



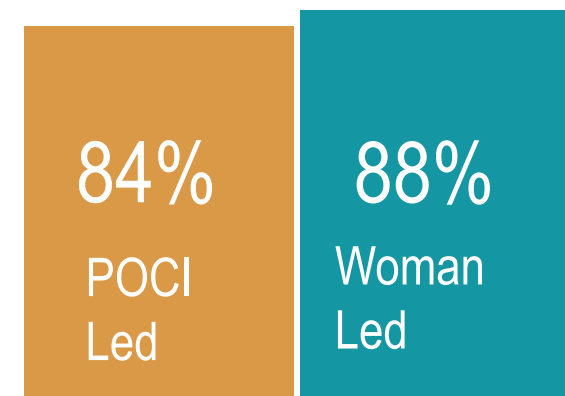
Better Way  
FOUNDATION

# Funding Early Childhood Development & Educational Sovereignty

# Better Way Foundation 101

*We acknowledge our presence on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Dakota People.*

- Endowment: \$54 Million    Grantmaking: \$2.4 Million
- Geography: 35% Tanzania, 65% Domestic (mostly Indian Country)
- 2014 – Better Way merged with Sieben Foundation:
  - Refreshed mission, vision and statement of values
  - Programs: Systems change/early childhood development (ECD)
  - 2016: Commitment to Indigenous ECD: \$5 years/\$5 million
  - 2018: New commitment: \$10 years/\$10 million



# Programs – Indigenous Early Childhood Development

## Developing our Indigenous ECD initiative

Key principles and operating assumptions:

- We start by listening. Acknowledge inherent power dynamics and privilege. Earn trust. Invest in relationships. Show up.
- Indigenous people know what's best for indigenous people.
- We act in service of our partners and their communities. Our partners guide us and we are accountable to them.

# Programs – What are we supporting?

## Native-owned, Native-led organizations

- Our cohort: 10-12 partners
- Geography: New Mexico, Minnesota, Pine Ridge (SD)
- Delivery: Head Start & Montessori
- Language and Culture at the heart
- **Educational Sovereignty** – we believe deeply that Native people know best how to educate their children, and believe in honoring and supporting their inherent sovereignty over education (and inherent sovereignty as Nations more broadly)
- **Example:** Oglala Lakota College Head Start
  - 20 centers, 600 children
  - Supporting cultural healing practices to help children & caregivers overcome trauma

# Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation: ECD as Healing

## Indian Boarding Schools History

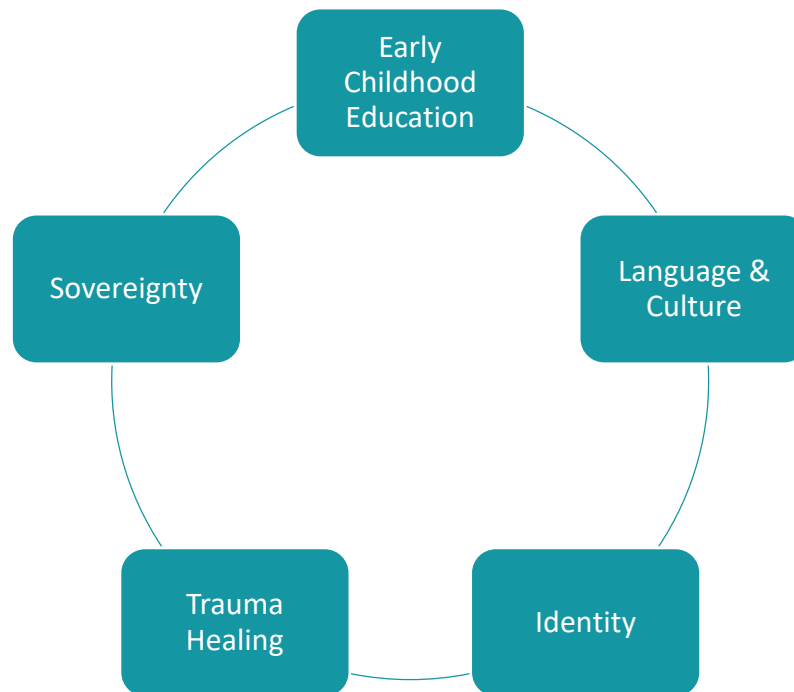
- U.S. Government Policy
- Forcible removal – Family separation
- 1900: 20,000 children in Indian boarding schools
- 1925: more than 60,000
- Reclaiming Native Truth project

## Why does this matter to Better Way Foundation?

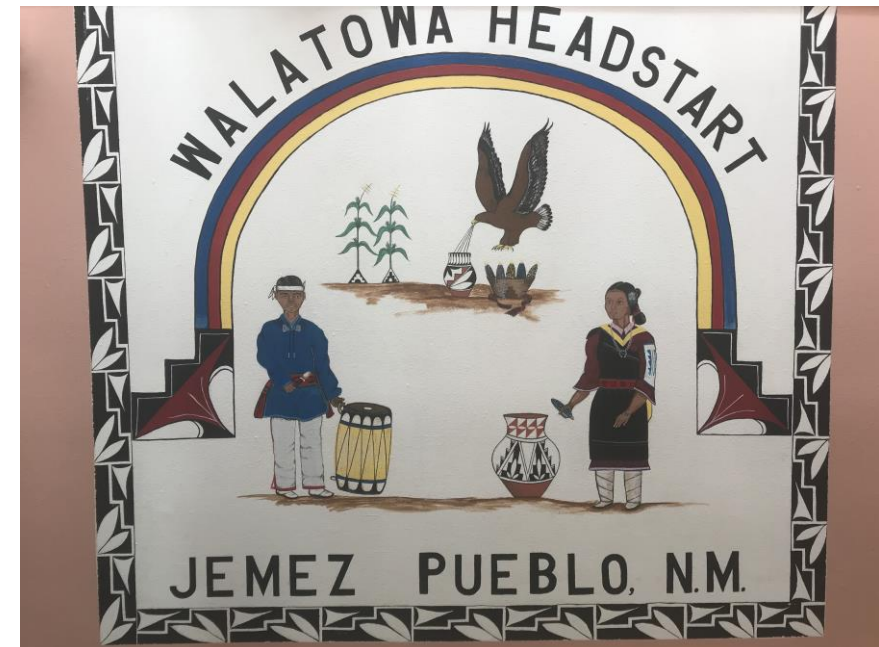
- Catholic boarding schools – past & present
- Historical trauma
- Healing



# Early Childhood Programs and Sovereignty



# ECD as a Pathway to Sovereignty: Partner Stories



# Programs – Evaluation and Learning

## **Indigenous Evaluation Framework/Process**

- Who defines our goals?
- Evaluation and learning are critical, and must be owned by our partners.
- Process matters.
- Long-term partnerships.

## **How?**

- Cohort convening events
- Cross-learning strategies



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