Funding Early Childhood Development & Educational Sovereignty
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

84% 88%
POCI Led Woman Led
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

- Early Childhood Education
- Sovereignty
- Language & Culture
- Trauma Healing
- Identity
ECD as a Pathway to Sovereignty: Partner Stories
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