wounds. The colonial wounds which I am referring to are those that sit on a shelf in our psyche, in which colonialism has taught us not to talk about or explore. It's the "…. shhhhh… we don't talk about that" or the "…for better or for worse" ways of thinking. For many, this is the place of shame that we allow our spirits to linger within for generations and, ultimately, this is what holds us back from finding our peace.

So much of this work ties into the experience within my own community. Like our sister Pueblos, Cochiti has had a tumultuous history. We are the grandchildren of the Anasazi and it is told to us that we emerged from holy places such as Bandelier, Chaco Canyon, and later inhabited Old Cochiti Mesa. These places of emergence have remained significant in how our people came to be. Cochiti is sister to 18 other Pueblos in New Mexico and is in many ways, very similar to these respective Pueblos, as well as very unique. The Cochiti culture itself is something that cannot be transcribed. The language, Keres, is orally based. It is one of the seven Keresan dialects that are spoken amongst the Pueblos and can only be found within the state of New Mexico. The entire makeup of the Cochiti people is beautifully woven into the language, including the socialization of the people and the various roles they are responsible for.

Socialization becomes endowed through kinship with our relationship to Mother Earth. How we establish ourselves and perpetuate this way of life is what exemplifies Cochiti philosophy. It is about living for the community, rather than living for the individual. The oral tradition is also passed by way of cultural activity. For example, throughout the times of planting and harvest, songs and stories are also implanted within the hearts of the listeners. Cochiti children, prior to the building of the Cochiti Dam, were immersed in the language during these annual activities and for many, like my mother, Keres was her first language.

The connection to deeper thought and higher being have not only traditional Indigenous origins, but also are founded on the breadth of Catholicism which continues to be debated today, especially in lieu of the recent denouncing of the Doctrine of Discovery by Pope Francis (Iverson, Sando, & Pecos, 1993; The Vatican, 2023, Youtube, 2023).

Figure 2 Heart Story Curation Land Mapping[2]

[2] The researcher participated in a Land Body mapping workshop during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic that was hosted by the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW) www.csvanw.org

As demonstrated in Figure 2, the metaphor of land to body is embedded within this figure. This illustration reflects the ways in which the land holds memories and how the building of the Cochiti dam reservoir has created such shifts in traditional practices, ultimately redefining how we are able to connect with the land. Such mappings support an asset-based approach to understanding steps that can be taken to engage the empowerment of community through self-awareness. Creating a culture of commitment to being "woke" for the next generation is also what this work seeks to do through heart story curation.

This work honors Indigenous Women who are fiercely dedicated to bringing healing to their communities from all the settler colonial violence and extraction that raped the land, body, and spirit of our Ancestors. These modern-day healers and Warrior Women do this by the pairing of traditional and contemporary knowledge to creatively mobilize for Indigenous futures. This work is the voice of prayers carried to places such as Carlisle Indian Industrial School, along with other sacred spaces from where our relatives' spirits dwell in. This work has been born through healing from grief, the loss of loved ones, and a continued hope for a prosperous future.

Lastly, this work is intended to serve as a toolkit for healing. These words are focused for you, the reader, to find inspiration to support healing solutions in your community by using tools such as academic research, philanthropy, journaling, meditation, fitness, Indigenous medicines, playing sports, hearing the laughter of your children, talk story, culture, language (as explored in chapter 4), etc. There are so many healing modalities to choose from and it is through your own lived experience for you, as the reader, to determine which is the best fit. Chapter five will explore the future and next steps for healing by implementing a rematriation lens.

Historicity of Matriarchical Pain

Indigenous Women have carried out community and familial roles that embody deep cultural practices connected to matrilineal caretaking of land, body, and spirit (John, 2015; Nickel & Fehr, 2020). Matriarchically ways of knowing have created a special balance in communities that have allowed for the proper caretaking of kinship circles, traditional cultural practices, celebrations of life milestones, as well as emergency response efforts during times of crisis (Green, 2017, Eagle Heart 2020).

These practices also provided for restorative and regenerative development for the community at large and centered women as an equal shareholder of leadership circles. Such activations of leadership roles birthed new life during the COVID-19 Pandemic[3]. The pandemic forced global economies to halt and allowed for community think-tank's to be ignited. Such think-tanks involved Native women leading response efforts to deliver food/water, personal protection equipment (PPE), and sanitation equipment. Those involved in philanthropy also collaborated to create relief funds geared toward supporting tribal communities. In New Mexico, for example, the Native American Relief Fund[4] was created as an effort to collaborate with local and national funding partners, nonprofits, and government entities, to help deliver resources to the Apache, Diné, and Pueblo Nations within the state. To date, NARF has awarded more than 90 grants and raised over $2.4 million of its $3 million goal. Figure 3 was taken in May 2020 when a check for $25,000 was hand-delivered to the Cochiti Pueblo Governor on behalf of the NARF Committee. I personally had the honor to share this update as an extension of my heart work for my people.

[3] Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It was first discovered in Wuhan, China and later spread globally to all continents of the world causing a major global crisis and shutdown.
[4] The Native American Relief Fund (NARF) was founded in 2020 at the New Mexico Foundation. The advisory committee for the NARF also included the researcher.

Figure 3 Women of Cochiti and Governor of Cochiti

Response to the Pandemic

In addition to development of new philanthropic funds geared towards support relief efforts, many also found themselves behind their sewing machines, making masks for community. My own personal reflection of this time is reminiscent of the collective kinship circles to support those who were ill and also those who did not have the means to gain access to supplies including food. Philanthropic partners such as the Return to the Heart Foundation (R2HF) collaborated with Open Society Foundation and Masks For America to gain access to funding and PPE for rural groups including the tribal nations of New Mexico. I personally represented New Mexico and the southwest region of the US and coordinated with local groups

such as Pueblo Action Alliance (PAA), Laguna Community Foundation, Buffalo Thunder Isolation & Quarantine Center (Northern New Mexico), and the Mescalero Apache Tribe to deliver thousands of masks via my personal vehicle. Like many other mothers who were also mobilizing, I was also supporting home school learning in a virtual setting for my four children.

Responding to the crisis felt like an inherent extension of my values and I persisted despite fear of the unknown variants of the COVID-19 virus. At the onset of the pandemic, I was the lead on a W.K. Kellogg Foundation project that was focused on building long-term generational wealth in Native Communities and managing the Native American Advised Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation. Several months into the pandemic, I shifted gears and accepted a role at another community foundation.

Laguna Community Foundation

In joining the Pueblo of Laguna as the Executive Director of the Laguna Community Foundation (LCF), I had the opportunity to create Pueblo-centric circles of care and also to continue developing the LCF COVID-19 Relief Fund. The Laguna Community Foundation (LCF) was established in 2012 by the Pueblo of Laguna Leadership. In 2013, LCF incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and began supporting community-based efforts. The mission of LCF is to generate charitable resources that strengthen Laguna Pueblo. LCF has sought to forward its mission through local capacity-building. The Foundation is located in the heart of Laguna, New Mexico near Historic Route 66.

The LCF COVID-19 Relief fund supported over 75 artists and entrepreneurs at the Pueblo as well as tribal members living off the reservation. Each grant making period allowed for data sweeps to better understand community dynamics and challenges. Of the greatest of these data gathering opportunities, the Education to Employment Project, was also under weigh

before I joined the foundation. Supporting pass-through efforts as a local community foundation also meant that LCF had the opportunity to support other communities in its role as a connector, convener and engager. One of the most heartwarming moments I experienced at the LCF came by way of a fiscal sponsee known as Yakanal Project[5]. Yakanal Project had made connections with a group of female Guatemalan Weavers who were in desperate need of funding to support relief efforts in Guatemala. Through the fierce leadership of Dr's Shelly Valdez and Isabel Hawkins, a total of ten-thousand dollars was sent to this group of women to support such healing efforts in their communities.

I received an email with the photo detailed in Figure 4 (shown below) confirming receipt of the funds and also the gratitude; this was the answer to the Guatemalan Weaver's prayers.

Figure 4 Guatemalan Weaver Prayer Altar

[5] Yakanal Project's mission is to strengthen cultural identity and leadership capacities in Indigenous youth, preparing them to engage with other cultures while preserving their own. More information can be found at www.yakanal.org

Figure 5 Group of Guatemalan Women Weavers Group

Catalyzing on community-based efforts led by Indigenous women further speaks to the hard work that has been embedded within both of these photos. There is a deep commitment to love and support, as expressed through the values of the women who are doing the work. I interpret the heart-shaped floral arrangement on the floor, surrounded by candles, as a connection between the earth world and the spirit world, that honors the ancestors. Figure 5 further details the women in action through they're beautiful woven yarn and tapestries. In 2022, nearly two years after the pandemic, I received a beautiful woven scarf made by this group of women. This expression of gratitude further allowed me to reflect on the healing that is embedded into helping community when they need it most and that such acts of gratitude are tied to one's own heartstrings.

Philanthropy within Native communities, though not explicitly named, has always been a vital element and extension of core cultural values (Nickel & Fehr, 2020). For all Indigenous peoples it is a thoughtful caretaking of land, the earth's natural resources, and the cyclical calendar of traditions, customs, and ceremonies that help to guide long-term sustainability of all humanity. Native philanthropy can also be thought of an inherent responsibility to one another to provide support through various facets, including food, clothing, shelter, ceremony, as well as monetary in some cases. The idea of scarcity became prevalent with the arrival of visitors to Turtle Island beginning 1492 (Laduke & Cruz, 2013).

As such, the foundation of philanthropic wealth started with the accumulation of colonial wealth in the Western Hemisphere enacted through principles of the Doctrine of Discovery endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church's—Doctrine of Discovery, explicitly enforced the policy of the settler colonial project by declaring any lands discovered in the New World to be seized. This doctrine principle was soon legitimized by nation states in legal precedent processes, such as in 1823, the United States Supreme Court case, Johnson v. McIntosh. Chief Justice John Marshall's opinion firmly established the United States "that the principle of discovery gave European nations an absolute right to New World lands." At the very beginning of colonial contact, the imposition of settler colonial patriarchy has manifested itself into community political structures through the socialization which has not only been extractive, but it has also proven to be violent against Indigenous people, particularly women, Two-spirit (2s) people, and children (Smith, 2014). The unjust taking of Indigenous lands, vital resources, and chattel slavery has provided a foundation for generational philanthropic wealth to be built which has also been achieved through forced Federal Indian

Policy (Dulfano, 2017; Suzack, 2015). These are just a handful of examples by which ethnocide has been justified as to gain access to resources establishing vast amounts of colonial wealth.

The decimation of Indigenous cultural and kinship relationship systems was torn apart through the historical critique of Indigenous women by colonists, anthropologists, ethnologists, and various religious denominations that have labeled them as "subservient, acquiescent, and exotic" (Green, 1995; Green, 2007; Klein & Akerman, 2000). This gendered racial abstraction has further constituted ideas that women do not make community because their voices are not a part of political governance structures, especially in spaces that continue to secure colonial capital power (Krouse & Howard-Bobiwash, 2009). White supremacy and the settler state has also continued to fragment Native Nations through the jurisprudence of federal, state, and tribal relations, making it even more challenging to actively address violence against the land, people, and natural resources. This further lends to a plethora of monetary resources that are generated from stolen land and stolen resources.

Heart Work

Beyond the continued fight for equal rights, visibility, and the long-term outlook of the fiduciary duties indebted to Tribal Nations, the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the ways in which tribal infrastructures lacked adequate resources to respond to the emergency. Three months into the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May 2020 enacted protests and a call to action to address the policing of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) groups. It was also during this time that Indigenous Women were also leading circles of care to deliver water, food, medicines, personal protection equipment (PPE), etc. to their respective communities. Additionally, such leaders who also carry the title of "land and

water protectors" continued to call out the police brutality carried out through white male hegemony during this time (Hixson, 2021; Parsitau et al. 2021).

Indigenous Women have been the backbone of their communities' leading such grassroots efforts stemmed in culturally responsive solutions which can further be referenced as "heart work" (Minthorn, 2022; R2HF, 2022). Such modern-day efforts include raising capital to fund projects that support intergenerational communal healing like at the R2HF. Much of these projects address global epidemics including bringing attention to the Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls[6] crisis (MMIWG), violence against women and girls, and basic fundamental humans' rights issues. Indigenous Women are also creating healing and regenerative projects that support Native Women and Girls. Digital Media outlets have not thoroughly documented this, especially from a philanthropic lens to assess how much monetary support is funding efforts by Native women and girls. The lack of funding and the historical exotification of Indigenous women has also proven to be lethal to Indigenous communities because of the continued jurisdictional challenges that Native Nations experience as it relates to prosecuting Non-Native perpetrators (Smith, 2017). This, coupled with the extraction of the earth's natural resources and the violent decimation of land through fracking, nuclear testing, and nuclear waste disposal is a violent metaphor for the continued abuse that is experienced by Native Women; violence on the land is violence on Native Women.

Cultivating such heart work and beloved community during the time of COVID-19 was a rekindling of Puebloan stewardship. Through the various roles that I carry, I hold an inherent obligation through Cochitian ways of knowing, including *coo'weh scho'ah'peht* which I have come to know and understand as Pueblo philanthropy. Coo'weh Scho'ah'peht, loosely translated,

[6] It is also important to note that this movement also comes in the forms of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR).

can be defined as “how they tell us to lead.” To encompass such values includes a responsibility of reciprocity through how we support one another, how we make space for one another, and how we nurture one another through food and creative monetization. Attached to this also includes intergenerational layers of care that we have come to embody through the bonds of kinship, clanship, and the cultural paradigms that are nuanced within the Keres language.

Indigenous people across Turtle Island, as well as globally, witnessed the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and what shortfalls prevail when policy fails to address basic needs of Tribal Communities. COVID-19, despite its detrimental effects on entire nations, has allowed many of us to do some deep listening. Post-pandemic it has also shown us that food security and dependency on capitalism has pulled us further away from our traditional subsistent ways of caretaking. Through reconnecting with the soil, we press upon the heart of our mother and it is through her love that we are reborn again.

Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership

This very activation of funneling philanthropic resources created a slate for what can best be described as Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership (IFJL). IFJL can be best defined as an intersectional approach to provide grassroots action, advocacy, reciprocity, and rematriation to Indigenous communities (Green, 2007; Singer, 2020).

IFJL efforts supported a critical recentering of Indigenous Women’s voices during the coronavirus crisis and continue to do so as we move toward a post-covid world. An exponential number of community-based healing efforts were led by Native Women, throughout the time of COVID-19, which demonstrates the vast variety of healing modalities known to Indigenous communities. Such efforts further activated the opportunity to empower, uplift, and support intergenerational community healing. Illuminating the stories of such efforts are vital to

recentering community wellness, creating healing models, and are also an opportunity to further contribute to the discourse of Indigenous Feminist Body Sovereignty and Self-determination. They also point to the ongoing need for philanthropy to fund those efforts, especially where state, federal, and tribal dollar's fall short.

Statement of the Problem

Despite ongoing efforts, a snapshot of IFJL philanthropic healing efforts, during the time of COVID-19[7] as well as currently, across Turtle Island has not been evaluated. Most often, the devastating statistics surrounding MMIWG, substance abuse, poverty, and unemployment rates tend to lead capital campaigns within non-profit giving circles (Wegner & Lawless, 2021). The Return to the Heart Foundation[8] (R2HF) is a Native-Women led organization that supports empowering visionary Indigenous Women-led initiatives as an intermediary grant maker and was founded in 2020 by three Native women (Eagle heart, 2020). The four focus areas that shape the heart work at R2HF include: 1) Civic Engagement, 2) Climate Justice, 3) Narrative Change, and 4) Restorative and Regenerative Development. The co-founders and Co-Chief Executive Officers are visionary Native women[9] who are experienced in creative community building and are called to bring healing and action to Native communities through their ancestral wisdom. They believe impact and cultural shifts come from a diversity of perspective and skill. This team holds unique expertise in advocacy, civic engagement, community development, healing, narrative change, philanthropy, strategic planning and leadership development.

[8] The Return to the Heart Foundation can be found at www.return2heart.org
[9] Sarah Eagle Heart, Gina Jackson, and Senator Red Dawn Foster serve as the co-founders of the Return to the Heart Foundation. Gina Jackson and Joannie Suina, the Researcher, serve as the current Chief Executive Officers.

R2HF Civic Engagement

Despite representing nearly seven million in number, Native Americans make up just 2.9% of the U.S. population. In some political circles, Native peoples have been called the "sleeping giant" because Native representation can shift elections, disrupt the status quo in America by overturning local and national elections.. However, it will take electing more Indigenous people at all levels of government to address the unique issues that affect Native People. History was made in 2018 when two Native Women were the first to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Just two years later, a record eighteen Native Women ran for Congress, and three were elected. In 2021, Deborah A. Haaland, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, was confirmed as the Secretary of the Interior and the first Indigenous person to serve as a cabinet member.

To further this progress, R2HF is committed to increasing civic engagement to build Indigenous power and influence in the political sphere. This includes supporting Native Women who are running for elected office at the local, state, national, and tribal levels. As a result, Indigenous people will continue to advance policies that bolster Native sovereignty, benefit Native communities, and prioritize Native values which is critical to the future of all Indigenous self-determination.

R2HF Climate Justice

Climate change continues to be at the forefront for R2HF as a strategic focus area. With global warming, the earth is experiencing more and more natural disasters, weather extremes, forest fires, food and water insecurity, and other environmental issues that threaten our very existence. While communities across the globe are feeling the effects, Indigenous peoples are

impacted first and most drastically. Ancestral lands and sacred sites continue to be desecrated for resource extraction. Water on some reservations is unsafe to drink due to chemical pollutants in the soil. Coastal tribes in Alaska are losing entire communities and lifeways because the environment that has sustained them for centuries is now warming and the tides continue to rise.

Indigenous Women experience climate injustice even more poignantly. When extractive companies build their “man camps" near tribal lands, violence against Native Women and children increases dramatically. Fracking raises health risks for a host of diseases, including birth defects and childhood cancers. Mining projects monopolize local water supplies and endanger the fish and wildlife that families rely on for sustenance. These kinds of issues have forced Native Women to the front lines of fighting climate change; however, they are severely underfunded. The largest environmental philanthropies give just 1.3% of U.S. climate dollars to BIPOC-led environmental justice organizations (R2HF, 2022).

R2HF Narrative Change

R2HF seeks to shift the narrative as it relates to stereotypes and misrepresentation surrounding Native people. Whether it’s in the classroom, the entertainment industry, the news media, or the sports arena, Native people are woefully misrepresented. Myths and misconceptions about Native Women dominate public consciousness, and as a result, Native Women are dismissed, dehumanized, or erased altogether.

To that end, R2HF is fiercely dedicated to narrative change. R2HF funds Native Women who are working to reclaim Indigenous stories and drive narrative change across a wide range of platforms, including film, TV, music, art, fashion, digital media, philanthropy, politics, academia, activism, and much more. Additionally, we support, uplift, and amplify the efforts of

those who are bringing physical, mental, spiritual, and cultural healing to their tribes and communities. In these ways, R2HF facilitates and promotes storytelling that is changing the way the world sees Native Women. R2HF seeks to ensure that the voices, stories, and narratives of Indigenous women are heard.

R2HF Restorative & Regenerative Development

R2HF recognizes that Indigenous communities and reservations represent some of the poorest places in the U.S. where infrastructure is often lacking, limiting access to running water, safe roads, and modern schools. Unemployment rates are high and many Indigenous people rely on informal economies to make ends meet. Often times, there is little to no funding to support this work. There is also very little opportunity for achieving economic stability, much less building sustainable wealth for generations to come. These deep economic challenges come from the colonial project, which has targeted Native peoples for centuries with continuous, largely violent attempts to erase Indigenous people from the land which have sustained communities for millennia.

As a result, economic issues in Indian Country require work that goes much deeper than mere finances. Native women recognize that healing is central to achieving economic independence – healing of the land, healing of relationships, and healing of generational trauma. This is the core of a Native Women-led approach to economic development. As such, R2HF supports the creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship of Native Women who are innovating healing pathways to generational wealth. R2HF aims to open doors that have never been opened before, by guiding philanthropic dollars to assist in building sustainable prosperity through economic development and enterprise.

Indigenous communities have been at the hands of many government-led policies that are empirical in nature. The application of cultural Puebloan core values that guide a process for decentralizing the hegemony of western feminism to works towards building community introduce new perspectives to the resurgence of an Indigenous Feminist voice. The need to continually decolonize leadership practices and the leader's lens is critical to building a framework that is inclusive of Indigenous voice. Since first contact, Indigenous people have experienced demoralizing unethical practices, abuse, and oppression through Westernized research and policies that have continued to dismantle traditional ways of knowing, along with languages and tribal history (Wilson, S., 2009; Smith, L. T., 1999; Kovach, M., 2010). Existing literature that unmasks and exposes continued colonization practices has shifted toward a decolonized lens along with frameworks that prioritize cultural protocol and embraces healing practices (Smith, L. T., 2012; Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T., 2008; Dana-Sacco, G., 2017).

Moreover, the need to develop a Pueblo Indigenous Feminist approach to carrying out leadership is formulated upon the premise that Indigenous women are knowledge keepers and the backbone of many Indigenous societies, communities, and groups (Mihesuah, 2003). The embeddedness of matrilineal kinship and the role of women is based upon an honoring of the sacred feminine (Allen, 1992). This occurs through a bonding between earth world (physical) and the spirit world (abstract). In decentralizing from the existing feminist theories that pivot on western feminism, will provide for empowerment of community and grassroots efforts as many of us have witnessed during this global pandemic. This has occurred through a rekindling of land-based practices in growing our own food, reinstituting systems of care for our elders and doing social distance check-ins, sewing masks, delivering COVID-19 status reports to funders to

request financial support within the philanthropic sector, as well as serving as caretakers and teachers for our children during their virtual learning. I also position that the environmental connection of Indigenous Women to land is a key element in formulating a process with regard to carrying out leadership.

Shifting the narrative is especially important in the current landscape which seeks to bring awareness within the sector around how philanthropy has been built upon stolen land and stolen resources. Against this backdrop, is a critical moment and opportunity to better understand how Indigenous Women-led efforts are promoting healing at the national level through assessing the ongoing grantmaking at R2HF. R2HF has focused its Traditional Healers & Helpers Grant Making on grassroots projects whose goals are cultural helping and healing. Such initiatives have proven to shed light upon uplifting initiatives to achieve long-term narrative change strategies from within social movements.

In the last decade, the rise of MMIW has astronomically increased. Following the Urban Indian Health Institute database, in 2016 alone, there were 5,712 cases of missing and/or murdered Indigenous women and girls reported, and of these only 116 were logged in the Department of Justice database (NMIAD, 2020: UIHI, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth a new way of life for many Indigenous families, including how Native women support their families financially and also fulfill a service in the community. Altruistically, many started businesses to balance caretaking of young children, and the elderly, and to allow them to have more autonomy in providing for their families (Laguna Community Foundation, 2022). This re-centering of women in roles that further guide communal core values allowed for open dialogues to address responses to the global crisis and to begin peeling away the layers of unresolved grief and trauma. Stepping into inherent matriarchal leadership roles has also allowed Indigenous

women to reflect on where communities are headed if women cannot be at the forefront to lead, guide, and carry out their heart work (Minthorn, 2018).

Justification or Rationale

From a contemporary and academic lens, IFJL can also be defined as the rematriation of Indigenous feminist teachings, which are sacred to kinship traditions that have been inherited and passed on to us from our ancestors. Native women are creators of life, protectors of future generations, cultivators, and nurturers of pollinating heart-wisdom into being. The teachings that Native women carry are essential for the well-being of Indigenous societies, clans, tribes, and nations. Acknowledging rematriation within formal and informal spaces as well as through everyday practices commemorates the matriarchal symbolism nuanced in Indigenous culture. In reflecting on the healing efforts led by Indigenous women during the COVID-19 pandemic, that were funded through R2HF, it is important to gather a full assessment on such healing modalities to fully understand how these efforts can best be supported. Therefore, it is critical to gather data and more information from R2HF grant award recipients surrounding the philanthropic support they have received for continued fund development within the sector.

Theoretical Framework

I will pull upon several theories centered on decolonial thought, including Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005; Reyes 2018). CRT centers the idea that racism is endemic to society which has continued to be challenged over the past three years by white supremacist groups and the settler state. While TribalCrit provides a framework to decolonize CRT Theory and expose the continued assimilation without acknowledging racism, it fails to acknowledge that colonialism affects both Indigenous women and men differently. It also does not consider gender oppression and sexism of

Indigenous women (including systemic erasure of Indigenous women as it relates to data surrounding MMIW, violence against Native women, civil and criminal jurisdiction on tribal lands, fundamental human rights regarding sterilization abuse, as well as visibility of intimate partner violence in tribal communities). I argue that the need to decolonize existing theoretical practices is weighted in the need for an Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership lens and a protocol that is sensitive to the needs and history of tribal communities. With an everchanging political forefront where tribal sovereignty and self-determination continue to be challenged, IFJL allows for an open dialogue to begin in spaces where the patriarchy has dominated communal voice.

The working logic model shared in the next page (Figure 6) describes a connection to land, kinship circles, and core cultural values. In understanding how Indigenous feminism provides pathways for connecting to community, it is important to capture these tenets which is why I sought to illustrate them within this graphic. Beyond that, there is a woven connection between the ancestors, the heart work, and being prayed into existence. Much of this work is also centered on mothering and nurturing our communities, whether it be through various healing modalities that are described in this paper. It is also considerate of the roles of mother, auntie, grandma, and sister and how they are critical elements to the sharing of knowledge.

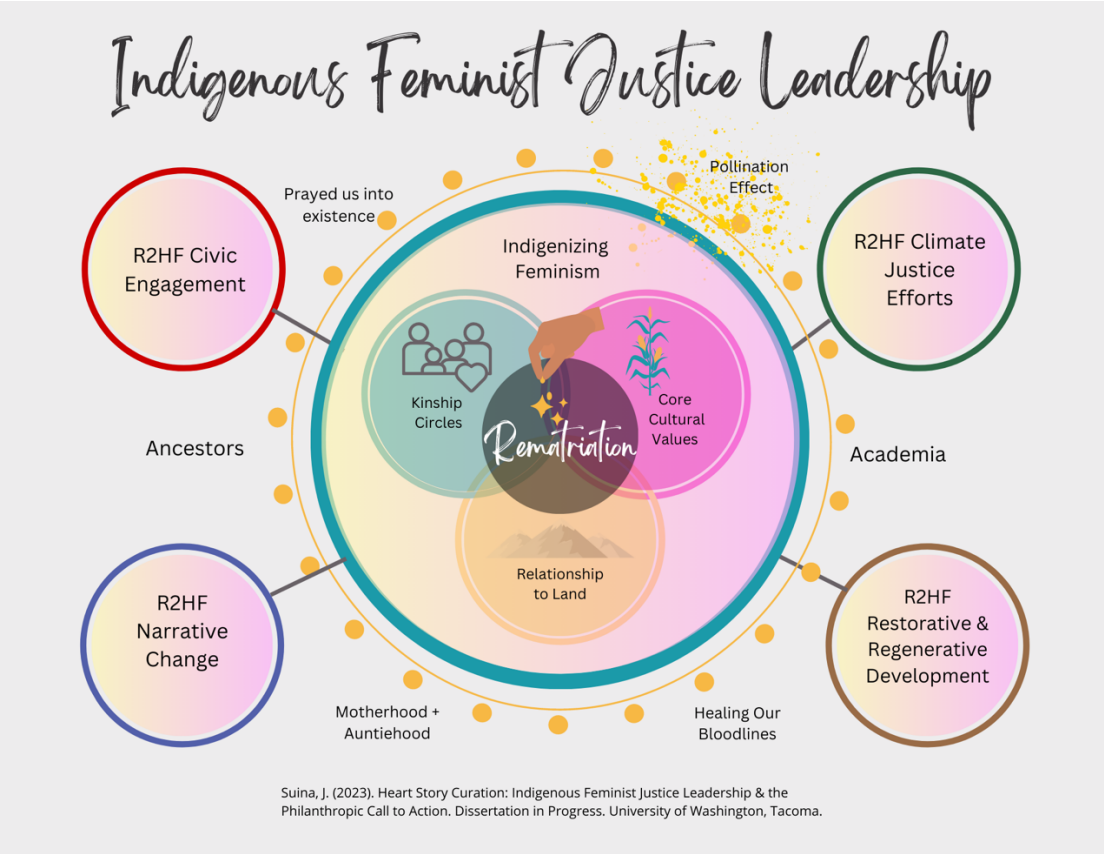

Figure 6 Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership

As a growing discourse, I define rematriation as its own IFJL Theory through the collective narratives, experiences, and cultural connections that are fulfilled via communal obligations (Dulfano, 2017; John, 2015; Nickel & Fehr, 2020). The above logic model describes a work in progress in which rematriation efforts are carried out in a number of ways, including: 1) Kinship, 2) Relationship to the Land, 3) Core Values and they ways they are practiced which lead out from the diagram as an attempt to decolonize, and connect the spaces where Indigenous people are centered within. This is a growing body of culturally responsive strategy which began as a framework for Corn Pollen Consulting (CPC), LLC[10] in 2017 (Corn

[10] Corn Pollen Consulting, LLC. is a 100% Native Women-owned business that was founded in 2017 by the researcher.

Pollen Consulting, 2017). Below in figure 7, details the model for culturally responsive strategy for which CPC utilizes while working with Indigenous Communities.

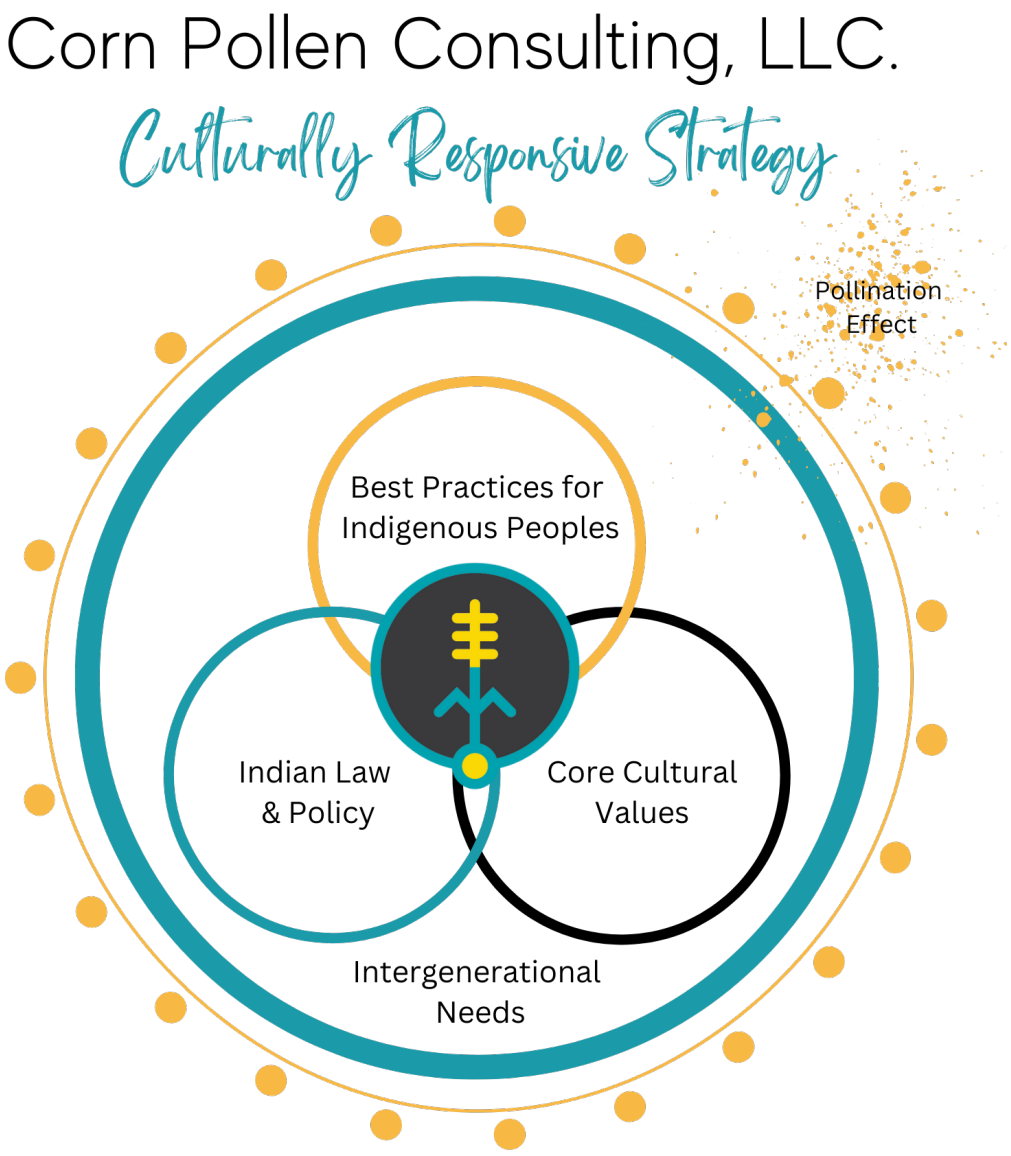

Figure 7 Corn Pollen Consulting Framework

Each circle represents an area of focus while the dotted line represents the "pollination effect" which can best be described as an ongoing sharing of resources and teachings which occurs

organically in Indigenous communities. These working models represent leadership activation and these areas heed a call to action for philanthropic dollars to fund this work.

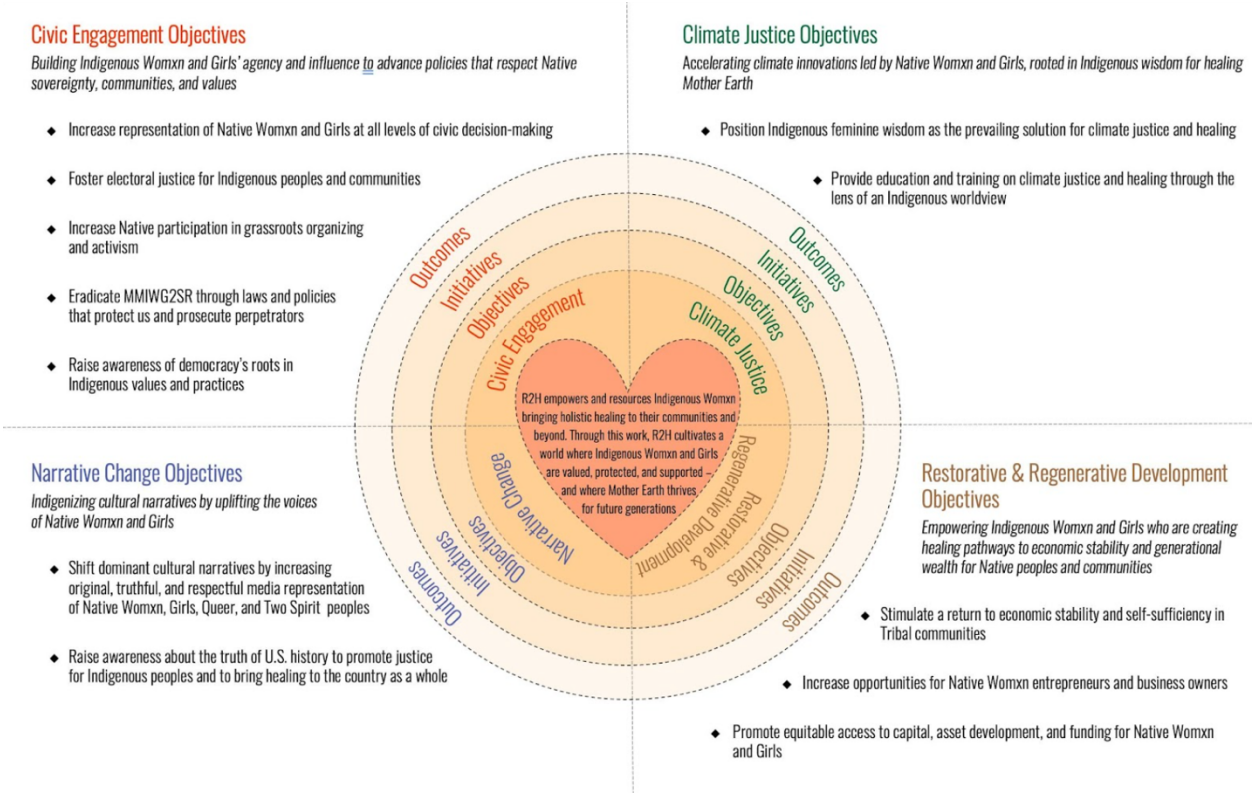

Figure 8 Return to the Heart Foundation Leadership Activation Model

Lastly, such leadership weavings manifest themselves into the R2HF Strategic Framework that focuses on healing, decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, and self-identification. Illustrated from the center of the image (Figure 8) are the four focus areas for which the foundation pivots upon to support intermediary grant making efforts. Civic engagement supports the ongoing development of policies that respect and uplift native sovereignty, community, and values. Narrative change enlists the true story telling, shifting away from dominant culture and stereotypical labels that Native people have had to endure. Climate justice evaluates the ongoing stewardship of the earth through positioning Indigenous

women and feminism at the center of leading healing efforts. Restorative and regenerative development increases opportunities for Native women to uplift their work through small business efforts and grassroots projects, such as through the Traditional Healers & Helpers portfolio at the R2HF.

Defining Indigenous Feminism has been debatable among scholars, genders, and communities across sectors because of the varied experiences of contemporary and traditional Indigenous experiences. As Dulfano states, "…the question has become complicated because of the realignment of the two core components "of "Indigeneity and Feminism" as equally weighted, and of commensurate value, with decolonization of the hierarchy of patriarchal authority" (Dulfano, 2017, p.82). How a person views Indigenous Feminism would depend on numerous factors, including but not limited to; history (personal and historical), upbringing, trauma, and social situations. While Indigenous feminists have been writing and speaking out for time immemorial, IFJL as a global movement with resonance has continued to develop within the COVID-19 era.

Such assessments of Indigenous women have further channeled into violent expressions of abuse through the exotification and sexualization of Indigenous Women, girls, Two-Spirits, as well as non-binary identifying relatives. This has translated into patriarchal aggression from non-Native perpetrators who take advantage of the limited criminal jurisdiction on Native American reservations. Machismo culture, defined as an aggressive misogynistic attitude that has been influenced by Spanish colonial patriarchal imposition has also continued to be a common pattern among Indigenous men. The literature on Machismo and Cabellerismo behavior describes these personas as an "emotional connectedness" related to aggression and anti-social behavior

stemming from colonialism (Arciniega, Anderson, T. C., Tovar-Blank, Z. G., & Tracey, T. J. G., 2008). Much of this is also influenced by the ways in which communities practice their religious autonomy around patriarchal spaces such as tribal government and the local economy.

Drawing from the research of Michael Green, there are two theoretical issues associated with understanding the complexity of cultural identity of how settler colonialism has affected communities (Green, 1995). The first of these describes as an identity aspect and the second one is a cultural aspect. Green translates this to the specific interests that bond an individual to their community as an identity while culture is associated as a collectiveness, "…described as a nation" (Green, 1995). Allen describes matrilineal kinship ties as a web of dimensions that she details as: cultural, spiritual, personal, and historical (Allen, 1992). These spheres of identity are founding principles of how an individual is regarded in her community and how her relationships with the social structure are to be carried out (Green, 2007; Mihesuah 2003).

This system of understanding the underlying structure of clanship is a framework that one is born into and through it, both the spiritual and physical world is acknowledged. In many ways, women as cultivators of culture have continuously been redefined through western researchers' lenses, particularly ethnographers who observed women's roles as subordinate to their male counterparts. This shifting of the narrative probes the need to understand what the 21st-century Indigenous woman defines herself as and how these fits within IFJL.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This review is a critical analysis of the literature pertaining to the experience of Native Women within the context of Indigenous communal roles and will highlight the hardships as well as the resiliency of women's roles, through language and culture. This review will also explore the ways in which Native Women have been marginalized through settler colonialism, forced Federal Indian Policy, and the continued suppression of women's voices and as Matriarchal figures (Mihesuah, 2004; Klein & Ackerman, 2012; Green, 2007). The literature acknowledges the connection between colonial impositions, gender studies, and the discussion of women's roles as integral pieces to the Native community, kinship circles, family structures, and sources of community resilience and healing (Nickel & Fehr, 2020). Such evaluations of the role of Native Women and girls have also included an analysis of the imposition of Boarding Schools which is key to understanding shifts of traditional roles within societal structures in a post-assimilative world. This review also seeks to understand the effects of engendering women and girls and what kinds of dominant attitudes over women (Tippeconnic Fox et al., 2015). The goal of this research is to use philanthropy as a tool to mobilize efforts to reverse such negative attitudes against Native Women and girls and create more opportunities for them.

For time immemorial, Native women have carried out important leadership roles as clan mothers, midwifes, healers, and culture bearers, but the literature regarding present-day social structures is inconsistent (Krouse & Howard, 2009). I define the Indigenous Feminist movement as one that includes a reconnection to land, body, and spirit with the focus of providing healing and support to the community at large. Traditional teachings have always identified Native Women as a critical element within Indigenous society and, ultimately, one who serves as the

backbone of their community. Much of the literature suggests that the voice of feminism positions itself with regard to sexuality and civil rights while other authors claim that "…women's status is produced through social forces that give rise to the origin of the family, private property, and the state" (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 21). The idea that women's status is understood and defined as property continues to enforce a prejudice that degrades Native people as "less than" which is evident in founding documents for the United States, including the Declaration of Independence that details Indigenous people as "merciless Indian savages" (US DOI, 1776).

Women's suffrage has remained to be a topic of discussion because of the slow progression that has been made in civil rights and exercising autonomy. During the 19th Century and up, until the 1900s women were not allowed to own property and were defined as "property" and belonging to their husbands. English Common law defined United States law and most Americans are not familiar with how the Iroquois Confederacy and how Haudenosaunee Women ignited a movement of Indigenous Feminism (Wagner, 2020). It was not until 1920, when women were granted the right to vote after the 19th Amendment was passed (US Const. Amend. XIX). However, Native American people were still not considered US citizens and did not gain the right to vote until 1924 which was shortly after the first Indian Boarding School closed its doors, just six years earlier (NARF, 2019).

The redefining of Native Women's roles in the American society has also been highly influenced by media, anthropologists, ethnologists, and others seeking to learn their histories (Klein & Akerman, 1995; Green, 1995; Green, 2007). Unfortunately, many of these stories were highlighted from what LaCroix defined as "as-told-to" informants. In the last decade, the rise of missing and murdered Indigenous Women has astronomically increased. Following the Urban

Indian Health Institute Database, in 2016 alone, there were 5,712 cases of missing and/or murdered Indigenous women and girls reported and of these only 116 were logged in the Department of Justice database (UIHI, 2017). Pairing the ways in which Western researchers and Federal Indian Policy have positioned women's roles suggests subservience and subordination, further purporting toward stereotypes around the exotification of Native Women (Beck, 2017).

Federal Indian Boarding Schools

Boarding schools were an instrument of assimilation into western culture and also a mechanism of purging ideologies that further enforced manifest destiny (McCarty, T., 2013). Upon arriving at such boarding schools such as Carlisle Indian Industrial School, students were forced to take Christian names as a part of their new identity and their hair was chopped off[11]. They were also given uniforms and were taught to acquire property. Individual property was a concept that did not exist in tribal communities, as communal property was the basis for Tribes (Miller, 2013). Native children were also forbidden to speak their Native language to one another. The children were severely punished and beaten for speaking the native tongue. Additionally, children suffered from extreme rates of malnutrition, depression, and homesickness as they were completely removed from everyone and everything they had ever known (Lajimodiere & Lehman, 2021).

Federal Indian Boarding Schools focused on domestication and "developing young women into housewives (Carlisle Indian Industrial School Girls Roles, 2018). The 2019 Native American Rights Fund report, "Trigger Points" details key findings from Boarding School Survivors. The report details a recount of how students, after leaving boarding school, became

[11] For many Native Communities, hair is only cut short when a person is in mourning.

ashamed of their “identities and communities” due to the internalized messages that were perpetuated through assimilative education of Indian children (NARF, 2019). “Reflecting on her experiences in the early 20th century, A Kiowa female recalled, you get punished. Everything you do, you get punished. You’d get tired and get punished” (as cited in Torres, 2019). Assessing the psychological distress that can also transfer unconsciously from a survivor to the next generation through repressed trauma experiences or unresolved and disenfranchised grief as Dr. Maria Yellowhorse Braveheart described in her keynote address at the inaugural National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition Conference (Yellowhorse Braveheart, 2018) provides an alignment to healing through place-based identity as Indigenous people and our role as matriarchs.

Gender roles were extremely defined in the curriculum of such schools. Girls were taught how to cook, sew, launder clothes and bedding, and spent a large majority of their school day cleaning the institution. Boys, on the other hand, were taught vocational skills such as farming and cultivating the land, blacksmithing, shoe-making, as well as other forms of manual labor. The conversion to Christianity was an essential part of school curricula. Students were taught to disown traditional Native American rituals, as these were considered barbaric and sinful. Sexuality of students was highly governed by school staff, yet rape and sexual abuse was ongoing. Despite the abuse, mistreatment, and federal-imposed policies Native children were led to believe that this way of life was ordinary, non-threatening, and that these schools would further support American life (Lajimodiere & Lehman, 2021; Child, B., 2000; Fear-Segal, J., 2007).

Carlisle Indian Industrial School became the first policy driven practice of American Indian child removal implemented by the Federal government. During the forced removal of Indian children, transformation occurred, not only physically, but also mentally. It was a time of pain and depression for Native families. The emotional care or mental health of students was something that was not taken into consideration at Carlisle because military operations guided its pedagogy. The model of Carlisle paved the way for the future 367 Indian Boarding Schools[12] that would be developed, under the guise of twelve different religious denominations (Healing Voices, 2018).

Understanding the ripple effects of historical trauma from boarding school experiences and how individuals can heal from such traumas across the span of one's lifetime and across generations continues to remain an area of study for many scholars, as well as organizations dedicated to truth, justice, and healing. When analyzing the literature, Indigenous Feminism is a highly variable concept, and the need to understand the resilience of women, and boarding school survivors centered on tribal cultural continuity and revitalization of language are limited due to the lack of autobiographical narratives addressing this topic. Indian Boarding School: Daughters Coming Home details the personal narratives of survival stories of Native American Women and sheds light on the resilience embedded in spiritual and emotional health, as key elements to healing from traumatic events and adverse childhood experiences (LaCroix, 1993). LaCroix discovers several themes in her qualitative study in which she interviewed ten female boarding school survivors.

[12] According to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, there are 367 Federal Indian Boarding Schools identified within the database. 67 of these schools remain open today and are an example of reclaiming our Native Children's education through Tribally-controlled schools via the Bureau of Indian Education.

These themes can be summarized around the aspect of identity and how it was not until many years later as elder women, did these women recognize their own positive leadership qualities as grandparents. LaCroix coins this as, "the grandmother's mirror (LaCroix, 1993, p. 236). Each of the interviews details the painful experience of neglect, abuse, loneliness, and failure to understand or lead in traditional matriarchal roles upon returning home from boarding school. A separate qualitative study lead by First Nations scholar, Gretchen W. Minakutsik highlights how roles models of women who were survivors of Canadian Residential Schools and bonded with other women a part of their extended family to process their own experience with assimilation speaks to qualities of a leader such as the importance of reflection (Minakutsik, 1993). The interviewee describes, "…Dad taught me the value of silence and observation, how to use these for learning" and how this practice helped her to heal from her upbringing and conflict with identity due to forced assimilative practices of First Nations people (Minakutsik, 1993, p. 165).

National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition[13] (NABS), founded in 2012 after a national symposium in 2011 by thoughtful discussion and leadership from the United States after discussion with First Nations Leaders from Canada who were also simultaneously working through the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The mission of NABS is to lead in the pursuit of understanding and addressing the ongoing trauma created by the U.S. Indian Boarding School policy (NABS, 2023). This has been exemplified by new partnerships with the Department of Interior during Secretary Deborah Haaland's tenure

[13] The researcher currently serves as Treasurer for the Board of Directors of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. She has served in various Executive Board positions varying from President, to Secretary, and most recently as Treasurer for two consecutive terms. She joined the board in 2018 during the 100th year anniversary of the closing of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

including establishing a commission for Truth and Healing. Policy development at the federal and state level have included the recognition of "Day of Remembrance for the Children who died while attending United States Boarding School Survivors" as was proclaimed in Minnesota on September 28th, 2022 and signed by Minnesota Governor Tim Walz[14]. It should be noted that such leadership decisions could not be made without the movement of Indigenous Feminist voice, including through the thoughtful support of Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan who represents the White Earth Band of Ojibwe people who also presented the official proclamation to the NABS team on this day.

Truth & Reconciliation

The government of Canada continues to be committed to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership through the TRC. However, this continues to be debated among scholars and community. Through the TRC, Canada has committed to work closely with provinces, territories, First Nations, the Métis Nation, Inuit groups and church entities to implement recommendations of the TRC and further reconciliation to the benefit of all Canadians in perpetuity for residential school survivors and descendants. It was estimated that 150,000 children attended Indian Residential Schools in Canada and that between 2,500-3,200 went missing. However, in 2021 at the height of the pandemic, the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School further confirmed what First Nations people have been saying for decades,

[14] The research was present at the NABS office in Minneapolis, Minnesota when the Proclamation was delivered to the NABS Team by Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan (Indian Country Today, *The wrap: The national day for truth and reconciliation* 2022).

that thousands of children went missing while attending these schools. Today, that number continues to rise well beyond 10,000 (Douglas & McIntyre, 2012;Wilson et al., 2019).

NABS has learned from the experience of our First Nations relatives about the TRC process and has even included TRC commissioners as a part of strategic planning efforts. They have provided their expertise in building the commission as well as the call to action to the Canadian Government to fund the reparations work. The intertwining of reconciliation efforts and Native Feminism has continued to allow for a platform of storytelling to occur. These opportunities for truth-telling shed light on the history surrounding Federal Indian Policy and the many detrimental eras that have not been shared by the dominant narratives in western society (Linklater, 2014; Weaver, 2019). Within Research & Reconciliation: Unsettling Ways of Knowing through Indigenous Relationships, the authors describe storytelling as an art to support empowerment projects (Wilson et al., 2019). This strategy is something important to keep in mind within the discourse of academia and how such truth-telling narratives can be bridged within philanthropy to support giving to such causes as healing from federal Indian boarding school policy.

Further activations of healing intergenerational historical trauma can also be learned from First Nations people, as The TRC's mandate was to inform all Canadians about the truthful history of the country and its assimilation through Indian Residential Schools. For many, the undoing of such atrocities is impossible because of the lasting effects of intergenerational historical trauma. "Reconciliation as attempts to improve social relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; reconciliation as specific calls to action and processes outlined by national governments; reconciliation as healing within our families and communities;

reconciliation within ourselves" is described by scholars reflecting on the collection of research and testimony of survivors' experiences (Wilson et al., 2019).

Some of the important tenets of this work also draw upon international policy pulled from the United nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP, 2007)). UNDRIP defines an overview of the fundament collective human rights of Indigenous people. Article 7, Section II details:

"Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to an- other group."

Despite the declaration not legally binding, it does carry heavy implications for all international governments comma especially as it relates to human rights. The United States has agreed to support UNDRIP.

Flow of Capital + Philanthropy

According to a 2019 report conducted by Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) and Candid, philanthropic giving for Native led and Native-serving efforts only occurs at 0.04% nationally (Candid & NAP, 2019). As described in a recent publication, "Native women who are leading New Mexico-based foundations, community nonprofits, and organizations came together—across kitchen tables, on conference calls, in virtual meetings, and via email communications—to identify the greatest areas of need in their state and local communities" (NAP, 2022). Suina also describes this as, "…in a system that wasn't built for us and a system that was built upon our stolen land, Native people are reclaiming systems, shifting the conversation, rewriting the narrative, and re-centering Indigenous women" (NAP, 2022). These conversations lend themselves to the full dialogue around how philanthropy can recognize and

honor the matriarchal symbolism in Indigenous communities. This is critical to understand the origin of where healing needs to take place and how communities and funders can strategize around those needs.

Framing the lens for which Indigenous Feminisms and communal stewardship supports a health way forward is necessary to allow for a deeper conversation to evaluate some of the root problems that have erupted through traditional philanthropic giving. The COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the continued inequities of communities across the globe, especially rural tribal communities, along with a movement to support the racial revolution. Philanthropy, donor-advised giving, fund development, and charitable giving has always been geared towards charity efforts that attempt to tackle poverty and other deficits for communities of color. Anyone who has been in the philanthropic sector can understand the pragmatic layers that exist between donor and the recipient of capital.

There is a "gatekeeping" role that philanthropic organizations such as community foundations take on that prevents marginalized groups from achieving wealth, addressing racial equity gaps, or even having sustainability through funding projects. Additionally, government-led initiatives have streamlined their agendas, with a particular focus on the ward-to-guardian relationship that defined the role of the US government in supporting Native Nations as decided in Worcester v. Georgia (Cohen, 2017). Despite the 19 Pueblo Nations in New Mexico, Pueblo philanthropy has never been considered as critical methodology or framework for what partnering with Native Communities can look like if philanthropy was able to catalyze its efforts. Federal Indian Policy and historical legislation has affected us in exponential ways and we have seen the detrimental ripples in how the government has failed to respond through the CARES Act and the subsequent amendments that have shifted Native Nations and their ability to submit

reimbursements for expenses. Setting up roadblocks to prevent unwanted traffic was challenged in the state of North Dakota and is currently in litigation. The very fabric of accessibility and what critical needs exists to those residing in spaces that are labeled as “food deserts” also point to the cash economy that has shifted our ways of thinking.

Food apartheid prevents communities with acquiring the adequate nourishment of traditional foods that are known to have medicinal and healing purposes. Instead, the bioengineered food that is found within reservation grocery stores also reinforces the settler colonial state of capitalism through mass production. Much like the basis for how philanthropy was built, through chattel slavery and stolen land, today’s produce is still generated through undocumented immigrants who are paid little to no wages, receive no healthcare or benefits, suffer during extreme weather while tending to fields, and in turn capitalism benefits from this mass production of food for profit.

The gatekeeping within philanthropy exists through the application processes and granting of awards to applicants. Many applications are highly technical, require several hours of work and explanations, and require applicants to find solutions to issues such as gentrification, homelessness, and income insecurity. These major community foundations also lack in understanding the longevity of projects and only offer measly grant awards that are specific to a project and do not support general operations within a nonprofit organization. This kind of resource hoarding also prevents long-term solutions because sustainability is not attached to these kinds of awards. Moreover, Native-specific funding sources also sometimes may inadvertently pose their own challenges within the sector because applicants are pointed to the “Native-only” funding opportunities and then are deemed ineligible for those available to the

general population, as is the case with many of the COVID-19 relief funds for municipalities that border reservation lands and yet are considered “too far” or out of reach.

In April of 2020, I was also appointed to serve on the Native American Relief Fund Advisory Committee before it was formalized. Each advisor recognized that NARF funding could support tribes in providing relief from COVID-19 in the areas of food, medical supplies, water, as well as community and individual needs. Part of the immediate needs were to provide for a non-federal match to support any Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) funding that a tribe received. FEMA defines this non-federal match as a cost share. The matching or cost sharing can be found at 44 C.F.R. § 13.24. Additionally, federally recognized tribes are subject to a number of different requirements in how they determine to be an applicant or a sub-applicant. While COVID-19 hit communities such as the Navajo Nation, San Felipe Pueblo, and Zia Pueblo especially hard, it was important to consider how tribes and their proxies might be acting on their behalf. It was determined that the application itself needed to be simple. For the first round of funding, we were able to deploy $25,000 to each of New Mexico’s Federally recognized tribes.

COVID-19 required community to mobilize during this pandemic to safeguard one another. Like many of my peers, I have received the call to action to mobilize by sewing masks, distributing food amongst tribal communities, and confronting the white supremacy in systems of power. Those in leadership roles who lead without gratification are the ones who have the ability to empower and redefine leadership through ways of knowing, such as community stewardship. This idea of working in solidarity for community centers upon a “re-matriation” of traditional knowledge that is especially needed during this time. As a researcher and philanthropist, I am confident that during my academic career as a doctoral student I will

contribute to the development of informing best practices for culturally equitable frameworks within the field of educational leadership. The opportunity to shift power and agency though leadership is something that will require me to go deeper, to continue to unearth my roots. I am ready to serve as the catalyst for the unique position of women working towards healing our past, addressing our current, and preparing for our future.

Much of the healing work that has taken place for Indigenous communities has taken place through ceremonial practices as suggested by Allen in her book, The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Allen, 1992). Allen suggests that a "spirit-informed view of the universe" leads an individual to our levels of consciousness regarding reconciling healing through art, ceremony, ritual, and vision (Allen, 1992, p. 165).

In an interview by Indian Country Today News, regarding the national Native Women's pay day which occurs on November 30th every year, Suina stated "…Native women have to work twice as long to catch up with the average earnings of a White man" (ICT, 2022). This further illuminates the need to fund campaigns that support equal rights work among Indigenous women. There is a duality that exists for Indigenous Women who must walk in two worlds to maintain cultural memory and also to be successful and able to provide for their families. Native Women are not only the "bread makers, but also the breadwinners" as Jaime Gloshay, Co-Director of Native Women Lead, shared in a 2022 interview (Return to the Heart Foundation, 2022).

Healing from the Intrusion of Settler Colonialism

According to Michael Green, there are two theoretical issues associated with understanding the complexity of cultural identity of how settler colonialism has affected communities (Green, p. 3 1995). The first of these describes as an identity aspect and the second

one is cultural aspects. Green translates this to the specific interests that bond an individual to their community as identity while culture is associated as a collectiveness, "…described as a nation" (Green, 1995, p. 3). For Pueblo people, identity defined through one's name and clan are extremely important to the Puebloan psyche; it is the connector between earth world and spirit world. Allen describes matrilineal kinship ties as a web of dimensions that she details as: cultural, spiritual, personal, and historical (Allen, 1992). These spheres of identity are founding principles to how an individual is regarded in her community and how her relationships with social structure are to be carried out (Green, 2007; Mihesuah 2003).

As a continued expression of understanding the ongoing movement within climate justice efforts, it is important to continue to map and position oneself as a part of the living world to better understand traumas experienced by people and also upon the land. The late John Trudell, an active member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), used creative expression through poetry to bring attention to the injustices of women and how they were viewed in society. In his 1994, poem, "See the Woman" he describes:

> She has a young face
> An old face
> She carries herself well In all ages
> She survives all man has done
> In some tribes she is free
> In some religions
> She is under man
> In some societies
> She's worth what she consumes
> In some nations
> She is delicate strength
> In some states
> She is told she is weak
> In some classes
> She is property owned
> In all instances
> She is sister to earth
> In all conditions
> She is life bringer
> In all life she is our necessity
> See the woman eyes
> Flowers swaying
> On scattered hills

Sun dancing calling in the bees
See the woman heart Lavender butterflies
Fronting blue sky Misty rain falling
On soft wild roses
See the woman beauty
Lightning streaking
Dark summer nights
Forests of pines mating
With new winter snow
See the woman spirit
Daily serving courage
With laughter
Her breath a dream
And a prayer (Trudell, 2008)

Trudell describes a woman's importance as a giver of life, as one who connects to the land and physical world and brings awareness to the historical injustices as women being defined as property owned (Trudell, 2008, 1994). Much of Trudell's activist work began in the 1970s during the Red Power Movement, also known as the Civil Rights Era, and now defined as the Self-Determination Era in Federal Indian Policy. It was during this time that many of the jurisdictional issues regarding violence against women began to become clearer as to what crimes could be tried in a tribal court.

Drawing from the literature, Indigenous Feminism is defined as a three-part intersection that addresses the shift of gender roles, the importance of femininity, as well as the shifts in paradigm surrounding the status of women in contemporary Indigenous Communities (Green, 2017; Smith, 2012; Mihesuah, 2003). As Indigenous women, our identity is interconnected to core elements of our Native culture and relationships- our relationships to family, to land, to place, and to our communities as well as our role with each of those spheres. While Indigenous feminism is similar to other feminist movements, "it is distinct from other feminisms in its fundamental familiarity with the oppression enacted through colonialism and in its formulation of a feminist critique derived from that experience" (Green, 2017, p. 5). More specifically, much

of the literature regarding gender roles regarding Pueblo Women is from the lens of white ethnographers who only observed women as subservient, assuming that the organization of women in Pueblo society is primarily within domesticated roles (Klein & Ackerman, 1995). Erasure of Indigenous people is also a major concern within the discourse which perpetuates continued suppression of Indigenous Feminist Perspectives (Mihesuah, 2003, p. 8).

Andrea Smith, an American Feminist an activist who falsely claimed Cherokee ancestry, wrote about the assessment of critical perspectives within the field of feminism as it relates to settler colonialism and hyper-sexualization of Native women. Smith posits that the hyper-sexualization of settler colonialism creates a domino effect of desexualizing within our communities to conform to this narrative which I have personally witnessed. She questions how and in which ways settler colonial violence has continued to perpetuate a culture of Eurocentric gender politics. She suggests that this narrative is connected to the larger environmental racism and neoliberal capitalism that we see being carried out through damage to the environment. This violence on the land is exemplified through her approach to map the intellectual developments within certain movements.

Smith further assesses how the forced and unknowing sterilization abuse experienced by Native Women suggests an ongoing theme of violent abuses against Native people. She traces the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2010 and the longer standing legislation around the 1978 United States Supreme Court ruling in Oliphant v. Suquamish, in which tribal governments could not exercise criminal jurisdictional over non-Native people on tribal land, further resulting in the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Peoples movement.? Smith also suggests that scholars should consider a decolonization framework to address dismantle the

settler state by analyzing from the lens of the tribal sovereignty perspective and also the Native Women's sovereignty perspective.

The relationship between Indigenous Feminism from the literature points to women whose personal narratives have been publicly shared through their advocacy or activism work. Joyce Green, shares that, "women's movements cannot define all the terms nor expect Native women to assume dominant cultures as their own, even if we share common interests around gender" (Green, 2007; Krouse & Howard, 2009). With the rise of access to social media and digital platforms, a new culture of activism has developed to highlight Indigenous people's movements that can be viewed as "trendy" because it's convenient to be a participant of a large-scale event which produces imagery through photos posted on social media versus on the ground activation of efforts.

The redefining of Indigenous women's roles in the context of a community social framework has been positioned within an activist-focused Indigenous Feminist lens recounting numerous ways in which Native American women have been proactive movement "makers and shakers" (Krouse & Howard, 2009). The relationship between Indigenous Feminism from the literature points to women whose personal narratives have been publicly shared through their advocacy or activism work. Joyce Green, shares that, "women's movements cannot define all the terms nor expect Native women to assume dominant cultures as their own, even if we share common interests around gender" (Green, 2007; Krouse & Howard, 2009).

Indigenous Feminism holds another lens of leadership that the literature fails to mention how female Indian Boarding School survivors define their own leadership roles upon returning to their communities, post-boarding school, to carryout roles as culture bearers, and those aiding

their families to heal from historical trauma. The focus of resiliency, including healing for our grandchildren's grandchildren is one that the literature fails to address. Mihesuah persuades us that erasure is a concern amongst Indigenous scholars because of the colonial history that continually suppresses the voice of Indigenous people and especially women's voices (Mihesuah, 2003, p. 41). Therefore, understanding the unique needs of today's Indigenous woman depends on a multi-faceted approach that seeks to address: 1) Identity, 2) healing from the intrusion of settler colonialism, and 3) Finding Balance in being a 21st Indigenous Woman.

Healing from settler colonial violence also must integrate a system of cultural continuity to provide avenues for healing through ceremony. The underlying structure of clanship is a framework that one is born into and through it, both the spiritual and physical world is acknowledged (Suzack, 2017). Characterizing colonial frameworks that disempower women's rights with regard to land, tribal enrollment, recognition of head of household, hunting/fishing rights, etc. are also "…constitutive of how legal, gender identity, and political discourses work together" in tribal governance structures.

Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez (1978) caused an extensive debate of tribal enrollment and the dichotomy of female tribal members being granted the right to enroll their children in the Pueblo to be recognized as tribal members. Deliberated at the level of the United States Supreme Court, the court sided with the Pueblo and found that a Tribal Nation had the power to self-determine its membership requirements. This decision can be considered one of the worst decisions ever made in Federal Indian law because it set precedence in how courts recognize the offspring of female tribal members, further preventing them from obtaining tribal enrollment.

In many ways women as cultivators of culture has continuously been redefined through western researchers, particularly ethnographers who observed women's roles as subservient and

subordinate to which of male counterparts. This shifting of the narrative probes the need to understand what the 21st century Indigenous woman defines herself as. The All My Relations Podcast hosted and developed by Matika Wilbur and Dr. Adrienne Keene seeks to discuss highly critical issues that exist amongst the relationships of Indigenous Women. They share ideas about "being relational people" and defining "ourselves as our grandmother's granddaughters*, and the responsibility to share and uphold matriarchal leadership to continue to cultivate our respective communities, whether urban or rural reservation-based (Wilbur & Keen, 2019).

The idea that generational experiences perpetuate settler colonialism is not described in this podcast because the question of how revitalizing the matriarch in Indigenous communities needs to be addressed before we can decolonize the messages embedded in cultural practices that uplift Indigenous women. Much of the healing work that has taken place for survivors of violence and present-day Indigenous feminists has taken place through ceremonial practices as suggested by Paula Gunn Allen in her book, The Sacred Hoop: recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Allen, 1992). Allen suggests that a "spirit-informed view of the universe" leads an individual to our levels of consciousness regarding reconciling healing through art, ceremony, ritual, and vision (Allen, 1992, p. 165).

Promoting Healing within Indigenous Communities

In the first year of operation, the R2HF established two key initiatives: The Society[15] Fellowship and the Traditional Helpers and Healers Micro Grant. Both provided funding and project support for Native Women and Girls, with a specific focus of supporting healing efforts. The Traditional Helper and Healers micro grant supports projects that restore traditional lifeways to improve physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, and economic health in Indigenous communities.

[15] The Researcher was a part of the 2020 R2HF "The Society" Inaugural Fellowship Cohort. More information can be found at https://return2heart.org/fellowship/

To date R2HF has supported 73 grantees, which provide avenues for reconnecting their communities to traditional knowledge, food/medicine, ceremonies, and languages.

In addition to the funds described above, R2HF is an intermediary grantmaking organization that provides grant funding to Native Women and Girls who are fighting for Indigenous causes across the globe and restoring traditional lifeways for the health of their Tribal communities. Support extends well beyond funding and includes walking alongside grantees to provide direct project support, so they gain marketable professional experience. R2HF helps them develop leadership skills and program management capabilities as they plan and execute their projects. They are also given hands-on training in traditional media, social media, video production, and digital marketing as their portfolios are amplified their work.

While the literature only begins to align the intergenerational exchange of healing through revitalizing the matriarchal leadership in Indigenous communities, there is a continued need to understand how philanthropy can support this work as an act of solidarity. As a Pueblo woman, I realize I am on a continuous search to be more effective and mindful in my approach to school, work, and caring for my family. I realize that as mothers, daughters, aunties, etc. are intentional in the ways we organize our schedules; ceremony, professional goals, and lastly personal goals that usually also occur in that order. My values have always been in family, community, and Puebloan teachings about sharing and providing support for others who are in need.

I feel extremely moved to continue with my journey towards addressing the deficit narratives that we see used for us in charitable spaces. I believe that the intersection of healing, relationality, policy development, and leadership will lead us to building strategies that restore traditional values and focus on asset-based approaches to comprehensive planning.

I reflect back to my first visit to the present-day location of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School[16], remembering how I felt when I walked the grounds on the present-day location of the Army War College, praying that I might find a higher purpose reverberated my thoughts. I prayed to our relatives who never made it home, placing my breath on the cornmeal, like seeds to tuck themselves into the soil where so many tears had been shed. I left that day from Carlisle with a desire to do more, to share more, and to make my purpose known. As modern science tells us that a female fetus is born with all the eggs she will have in her lifetime, and so, grandmother carried and planted those seeds. Native Women are the backbone of our communities. We carry the world through our prayers, our wombs, and our love.

[16] Carlisle Indian Industrial School's present-day location is the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Chapter Three: Design & Methods

The design of this mixed-methods study required a national call to Native American Women, over the age of 18 years of age, who are deeply invested in supporting and leading grassroots healing efforts in Native communities. Grassroots efforts included passion projects that are self-funded or funded with a one-time micro grant; or those initiatives and programs located within a nonprofit or charitable organization and/or fiscally sponsored initiatives. The goal behind the data sweeps were to better understand where philanthropic dollars were funding healing efforts led by Native Women across the United States.

The focus of the design came from deep reflection about the pragmatic layers that exist between donor and grant receiver when dollars make their way toward the project or initiative. The flow of capital has continuously withheld the racial and ethnic wealth gaps, so much that data on Native Americans is not accessible (Asset Funders Network, 2022). Such philanthropic gatekeeping prevents marginalized groups from achieving wealth, addressing racial equity gaps, or even having sustainability through funding projects. IFJL has the opportunity to be considered a critical methodology to further catalyze efforts by Native women for Native communities.

Philanthropic gatekeeping also exists through the grant application processes and granting of awards to applicants. Many applications are highly technical, require several hours of work and explanations, and require applicants to find solutions to issues such as gentrification, homelessness, food insecurity, social issues, substance abuse, violence, cultural and linguistic revitalization, and income insecurity to name a few. Such major foundations lack full

understanding in visioning the longevity of projects and only offer measly grant awards that are specific to a project and do not support general operations within a nonprofit organization.

This kind of resource hoarding also prevents long-term solutions because sustainability is not attached to these kinds of awards. Moreover, Native-specific funding sources also sometimes may inadvertently pose their own challenges within the sector because applicants are pointed to the "Native-only" funding opportunities and then are deemed ineligible for those available to the general population, as is the case with many of the COVID-19 relief funds for municipalities that border reservation lands and yet are considered "too far" or out of reach. As such, the methodology of this work was also intentionally designed to respect intellectual sovereignty of participates, along with their strategies for how they secure funding sources.

Research Design

The data collection for this study consisted of an online survey and two 60-minute focus groups. The survey consisted of a demographic sweep and also allowed for open-ended answers to questions. The goal for the focus group was to host five R2HF grantees per group, featuring five R2HF grantees per focus group. These two data gathering opportunities allowed the researcher to gather a full understanding of what kinds of funding support types (tribal, state, philanthropic, or self-funded dollars) are available to Indigenous Women leading healing efforts.

The design came from an analysis of a number of texts that address the importance of applying culturally responsive methods rooted in Indigenous methodologies with the goal of providing an end product that contributes to the community and not just the discourse. Shirley and Angulo describe this as a "…heartfelt connection to the community" and responsibility to

"give back" (Shirley & Angulo, 2019). Integrating a Pueblo Indigenous lens was also important to this work because as referenced in Chapter One, applying a culturally responsive lens is key because this work is an inherent extension of my values. Those in leadership roles who lead without gratification are the ones who have the ability to empower and redefine leadership through ways of knowing, such as community stewardship. This idea of working in solidarity for community centers upon a rematriation of traditional knowledge that is especially needed as we reflect on the post covid world.

Research Questions

Healing is an essential component of ending intergenerational historical trauma to make space for cultural maintenance and revitalization. The opportunity to be inclusive as an approach to bringing forth concepts such as IFJL, especially in consideration of the current climate of Native Nations facing the overturning of such pieces of legislation such as the Indian Child Welfare Act, that provides an avenue to protect children and community and the recent denouncing of the Doctrine of Discovery by Pope Francis (Brakeen v. Haaland, 2022). I seek to make space for community cultivation by investigating how a matrifocal connection will empower Indigenous Feminism to be further elevated within the theoretical frameworks to be further explored through this study.

To better understand this topic, the following research questions guided this study: 1) How are Native Women being funded in the philanthropic sector? And 2) What kinds of needs exist to fund healing work led by Native Women within philanthropy?

Participants

The population for this study is self-identifying Indigenous Women, enrolled in either a federally recognized or state recognized tribe who live and work in the United States. Survey participants were between the ages of 18-69 years. This age range of participants was chosen because this is reflective of the open call for Indigenous women who are eligible to apply for the R2HF Traditional Helpers & Healers Grant. This demographic also reflects an intergenerational exchange of knowledge, including those who attended federal Indian Boarding schools, as well as those who have overcome economic hardships.

In consideration of the Belmont Report Principles and conducting ethical research, I provided each participant with informed consent detailing the opportunity to withdraw at any point in time and that their identity will remain anonymous and will be coded along with their Tribal affiliation (only indicating either band or nation that they come from). The risk associated with this will be minimal and l and will meet the standards of Indigenous practice-informed data collection because I will be utilizing Indigenous methodologies to guide my process. The names and tribal affiliation of focus group participants were one of the identifiers for the project. Emails, phone numbers, and tribal affiliation were also identifiers for the project survey. Identifiers included tribal affiliation, age, phone number, email, and nonprofit sector type. The researcher stored identifiers and study data separately and maintained a link between the identifiers and the study code. Level 2 protections were also applied to the data. This means that access was limited to the researcher, except when the data are intentionally made public.

Regarding respect for persons, I ensured ethical procedures through voluntary participation and informed consent. Each session designated for data gathering also included

some pre- and post-grounding overview of such projects that was self-led by participants, allowing them to share their work and also to continue processing what they shared. The utmost safety and wellness of the participants was centered during the project, from start to finish. Because the nature of the study investigated the underlying gendering of Indigenous Womxn's experiences from an IFJL lens, I am confident that beyond the analysis of experiences where individuals felt disempowered, through this study they will equally benefit from being empowered by the resilience of their story.

Recruitment

This research study included snowball and purposeful recruitment methods. The criteria for the survey participants were anyone identifying as a Native Woman, including 2sLGBTQ Relatives who have been a part of leading healing efforts in their communities. Healing grassroots efforts included passion projects that are self-funded or funded with a one-time micro grant; or those initiatives and programs located within a nonprofit or charitable organization and/or fiscally sponsored initiatives. Social media posts were developed specific to the call and were shared on both Instagram, Facebook and the project website. Each post detailed the call for participants as well as the purpose of the data collection, along with a link to the Google Survey. It was estimated that the survey took 10-12 minutes to complete and participants had the opportunity to upload photos of their work or themselves in action. The survey consisted of 25 questions.

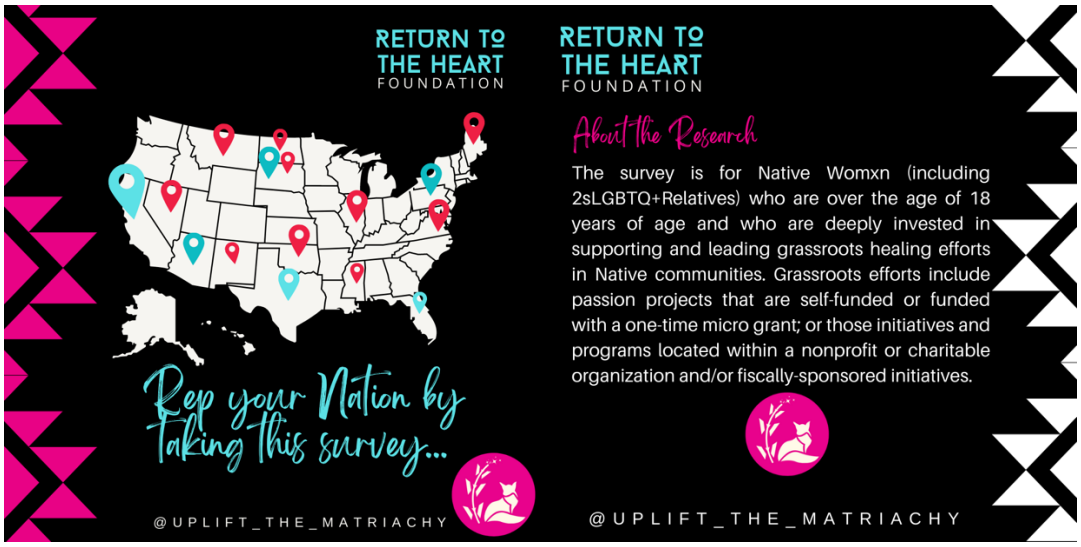

Figure 9 Social Media Recruitment Posts

Figure 10 Social Media Recruitment and Info about Research

Figure 11 Social Media Posts – Why is this research important?

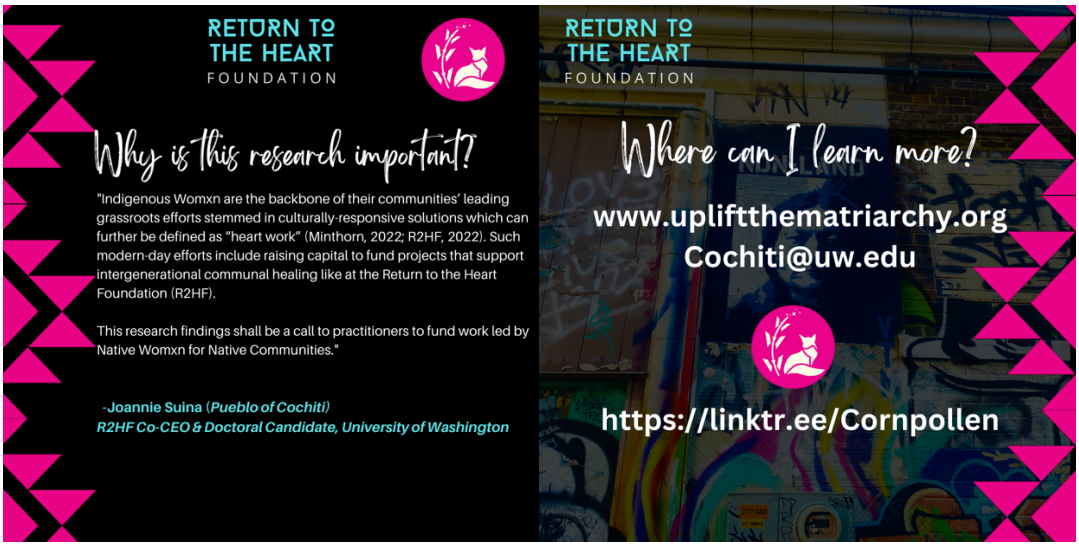

Figure 12 Social Media Posts -Why this research and where to learn more

Uplift the Matriarchy Website

In addition to the social media posts, a domain was also secured and the research built out a website to detail more information about the importance of the study. This website also hosted a location to showcase the research and provided a biography and qualifications of the research. There were also direct links to the survey. The pages built out within the website

include: 1) Gratitude (homepage), 2) The Research, 3) The Survey, 4) Contact, and 5) About. Each page allowed for a more intimate exploration about this study, the existing theories surrounding the topic, and the overall call to support the cause. Many research studies lack inclusivity in terms of the ways in which community can connect on deeper levels with the work. The intention behind developing a website was to also allow participants and the community to go inward by allowing for a safe, shared space to support digital.

Focus Group Recruitment

Recruitment emails and text messages were sent to 36 R2HF (third round) grantees to participate in the focus groups. As the researcher, I worked diligently to contact these individuals to attend. A total of five per group was the goal for each focus group. Additional strategies included sharing the flyers from social media about the survey so that these individuals also participated in both data gather opportunities. Each participant was provided with informed consent detailing the opportunity to withdraw at any point in time. The risk associated with the study was minimal and the University of Washington— Human Subjects Division declared this an exempt study.

The utmost safety and wellness of the participants was centered during the project, from start to finish. Because the nature of the study investigated the underlying gendering of Indigenous Women's experiences from an IFJL lens, I am confident that beyond the analysis of experiences where individuals felt disempowered, through this study they will equally benefit from being empowered by the resilience of their story. By handling the participant's identity through anonymity should they so choose, individuals will also feel more comfortable sharing their reflections. To facilitate the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, the survey,

was completed anonymously by respondents, but had three distinct sections- demographics, healing efforts, and the future of funding Native Women leading healing efforts. Age, tribal affiliation, education, familial makeup, and healing effort focuses were addressed, allowing for the disaggregation of the collected data by these variables.

Methodology

Having had the opportunity to previously become familiar with JoAnn Archibald and Amy Parent's Indigenous Storywork Methodology while doing community-based work, I sought to employ the strategy with this study because of the values piece with regard to culture and the participant's background (Kerrn & Ferguson, 2021). Indigenous Storywork Methodology integrates the values of *respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity* which compliments the working logic model of rematriation as described in chapter one. Turning to storytelling and oral tradition to help guide this study allowed for a unique, culturally responsive approach to capturing the experiences of Native Women leading healing efforts, along with a process to develop future comprehensive supports through philanthropy. *Respect* for such processes and opening a safe space requires thoughtful planning and this was executed from the moment emails were sent to participants. Each invited participant was greetings as, "Sister."

Reverence allowed for a deeper connection between the work itself and the spiritual framing of our ancestors for whom this work is also dedicated to. It allowed for the calling back of ancestors through the acknowledgement within healing circles which is another area of gratitude that participants expressed. The process to prepare to write about this topic began with an offering

and a prayer to ask my grandmothers and ancestors that I may have permission to write about this topic in a way that sheds light on the resiliency of the experiences of Native Women.

Responsibility also provided an extension of core values, by both the researcher and the participant, to help iterate the inherent desire of assisting Native communities to find healing. *Reciprocity* also provided a pathway for the sharing of personal experiences, toolkits, and methods by which others can also apply to their current and future works. Lastly, the opportunity to be inclusive as an approach to bringing forth IFJL, has come by way of putting core values into practice through being a critical pedagogist. In seeking to make space for the cultivation of community by investigating how a matrifocal connection will allow for empowering Indigenous Feminism to be further elevated within the theoretical frameworks described in this paper.

Theoretical Analysis

Understanding the transference of Indigenous knowledge through a postcolonial lens has been posited by several scholars in evaluating conventional research with that of a relational Indigenous research paradigm (Chilisa, 2020; Smith, 2012). Chilisa points to characteristics of Indigenous knowledge and also discusses the need for research advocates, specifically evaluating how the realms of academia, imperialism, scientific colonialism, methodological imperialism as well as western literature reinforces Western ways of knowing. The term “decolonization’ has continued to be thrown around heavily in spaces of academia and philanthropy with a particular hinging towards racial equity frameworks, especially during the time of COVID-19 amid the pulsed movement of White Supremacy, following the murder of George Floyd (Tuck & Yang, 2018; Lyiscott, 2019, Johansen & Akande, 2022).

A deeper comparison of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) alongside of Feminist Legal Theory (FLT), provides intersections between law and policy, including the historical context of racial social constructs. While the positionality of TribalCrit uniquely highlights law from an Indigenous lens, it fails to mention that women are also absent from this narrative. This further perpetuates an intolerance for feminine analysis within the context of colonial oppression, especially in regard to the ways that Tribal Nations have adopted dominant attitudes over women and girls rather than coming from a place of protection. Additionally, while Critical Legal Studies predated CRT, at the same time such pieces of policy also were birthed during this era including Indian Self-Determination as well as other federal policies that began to surface which supported more autonomy to tribal nations. While CRT centers race and racism, it also focuses on other areas of subordination. Solórzano writes,

> ‘‘Although race and racism are at the center of a critical race analysis, they are also viewed at their intersection with other forms of subordination such as gender and class discrimination’’ (1998, p. 122).

On the contrary, Feminist Legal Theory and Critical Legal Studies parallels with Federal Indian Law and historical legislation that supported the continued subjugation of women through subordinate statuses. This further translates into a gendered global Indigenous conflict in which today’s feminist jurisprudence fails the very social constructs of Indigenous communities by using sexist law as an approach to address gender inequality by declaring that women do not belong in Tribal Council chambers. Other historical pieces of oppression include the forced sterilization of Indigenous Women within Indian Health Services facilities, the forced child labor

of Indian children and girls within Federal Indian Boarding schools, and the failed investigation of Indigenous women who are missing and murdered.

Chapter 4: Findings

As described in Chapter 1, the goal of this research is to better understand the kinds of healing efforts led by Native Women across Turtle Island. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the prolific issues that we know and experience in Indian Country, as the virus disproportionately affected the Native American and Alaska Native population far worse than any other race despite the fact that Indigenous people of the United States only account for 2% of the total population. The chart below (Figure 13) details COVID-19 information from the State of New Mexico's COVID-19 Database as recorded on May 1, 2020, around the same time that these Native Women were mobilizing and creating circles of care to support Indigenous People in their communities. Just over 53% of the cases were people who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native.

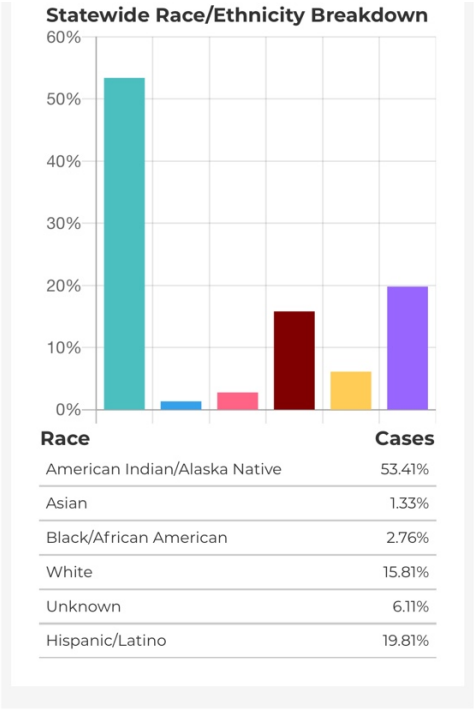

Figure 13 NM COVID 19 Dashboard

Despite the great loss of community experienced throughout the pandemic, there was also a beautiful recentering of Indigenous women's voices. It was these women who were leading healing efforts in their communities. This chapter provides the findings of this study and is organized into five sections: Demographic Data, Grassroots Healing Efforts, the Future of Funding Native Women, and Additional Open-Ended Responses. The fifth and final section details the focus group participant reflections and themes built from the conversation.\

Demographic Data

The Demographic Data section is classified into two categories, there are characteristics specific to tribal enrollment and familial makeup and the second part is specific to education and professional focuses. The next section presents the key findings and themes that emerged from the data collected from the national survey. This section is further divided into the themes that came from the two 60-minute focus groups and the responses of participants.

The first section of the survey asked for demographic information about the respondents to identify trends in tribal enrollment status, along with patterns based on the individual characteristics of the participants. The rationale for each demographic question was to determine if the location and years in the field of grassroots healing efforts impacted the experience of accessing funding for leading such healing efforts. Other areas of consideration included age, number of children, and grandchildren applicable, as well as the education of the participants. These questions were asked to ascertain if the additional factors may have increased any area of impact.

There was a total of 32 respondents for the national survey. Of the 32 respondents, there were a total of 24 different tribal nations represented. The tribal nations represented have been

listed below and include the following (those that were from the same tribal nation were only listed once):

	Tribe Represented	State	Respondents
1	Bishop Paiute	California	1
2	Blackfeet	Montana	1
3	Citizen Potawatomi	Oklahoma	1
4	Diné (Navajo Nation)	Arizona, New Mexico,Utah	5
5	Fallon Pauite Shoshone Tribe	Nevada	1
6	Klamath	Oregon	1
7	Manley Hot Springs Tribe	Alaska	1
8	Mescalero Apache Tribe	New Mexico	1
9	Otoe-Missouria	Oklahoma	1
10	Pueblo of Acoma	New Mexico	1
11	Pueblo of Cochiti	New Mexico	2
12	Pueblo of Laguna	New Mexico	1
13	Pueblo of San Felipe	New Mexico	1
14	Pueblo of Taos	New Mexico	1
15	Red Cliff Band Of Lake Superior Ojibwe	Wisconsin	1
16	Santo Domingo Tribe	New Mexico	1
17	Sault St. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians	Michigan	2
18	Southern Ute	Colorado	1
19	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	North Dakota	1
20	Swinomish	Washington	1
21	The Tulalip Tribes	Washington	2
22	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Utah	1
23	Waccamaw Siouan	North Carolina	1
24	Western Shoshone	Idaho	1
25	White Earth Ojibwe	Minnesota	1

		Total	32

Table 1 Tribal Enrollment Representation Data from Survey Participants

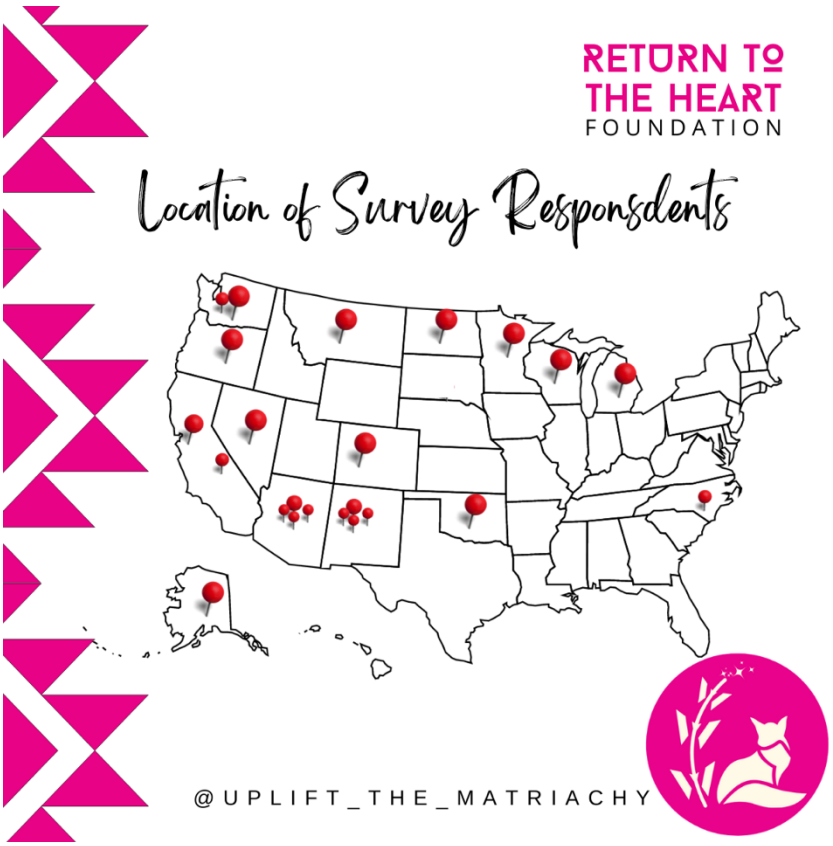

Figure 14 Location of Survey Respondents

Participant Characteristics

When categorizing tribal enrollment data, it should be noted that 94% of respondents represented a federally recognized tribe, 3% represented a state-recognized tribe, and another 3% represented "other." The highest level of education completed was a Bachelor's degree according to 38% of participants. The next highest level of education completed by participants was a Master's degree which included 35% of participants. Thereafter, 6% of participants had obtained an Associate's degree.

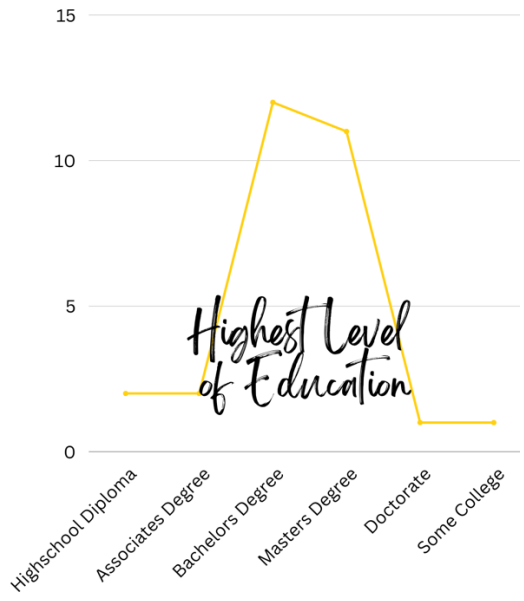

Table 2 Highest Level of Education- Survey Participants Cluster

The average age for 63% survey participants was between the 40-49 age range. A total of 76% of respondents reported having more than 2 children.

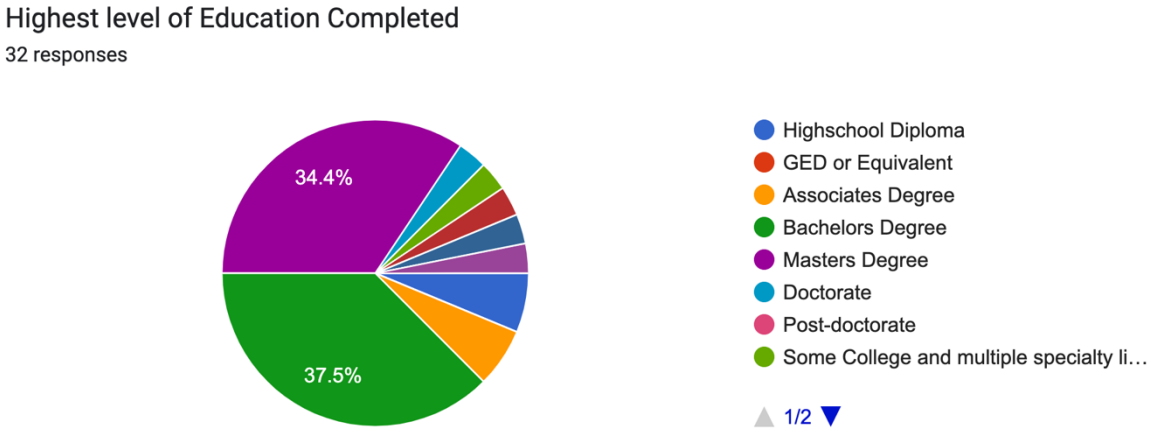

Table 3 Highest Level of Education Completed Responses Pie Chart

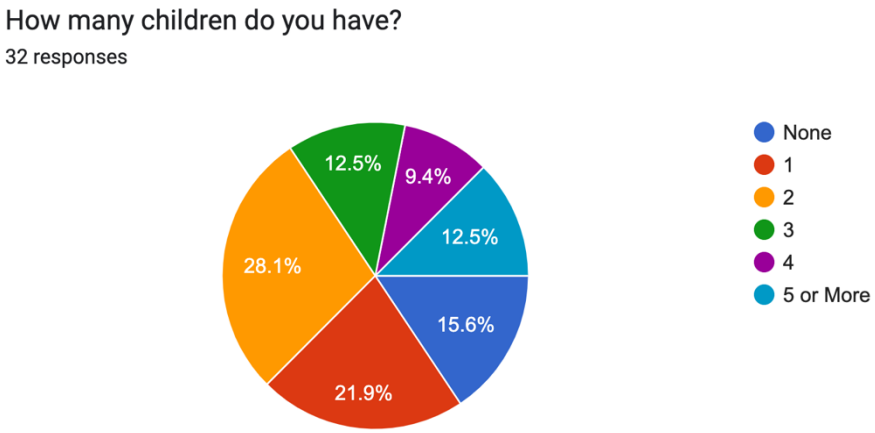

Table 4 Number of Children- Survey Participants

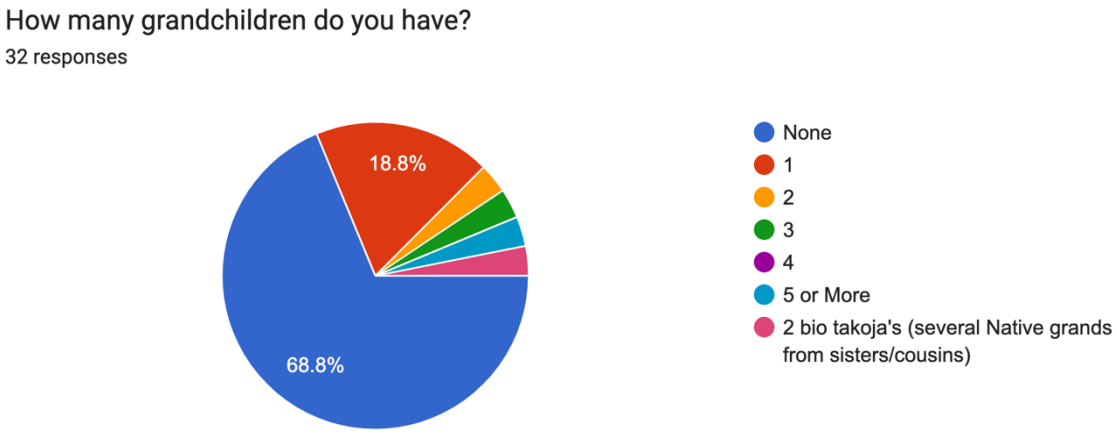

Table 5 Number of Grandchildren- Survey Participants

Grassroots Healing Efforts Focuses

The next section of the data collection covered Grassroots Healing Efforts. Grassroots efforts include passion projects that are self-funded or funded with a one-time micro grant; or

those initiatives and programs located within a nonprofit or charitable organization and/or fiscally sponsored initiatives. It was important to capture such efforts to better understand how long participants have been in the sector and what the focuses of their work entails. Of the 31 responses for this section, 32% of participants reported being in the non-profit sector for 5-10 years and that was followed by another 23% who had been in the field for 11-15 years.

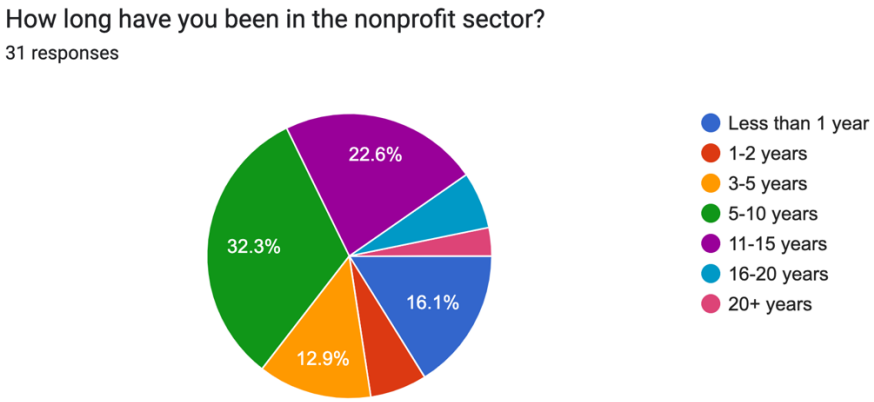

Table 6 Length of time in the sector

The focus area for the work and where healing efforts are being lead are in the following areas:

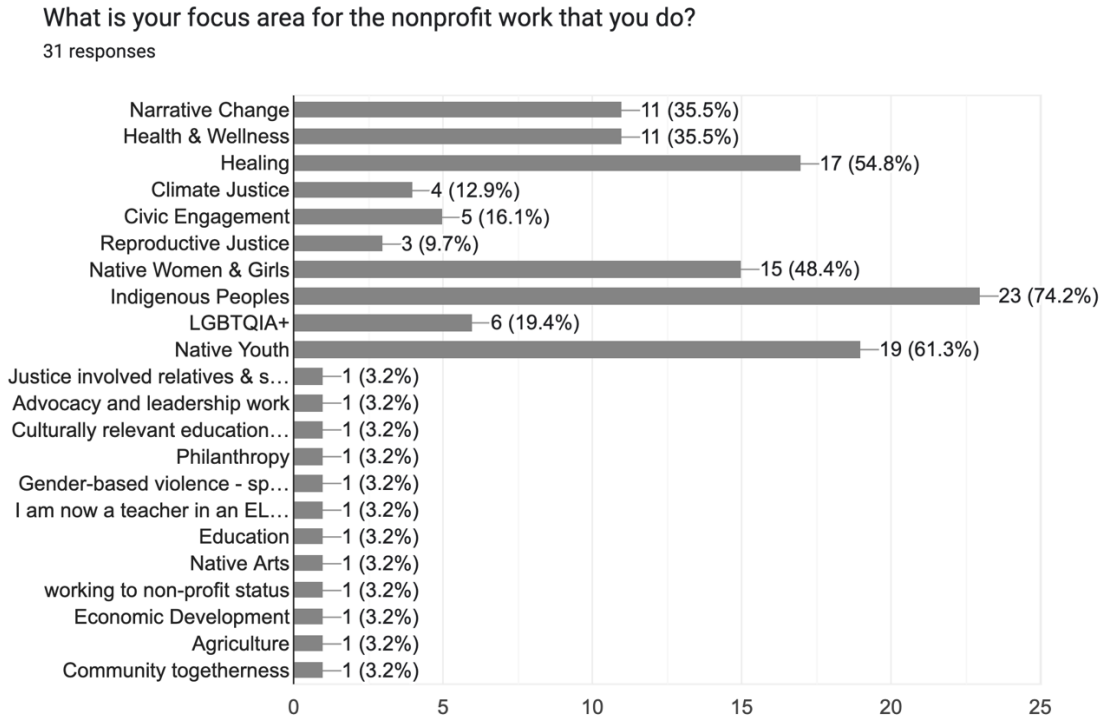

Table 7 Focus areas for the nonprofit work of Survey Participants

What can be gathered from these responses are that the focus of the work identifies as supporting Indigenous peoples as a whole, healing efforts, Native Youth, and Native Women and Girls as the top four focus areas. This aligns with the work at the R2HF and the continued development of funds to support the work. Additionally, 68% of participants identified funding the work as the biggest challenge related to their work/project. When asked what has helped them to heal from their experiences, respondents shared the following:

What has helped you to heal from any of your experiences?
Reconnecting to my traditional ways has been a huge part of my healing journey. Having others that have come from similar experiences sharing their hope and support. Also, having support to put my offender behind bars.
Supportive family, friends and coworkers who help me live into my medicine.
Fostering relationships with other grantees, we often share our best practices and help to uplift one another.

Utilizing ceremony and traditional ways of prayer to connect to Creator and my higher self. Also, yoga and meditation.
Sisterhood, faith, land, movement, animal relatives, and connection.
doing things for my people
Time
Just keeping a positive mindset and looking ahead, regardless.
Connecting with other Indigenous women and femmes about their issues with tribal leadership and figuring out ways to circumvent tribal politics to serve our people.
Support from leadership
My ways of knowing and being

Table 8 What has helped you to heal from any of your experiences? Survey Participant Responses

Funding for Native Women Leading Healing Efforts

The next set of survey questions pertain to funding the work for Native Women leading healing efforts. This section of the survey contained some of the most substantial findings of the study as determined by the amount of women leading efforts that were not considered to be either fiscally sponsored or under a formal organization which demonstrates an informal economy being built. 52% of the respondents share that their work is self-funded and not support under a 501c3 whether by way of incorporation or fiscal sponsorship. The quantitative findings of the Likert scale questions combined with the identified impacts on who is funding the work, highlight the struggles of securing funding experienced throughout the United States. A total of 65% of respondents shared that philanthropic funding, along with self-funding at 53% are the two top ways that healing is finding its way to the community.

Of the Native Women who responded to the survey, they also shared that 90% feel that their work is not adequately funded to continue to bring healing to their communities at the magnitude to which it is needed. The open-ended responses regarding the future of funding Native Women leading healing efforts, in terms of their hopes and dreams goes as follows:

What do you see for the future of Native Womxn leading healing efforts in this country? (Hopes and Dreams)
I see a huge movement of Intergenerational healing occurring. I see more woman led leadership being highly effective and empowering. There's a energy of this new leadership that's bringing a sense of humanity and equality. Where there is ego from non-woman led leadership, there's going to be humbleness and strength that brings balance back to this Universe.
That Native womxn can see choices available to them and live in liberation.
We will have the knowledge and capacity to continue to mentor and guide our program participants to see and reach their potential.
The future of healing work lies in women as care takers and givers. We have much to heal from but a lot of that work needs to be created by Indigenous womxn, for Indigenous womxn.
I see growth and opportunity. I feel identity is crucial for the healing of our people. As an Indigenous woman, who the takes the role as a student and teacher, I understand the ripple effects of a supportive community that identifies the needs specific to culture. Native women leading healing efforts can only lead to a better future for our young and impressionable youth. Giving our knowledge and stories, allow for the future to remember what our ancestors endured and the responsibilities that lie within oneself. These healing tools and modalities empower the individual and having the support system of native women leaders is crucial, as it acknowledges the female and maternal power that lies within all of us.
I believe Native womxn will continue to be the driving force behind cultivating healing spaces as our role as caretakers. I also see more collaborative efforts between womxn of various backgrounds and specialty areas to create healing spaces.
tons of opportunity
Fixing the actual issues not putting a band aid
I hope that more Native women will continue to keep pushing forward regardless of what is told to them.
It's so necessary but I'm unsure if tribal leadership and Indigenous cisgender heterosexual men are ready for us.
Women have a voice
As more Native Women rise, though their communities, experiences, education, politics they build a stronger network of shared experiences. They will be able to grow and heal-traditionally and through modern modalities that will bend and shape to the needs of our people. Providing a path for the children we raise.
When I held a leadership role in Native philanthropy, I still felt marginalized to some degree by one of my board members who exhibited a lot of toxic masculinity but justified it under the guise of his tribe's culture. But I also saw that Native womxn are the backbone of both the nonprofit and philanthropic sector and when organized around an issue, are extremely powerful and effective. Healing justice has come a long way and I'm so grateful for these new narratives, strategies, and conversations we're having in the field.

Everything that I know about healing I have learned from my elders - mostly women.
Native Womxn have always been the backbone of our communities and have played a significant role in the healing and wellness of their people. With the growing awareness of the importance of mental health and holistic healing practices, I believe that Native Womxn will continue to play a pivotal role in leading healing efforts in the country. Furthermore, as the United States continues to grapple with issues such as climate change, racial injustice, and healthcare disparities, the need for Indigenous knowledge and practices to address these issues will only continue to grow. I hope to see Native Womxn at the forefront of this movement, using their traditional knowledge and modern skills to create innovative solutions that benefit not only their communities but the country as a whole. In conclusion, the future of Native Womxn leading healing efforts in the country looks bright, and I believe they will continue to play a crucial role in shaping a more equitable, just, and healthy society.
The way of the world, future and healing are in the hands, dreams and goals of woman and young girls. I pray they get the same guidance, support and love I am receiving now with all the funds made more possible and easier to obtain.
I see many more indigenous communities being self sufficient
I hope to see a dismantling of funders' efforts to just feel good about funding Tribal communities and NA/I issues but not taking the time to understand the innerworkings of how it feels in community when there is no accountability for how those funds are used/not used. In my community, the existing funded programs only create more barriers and obstacles to survivors. They get bounced back to those programs by other community services due to the ignorant view of NA/I nuances and non-monolithic pieces of who we are as well. There should be just as much energy and willingness to see the benefit of funding Native Womxn leaders as the draw of patting themselves on the back for funding an "entire Tribe". Because that is questionable and I feel funders have sat too comfortably in their assumptions about what healing can and does look like for those who live this experience in NA/I community.
Continuation of womxn leading healing efforts. Remembering. Anchoring remembering. Cultivating accountability through awareness practices. Nurturing through the senses. Gathering circles expanding to include our allies of all Nations. Healing is occurring. It’s collective. It’s slow in this density. I have witnessed great change in my life.
Native women are who is going to save this planet and country. ReMatriation is what will save us. Our voices will be honored, respected, and heard. We will be in more positions of power as each year goes by.
I hope healing efforts help Native Womxn, but also bring awareness to non-Natives
Indigenous language centered around indigenous female needs, more information on female spirituality and maaniido, moon cycles, plants for indigenous female reproductive, more access to BIPOC therapy centered in decolonial healing
Yes
My vision is for more women to feel comfortable and welcome in healing spaces and that they are encouraged to participate and heal for themselves and their families.
I envision Native people’s returning to Traditional values and healing practices incorporating some western ideologies

Women will do the work that needs to be done regardless of resources, it is within our spirit to be the giver, the caretakers, the healers. Even in other indigenous communities, we have be sent with the message to bring our women of all ages together, teach them the culture, history and language, and they will save who we are by passing it on to the next generations.
I see healing efforts in full swing especially with the support of women led organizations.
More long-term funding for holistic healing in Native Communities. Accountability & land acknowledgement returned Matriarchy.
Equitable philanthropic support would mean 5x more funding to Native communities.
Matriarchs supporting others in their journeys. Not weaponizing tradition. Even if their support is just encouragement.
It will continue to rise

Table 9 Hopes and Dreams for the Future of Funding the Work

Focus Groups

Beyond the survey findings in this study, the researcher facilitated two 60- minute focus groups with a goal of hosting five R2HF Traditional Helper and Healer Grantees per focus group. Email invitations were sent out to all 36 grantees who were awarded during the third round of Traditional Healers & Helpers Grant making period. Little interest to participate came after the first wave of emails were sent and then a follow-up email was sent. In addition to emails, a text message was also sent to the grantees. I received a total of ten confirmations of attendance for the two focus groups. On the day of the focus group only three participants attended for Focus Group #1 and a total of four attended for Focus Group #2.

Each focus group was curated to be a listening session and the Researcher utilized the Focus Group Questions to guide the discussion. There was deep intentional processing for each of the responses from each focus group and each participant had an opportunity to share a broader overview of the work that they do along with their reasoning for why they do what they do. While the goal of having five participants per focus group was not met, the flow of discussion seemed more fluid rather than what it would have been at the maximum number of participants which is something to keep in mind for future opportunities. Smaller group settings

allow for participants to provide insight and share their expertise regarding the unique needs surrounding healing efforts that Native Women are leading.

Themes from Focus Group

Another area that participants described was being able to come together in spaces or hubs that would further support being able to connect with community, especially in urban settings. One participant described, “the MMIW has affected all of us, just like boarding schools and being a part of a community that was relocated in the Bay Area, a lot of us were from other tribes and trying to find sort of a community that was intertribal, obviously, because we're all from different places. Where I grew up, we had a safe space. We had the Indian Center. We had a place to come and make regalia or learn or to Pala dance. And that created the community.” she further went on to talk about the community that she seeks to build here in her husband's territory of the southwest.

The development of creating safe and shared space goes hand in hand with the ways that kinship circles are organically developed through such efforts to provide knowledge sharing or coming together around a meal to share food period. This was something that I deeply resonated with as a doctoral student in this cohort because of the ways that we would come together for not only our classes, but also to participate in writing workshops led by Dr. Michelle Jacob of the Yakima nation. I was reminded of the grounding exercises that we would partake in once a month to help us reach are writing goals and also journey through her latest work, “The Auntie Way” (Jacob, 2020). Another participant described this as, “…we're able to come together as sisters, as family, and help one another, encourage one another, and also just be there as a support system. We support one another through all the difficult times that we've been going

through individually. It could be anything from health. It could be things of the social issues, family." search themes of kinship continue to come forward through the focus groups.

Participants also described utilizing traditional methodologies to address contemporary challenges within their communities. They talked about the need to make themselves a seat at the table where their voices have been historically silenced and they also sought to address the gender politics at the level of policy and many tribal communities. The theme of being a modern-day warrior woman came forth from such reflections. Not only did women describe breaking cycles such as leaving abusive relationships, healing from the traumas of Indian boarding schools and being the descendants of survivors who attended some of these schools has paved the way for further analyzing the intergenerational connection between healing across the Matriarchy.

One woman shared about her upbringing, that "...What inspired me is my own trauma and that was my parents are boarding school survivors. And so my dad was taken off the reservation when he was 11. And my mom was adopted by a Mormon family, and they raised us here in Salt Lake City, Utah. However, the split between identity and wanting to do better, there comes a lot of, I should say, chaos with that. It created a lot of domestic violence and also alcoholism. It created a lot of havoc within the home life. When I was younger, I was like, I'm not going to drink. That's one thing I didn't want to do was being an alcoholic. Actually, I'm probably one of two that are not alcoholics in my immediate family because I chose to abstain. I was introduced to yoga about 20, and at 25 I started practicing it rigorously. I started practicing various ceremonies and becoming in touch with my culture and understanding deeply how our elders and also our medicine people, they were yogis too. And that's by connecting through the earth and everything they do, from making friends with the elements and being able to cultivate and to prosper and thrive off the land."

Other reflections about the federal Indian boarding school experience also detailed, "…There's both positive and negative in the experience. I had to go through the experiences from what their trauma was. And that was being able to recognize the patterns and the different illnesses that come along with the abuse that they suffered and being the one to make different choices for my children and for my grandchildren. And so I was able to reconnect to my culture, reconnect to who I am, and that's what I want for my children. I can still see my dad, smart man. And he graduated, he went to college. He suffered from alcoholism. My mom died from alcoholism. Now that I'm in a place where I'm healing, you're always healing, but you can recognize things from a different standpoint, from a different perspective, objective, rather than taking it internally and being able to blame or just sit in the anger." This further builds into how now as a grandmother so much of this healing work is critical for future, healed generations.

Word Frequency

The qualitative data collected for individual questions were exported from Zoom as MP4 files and then transcribed. Using the themes that emerged from the data, Chart below details the most frequently used words during the two focus groups. Many of the individual comments shared by respondents consisted of multiple themes. The top six words/set of words used in order of frequency goes as follows: 1) Community, 2) Healing, 3) Thankful, 4) Women, 5) Together, 6) Boarding School. Many additional themes can be drawn from this data. The frequency of these words further ties into the literature around Indigenous Feminisms and the cultural study of values (Suzack, 2017). The literature further describes such feminisms as being generally ambivalent about what it meant, but such themes held very strong positions on the goals of women's work to respond to community (Nickel & Fehr, 2020).

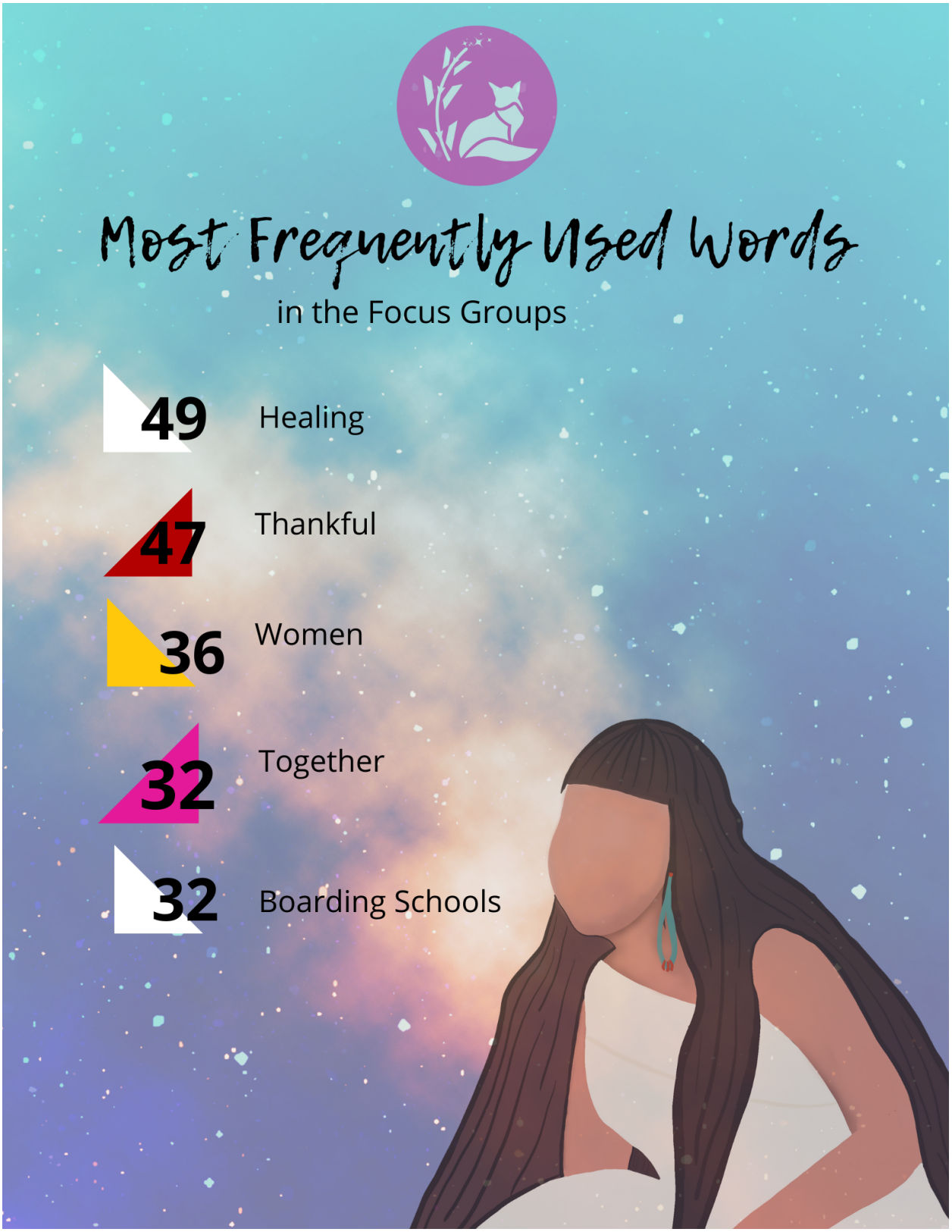

Figure 15 Most Frequently Used Words

Additionally, the frequently used words portray an underlying focus for continued areas of research.

Identity As Power

The primary focus of this research has been to better understand how Native Women leading healing efforts define Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership. Participants detailed important information around identity and finding healing as an individual who is healing from ongoing intergenerational historical trauma and also by breaking cycles in their families. For some, they are the first in their family to obtain post-secondary education and are also the first to lead a life of sobriety. These factors combined with a heightened awareness of accountability stemming from a commitment to support community based on core values helped to create a platform for healing movements.

One participant shared, "… My vision is to bring consciousness awareness to [clients] to able to understand that everything that they need for healing and [that] for progression, [it] is inside you to create consciousness and awareness. And so, it's like having a ceremony for yourself through maintaining the body. Not only that, but also connecting to the inner world within inside yourself through movement and promoting wellness and being able to live a healthy lifestyle. So, if you're conscious and aware within yourself, then you're conscious and aware with the things that you do and the things that your intaking or the choices that you make. And so, understanding that you are the power, you're the power that can change or shift things within your life for the better." Additionally, this participant reflected on the ways in which one can immerse themselves within traditional aspects of life in contemporary settings. Building upon the aspect of grounding and finding connection to land, body, spirit through traditional

medicines and the act of heart work being ceremony also became a prevalent theme in these focus groups.

Another participant reflected, “I personally have been affected by the MMIW crisis. My auntie went missing. The only reason why she was found was because there was a car accident right next to her body. I was adopted when I was younger, so I didn't really have my cultural identity. And so as I've gotten older and reconnected I just kind of found out how all of these different things, whether it's the Indian boarding school, whether it's the MMIW crisis, all of these things, I've seen how this, as a Native woman, has played a significant role in my life and in my community. So, I am very passionate about creating proactive solutions within my own community and doing it in a very grassroots approach. I know there is federal funding and things like that, but oftentimes those are laced with red tape. And so, our communities need the help. They need it right away, and what better way to do it in a traditional and culturally specific way that resonates with us and is just the way we heal? Or how does care look like in our communities? One of the biggest barriers is sometimes it can be within our own communities."

There is a continued urgency to address how these ideas can not only become self-generating, but also to look toward the long-range manifestation of community building and moving away from the scarcity mindset. Participants also expressed an ongoing desire to catalyze forces by standing arm in arm together in solidarity with their resources. The topic of lateral oppression deepened the conversation, as this was something that everyone could directly relate to. “We all love togetherness. And that's what I like about my community as well. We come together as a family, and they may not be your biological family, but I greet all my community as my relatives. So, when it comes to our identity, we always greet ourselves with our clanship. That clanship brings that community together. Like for my clan, I have four

different clans from my mother, my father, my grandparents. So when I greet myself to the community, I always greet myself with my four clans. And no matter where we go, no matter who we become in contact with, we're always some way related."

Another participant also shared, "…And I really appreciate the group here that Joannie, how you greeted us as sisters, that's exactly how I greet any female or any of my I don't consider them friends or I always greet them with respect as sister. So I really appreciate that too. And that really helps that bond that we create in our community."

The bonding through a shared sisterhood can also be considered an inherent extension of one's core values. It's the approach of conducting oneself in a manner that upholds the whole community and collaborates on a nation building standpoint. Such discussions have also been had between myself and my cohort sisters, or colleagues within this doctoral program at the University of Washington. Knowing that such systems continue to systematically exclude us from the narrative, how we move forward within the community remains to be at the forefront and this is exactly why it's important for funders and the community at large to heed this call. We need to utilize our best assets which is what I will explore in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Rematriation through Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership, though not always formally distinguished as this, is sacred to kinship traditions that have been inherited and passed on to us from our ancestors. As Native women, we are creators of life, protectors of future generations, cultivators, and nurturers of pollinating heart- wisdom into being. The teachings we carry are essential for the well-being of our societies, clans, tribes, and nations. The honoring of Native Women leading healing efforts has allowed for a communal connectedness. Such cultivation of "for us, by us" solutions are critical to the discourse because we know and understand the needs of our Nations.

Throughout this process of research, to better understand Indigenous Feminist Justice Leadership, I was continuously reminded that Indigenous Women Storytellers are an example of the powerful wisdom that is shared through talk story and that this is medicine. While I feel this will continue to be an opportunity to further develop cultural feminist leadership theories, I am confident that the decentralizing from a western hegemonic framework of feminism has allowed for me as the researcher and philanthropist to also cope, heal, and grow as a mother, daughter, scholar, and chief executive officer. By tying my work towards empowering Indigenous women to empower their communities, I am cognizant that there is also a spiritual awakening that is being reckoned to reconnect with land and kinship with decolonization strategies, as has been done for time immemorial.

So much of the gifts that were shared from one another's journeys throughout the exploration within the focus groups speak to core values that embody love, respect, humility, empathy, and forgiveness. This was something that deeply resonated with me as a Pueblo

Indigenous Feminist who is continuously reminded of such ways of knowing that have been shared with me since I was a little girl, up until now as an adult woman. I am reminded that as humans we are perfectly imperfect and as human tendencies allow us to do so, we make mistakes. It is how we respond to the learning from such mistakes, challenges, hardships that further speak to the balance of caring for community.

Creating Safe + Shared Space

Through and through, I have witnessed the need to not only honor, but also to create safe spaces for the Indigenous Feminist voice to consider their own cultural tenants are activated by nurturing, caring, and growing healthy communities. The growing body of social justice narratives that empower the Indigenous Feminist voice through this research shall serve as a call to the philanthropic sector to fund Native Women. In understanding how Indigenous Feminism can serve as a framework for funding gaps which prevents the work from getting done. The discourse can also reconcile, heal, and inspire the next generation of leaders (Green, 2007; Todd, 2020). Cultivating the matriarchy by empowering feminine narratives will liberate our ancestors by giving a renewed validity amongst how we protect the environment, how we protect our people, and how we protect the future of maternal values that support solutions-based approaches. As Indigenous women, we are the backbones of our communities. We are life givers.

Kinship

Another goal of this research is to evaluate how philanthropy can support such kinship models. Many organizations focus on direct services or connecting constituents to such partner organizations and because of the competitive nature within the sector it is only natural that many

of these funding opportunities create a breeding ground for scarcity. This has also been historically influenced by the lack of funding flowing within community, especially in regard to venture capital opportunities to fund solution-based work that is steeped in cultural ways of knowing.

You'll recall in chapter two in which I described the Native American Relief Fund (NARF) that was created on April 20, 2020 to support tribes in providing relief from COVID-19 in the areas of food, medical supplies, water, as well as community and individual needs. Part of the immediate needs were to provide for a non-federal match to support any Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) funding that a tribe received during the pandemic. FEMA defines this non-federal match as a cost share[17]. The takeaway from this is an example in which philanthropy stepped in to support and fill the gaps where tribal, state, and federal dollars fell short.

The acknowledgement of kinship through everyday practices, has also been in response to living through a pandemic when ceremony came to a pause and how community tried to maintain such practices within individual homes until it was safe enough to participate together as we did, pre-pandemic. The kinship circles of women and our connectedness are celebrated as an honoring of the matriarchal symbolism prevalent in the research. Such reflections from participants also allowed for a deeper evaluation of their respective culture and the extensive use of Native language and such stories.

[17] The matching or cost sharing can be found at 44 C.F.R. § 13.24.

Modern Day Warrior Women

In addition to the research from this study, one of the most significant findings has also been the development of a grounded sense of being that supports reinforcing Native Women's roles as modern-day warrior Women. Such grounding to place, community, healing and leadership are directly connected to healing spaces by way of geographic location. This umbilical connection to our motherland sheds light on motivation to address ancestral trauma, ultimately resulting in leadership roles that serve as a critical intersubjectivity modality for healing. Our roles as Native women are to empower one another through our relationships. We must teach the importance of kinship which demonstrates balance and interconnectedness of genders which we have continued to see unfold in a post-COVID world (Chavez, 2010; Mihesuah, 2003).

Framing the lens for which sustenance and communal stewardship supports a healthy community will allow for us to dive deeper to evaluate some of the root problems that have erupted through institutional frameworks such as philanthropy. This processing of our soil will allow us to uncover layers through the continued evaluation of the research to rediscover how we might be able to catalyze holistic approaches to giving, communal stewardship, and a reclaiming of asset-based thinking and ways of knowing.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the continued inequities along with a movement to support the racial revolution. Philanthropy, donor-advised giving, fund development, and charitable giving has always been geared towards addressing poverty for communities of color. The opportunity to shift power and agency though philanthropic giving is something that will require the sector to go deeper, to continue to unearth roots. This research is a calling, ready to

be funded, and to serve as the catalyst for the unique position of Native women working towards healing our past, addressing our current, and preparing for our future.

Cycle Breaking

Further extending from the themes embedded in this heart work, participants described a connection to land, body, and spirit. A fourth element has also driven the work which is cycle breaking. What propels each of the stewards and their relationship to their own self-sovereignty is a bond that has been created through their own healing journeys. This has also been guided by a maternal community network that serves as the glue to uphold such kinship circles. Many of the women expressed a desire to focus on asset-based approaches, versus the deficit-based narratives that have long shaped the history of grassroots movements.

Women serving as community stabilizers are also dependent on an agency of cycle breaking women who can support each other to do this work. Much of this undoing goes against many of the traditional norms that has allowed patriarchy to manifest within such layers of social political and cultural structures. These women continuously evaluate, “how will this affect my community?” Each participant in the focus group described their deep ties to hold relationships within the community and that in order to break cycles, at times, one must ago against the grain of what the communal norms are, whether they are the first in their family to graduation from college, first in their family to abstain from alcohol and other substances, or by leaving an abusive marriage when everyone within their respective circle tried to persuade them to do otherwise.

Uplift the Matriarchy- Ongoing Buildout

In assessing how much of philanthropy has been situated to create silozation between communities and amongst organizations, it is important to consider what kind of funding mechanisms might be able to be developed to showcase a streamlined way of connecting with community. Visioning a system that is not deficit based and that shares equitable avenues towards obtaining scholarship, fellowship, grant making dollars, and a plethora of shared traditional knowledge and resources I propose the following recommendations:

- Philanthropy needs to fund native women who are leading healing efforts;
- The sector needs to create a place at the table for Native Women to have an equitable voice and to share their solutions for healing intergenerational historical trauma in contemporary times;
- Trust-based philanthropy needs to be implemented across the sector and in spaces of investment where deep and intentional deployment of funding can be made in support of programs;
- Comprehensive Planning needs to take place at a state-wide level and also nationally to continue to build transformational leadership, and
- UpliftheMatriarchy.com will continue to serve as a digital meeting space to support the sharing of resources and ongoing opportunities for table talk discussions.

Grandmother's Seeds

Planting new seeds of connection through this work further lays a foundation for "Grandmother's Seeds" (GS) which came by way of a vision that examined healing across generations and also has considered all facets of the research findings in this study. Healing across generations include past (spiritual), present (physical), and future (spiritual + physical). GS is based upon a 5-generation mapping of Native Matriarchs. Through this framing, I look to continue this work at UpliftheMatriarchy.com by utilizing a planting metaphor to: 1) Uncover the soil, 2) Plant seeds to create threaded connectors, 3) Facilitate growth by documenting the processes (language, land, planting, healing, etc.), and 4) Harvest & Pollination and the sharing of knowledge. I anticipate the continued blossoming of Indigenous cosmo visions that reframe dominant settler colonial narratives around violence, erasure, and reclaiming self-sovereignty to make way for critical Indigenous processes as a pathway for communal healing to ground future generations.

The following illustration in Figure 16 details a blending of the working logic models proposed through this research following by a matrilineal pathway for how this further connects within one's lineage related to GS. Featured in Figure 16 is my Great-Grandmother, Estefanita Herrera to whom this work also is dedicated an extension of our clanship circle. The yellow represents the pollination effect and being "prayed into existence."

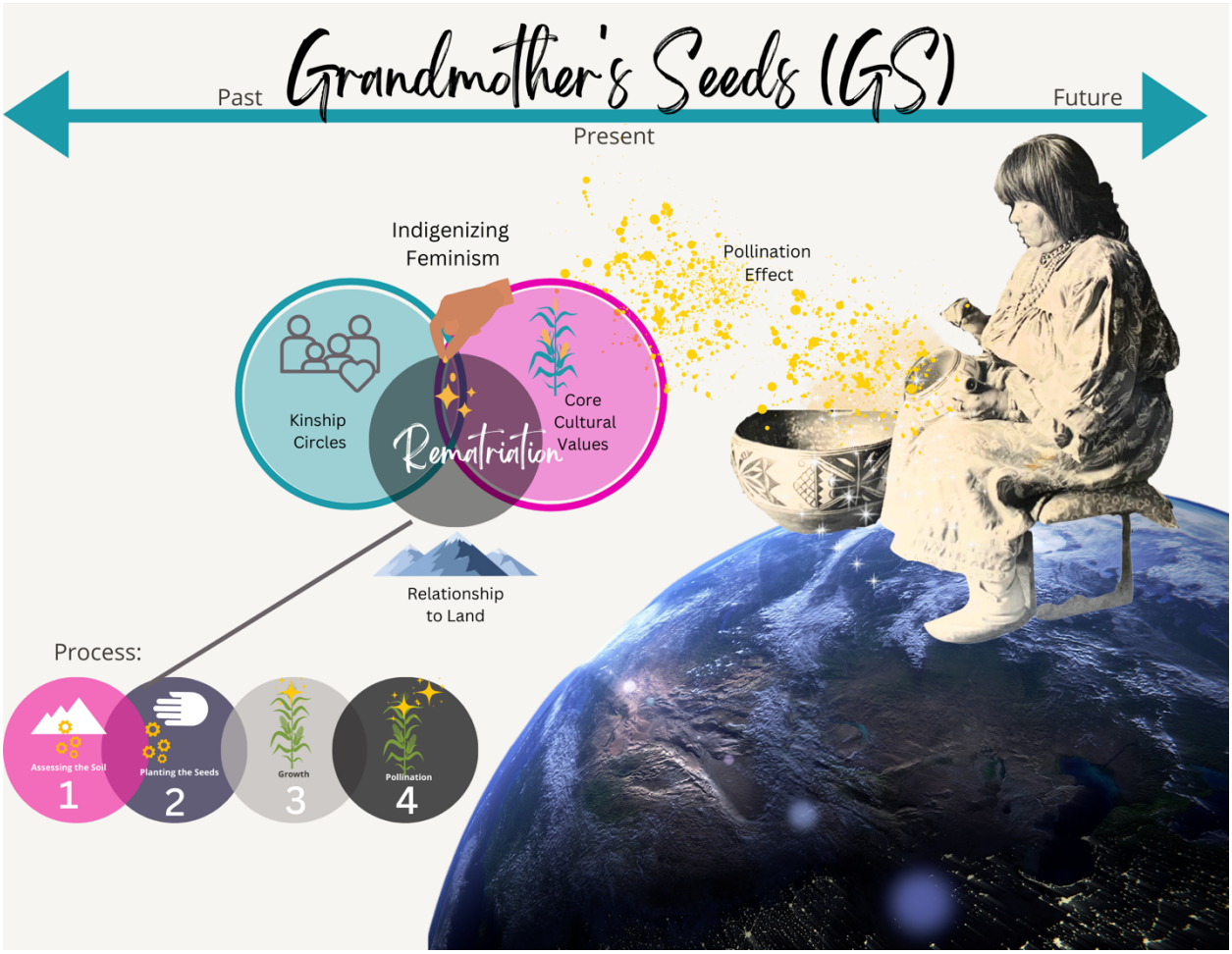

Figure 16 Grandmothers Seeds Planning Metaphor

Through the Grandmothers Seeds Planning Metaphor, I anticipate a series of layers to be unfolded which include but are not limited to:

1) Uncovering the Soil: Rematriation of Grandmothers knowledge through Native Language immersion talking circles, centered on the resilience of Woman as life givers

2) Planting Seeds: Mentorship opportunity with Native Grandmothers, Mothers, and Daughters (each serving as thought-partners) using the 5-generation mapping of Native Matriarchs to plan logistics of curriculum.

3) Facilitating Growth: Documenting the process through videography, photography, and taking stock of inherited Matriarchal teachings to support the development of a Grandmother's Seeds Curriculum.

4) Harvest & Pollination: Gathering of Grandmothers Festival event, co-developed by participants, to showcase the film, photography, and curriculum to show cultural appreciation through rematriation strategies.

Conclusion

Carrying the weight of unresolved grief and intergenerational trauma remains a challenge for any decolonization framework to address. Making space to share stories to encourage growth, community longevity, and the possibility of cultivating community is often overlooked because [pre-covid especially] we were so busy trying to make ends meet, take care of our families, learn our languages, etc. Through making space and by centering the voices of our Grandmothers alongside of what they have taught us about supporting our communities during challenging times, I anticipate a co-curation of Grandmothers Seeds, via UpliftheMatriarchy.com to create space, to cultivate teachings, and to re-empower Native women and their spirits to pave future pathways for our future generations.

What I've witnessed during the time of COVID-19, when I began this doctoral journey, up unto the present post-COVID world, has been the recentering of Native women's voices and the inherent practices which we seek to carry out through our heart work as an extension of Indigenous Feminism. Not only are we doing all those things, but we are also rekindling relations with the earth, our mother, by cultivating her land, planting seeds, growing roots and providing for our families. Through this threaded reconnecting we will guide the work through

our core cultural values of having empathy for one another and meeting each other where we are at in our learning and healing.

What I also learned during this research process with the continued confirmation of spiritual reminders that helped to guide the work. Turning to prayer, as described in the researcher's positionality at the beginning of this paper, there was also an implementation of care that led into the molding of these words. There was unexpected emotion that sprouted from returning to search ancestral ways of knowing. The history of Indigenous feminism and walking a good path has been highly tainted by the ongoing socio-political patriarchy that exists in our families and within our tribal nations. Finding balance and personal well-being has allowed me, as the researcher, to also draw upon my own Keresan philosophies and mantras. This work can be framed as a research deconstruction through analyzing the ways in which Native women, have continued to draw boundaries to protect their own self-sovereignty, and ultimately their children by choosing to be cycle breakers.

In the Keres language, Ku'we'meh translates to "be a strong, resilient, loving, tough woman." I am reminded of this during times of hardship, loss, sacrifice, and also in joyous moments. It is through such blood memory that I can hear the echoes of my ancestors and grandmothers reminding me of the matrilineal role that I will continue to carry forward in this lifetime as well as the next. I am also reminded of the ways in which supporting community means being in good relationship with one another, being grounded, and always looking at the brighter side of a challenging situation to remember such words that were left with me from focus group participants, "this is how we heal."

Rematriating through land, kinship, and our value system creates a togetherness that will ensure the continued sustainability of not only funding sources to support the hard work, but also to support the togetherness of community for all humanity. Though at times this may be hard work, it is certainly heart work. Lastly, to my future elder self and to those of my comrades, we must not forget that our ancestors have been waiting for somebody with our strength to carry their name. You are the one who will break the cycle.

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