INDIGENOUS ADOLESCENT GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

April 13, 2021

ResilienceCon 2021

Kelly Hallman (Cherokee Nation), Lisa Polen, Kassel Franco-Garibay, Stephanie Martinez

Photo: Vladimir Badikov, Voice of America.
RURAL NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

- Historical trauma

- Structural violence, racism, poverty, poor health, short lifespans, MMIWG

- Mainstream interventions not effective

- Seeking ways to thrive and heal in an indigenous way
Many AI/AN girls will become primary caretakers of a household/family.

(US children residing in single-parent families by race, 2019)

Source: K Hallman, ResilienceCon 2021; Annie E. Casey Foundation, KidsCount Data Center.
Rural tribal girls’ living arrangements

Who girls reside with, by age (northern plains tribal nation)

Native females have fewer financial assets & skills than Native males.

Figure 24. Gender and Financial Capability Among Native Americans

Native “youth” program scan:
only 6 of 79 programs (8%) had a gender focus

Support offered earlier could help girls face challenges

A GIRL IS BORN

SHE TURNS 10

SUPPORTIVE CONNECTIONS

HOMEWORK CLUB

Abuse/Violence
School Drop-out
Trafficking

SHE TURNS 18

HEALTH SYSTEM NAVIGATION

FINANCIAL SKILLS

Sexual Assault
HIV / STIs/Pregnancy
Suicidal Ideation

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Adapted from Girl Effect 2012/13
Women in rural tribal communities create hyper-local "Girl Societies"

Two-mentor team + Local girls, aged 10-18

Weekly Talking Circle for Girls

IMAGEN process

- Co-learning with Native communities, tribes & NGOs
  - Advisory council of 7 Native American women
  - 6 large grants to Native-controlled organizations
  - 68 COVID-19 micro-grants to 44 communities
  - Scores of (138) Native American women trained in planning, facilitation & data tools to start and operate Girl Societies
  - Bi-weekly virtual IMAGEN Circle gatherings since March 2020

HOW IS IMAGEN DIFFERENT?

• Native female support systems
  – Non-invasive, yet protective system
  – Inter-generational bonds
  – Native cultural lifeways
  – Skills for the modern world

• Gender- and life-stage focus

• Sovereign determination of content

• Suite of tools
  – Planning, implementation, assessment

• Continuous operational support


Photo: Vladimir Badikov, Voice of America.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)</th>
<th>Euro American</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual</strong></td>
<td>Key female responsibilities in ceremonies</td>
<td>Women forbidden to speak in religious services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social/Health</strong></td>
<td>GBV not tolerated, punished by leaders</td>
<td>Husband legal &amp; religious right to perpetrate GBV</td>
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<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Women communally manage farming; own physical assets</td>
<td>Women home isolated; no female property rights</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td>Women hold key political offices (clan mothers)</td>
<td>All decision-making by men</td>
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Do you know?

A resilience skills challenge game for Native American girls

Source: K Hallman, K Garibay, S Martinez, L Polen, 2021, Do you know: Resilience A Skills Challenge Game for Native American girls.
IMAGEN COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

Photo: Aimee Pond, Mary LeBeau, Thunder Valley Community Development, South Dakota
Cells phones & data

To help girls connect with and across Girl Society groups during COVID-19.

Photo: Sharisse Sitting Bear, White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society.
Personal hygiene bags for girls: resources (COVID-19 and other) available at White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society.

Photos: Sharisse Sitting Bear, White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society.
Wokpa: spiritual toolkit provided to each girl

Photo: Sharisse Sitting Bear, White Buffalo Calf Women's Society.
IMAGEN impact

• Platform for Native female inter-generational mutual support in Indian Country
  – IMAGEN “Girl Society Movement” being talked about across U.S. indigenous communities

• Spurring hope, ideas & action among members
  – Thru IMAGEN, Native female-controlled NGOs created to focus exclusively on Native girls
  – Existing programs shift from “youth” to girls and boys

• Influencing donors
  – As of 2021, donors announcing RFAs to work with Native American girls (not “Native youth”)
Documentary film by Voice of America (VOA). Dec 2020. (33-min):
THANK YOU!

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