



INTERNATIONAL FUNDERS
IFIP
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Photo courtesy of Pawanka Fund

Indigenous Ways of Giving + Sharing

Indigenous-led Funds Landscape Scan Report

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An important note about Indigenous philanthropy:

Indigenous peoples are diverse.

There are many different Indigenous cultures, communities and languages. There is not one Indigenous worldview. Although there may be shared values or beliefs amongst different Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples have their own understandings of philanthropy that is richly rooted in their own languages, ancestral knowledge, and cultural values of giving and sharing.

English is inadequate to accurately describe and wholly capture the diversity of Indigenous worldviews of philanthropy, and the values that guide their work.

We encourage funders to take the time to learn about the different Indigenous languages and related concepts about philanthropy that Indigenous leaders and funds root their work in.

Introduction

This body of work is a gathering place to bring together the wealth of knowledge about Indigenous-led funds and the wisdom of Indigenous leaders in philanthropy; to create a space where Indigenous leaders in philanthropy can learn from each other, and where funders can understand effective and decolonial approaches to grantmaking.

This body of work is also a call to action. An invitation for actors within the philanthropic community to reflect upon their power and privilege, and listen to the leadership of Indigenous peoples.

The International Funders for Indigenous Peoples commissioned this work in 2020, to amplify the voices of these Indigenous leaders and Indigenous-led funds, so that their calls for stronger support can be answered.

To embark on this journey of greater understanding, one must start by humbling oneself to listen deeply and learn; to step outside of the Western and non-Indigenous notions dominating philanthropy; and to open the mind to Indigenous worldviews.

This landscape scan will take you on a journey to Indigenous communities, cultures and worldviews all over the world. It will take you into communities who have their own history and understanding of, visions for philanthropy that is richly rooted in ancestral knowledge and cultural values of giving and sharing.

If we can make space for the leadership of the Indigenous peoples and communities demanding respect and recognition in philanthropy, together we can transform the way we do grantmaking.

Indigenous-Led Funds

Landscape Scan Overview

Background

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) is leading efforts to facilitate knowledge sharing amongst Indigenous-led funds, as well as raising the profiles of their work within the broader philanthropic community. IFIP hosted two gatherings of Indigenous-led funds in 2018 and 2019. The Indigenous-led Funds Working Group was born out of the gatherings and the Working Group has been guiding IFIP's continued efforts to amplify support for Indigenous-led funds. In preparation for the 2018 Indigenous-led fund gathering at the IFIP Global Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, IFIP conducted a survey to compile information about Indigenous-led funds. This year IFIP partnered with Alliance Magazine to include perspectives of Indigenous-led funds in a special feature on Indigenous Philanthropy.

This landscape scan was guided by the Indigenous-led Fund Working Group, and is a culmination of all the discussions and ideas that IFIP has hosted with Indigenous-led funds to date.

Learning Objectives

1	How are Indigenous-Led Funds resourced?
2	How are Indigenous-Led Funds distributing resources?
3	Who and where are they funding?
4	What are their priorities?

Intended Outcomes

1	Build understanding and awareness of Indigenous-led Funds
2	Share information amongst Indigenous-led Funds
3	Identify gaps
4	Identify how to grow and strengthen Indigenous-led Funds

Approach

This landscape scan seeks to amplify the voices of Indigenous-led funds and the wisdom of Indigenous leaders in philanthropy. Knowledge and stories were compiled and analyzed from:

- An online survey completed by 17 Indigenous-led funds in 2020
- The results of the 2018 IFIP survey completed by 16 Indigenous-led funds
- The stories shared by Indigenous-led funds on their own platforms (websites, reports, etc.)
- The wisdom shared in the Alliance Magazine special feature on Indigenous Philanthropy (published in March 2020 in partnership with IFIP)
- The wisdom shared in the Reimagining Philanthropy: International Funders for Indigenous Peoples video
- Information produced by the Indigenous-led funds Working Group
- Information shared in the 1st and 2nd Indigenous-led Fund Gathering Reports

We acknowledge that 2020 has been a year that has demanded Indigenous peoples and organizations to focus on priorities that may not include responding to an online survey. To be as inclusive as possible, we reviewed information on Indigenous-led fund websites to include their values and priorities in this landscape scan. The quantitative data provided on budgets and geographies is limited to the 17 funds that completed the survey.

The preliminary results of this project was presented to Indigenous-led funds in November 2020 and their feedback was incorporated into this report.

To identify the information needed for funders and non-Indigenous allies to better understand the work of Indigenous-led funds; knowledge, stories and questions were also compiled from supporters of Indigenous-led funds:

- An online survey (2020) completed by 7 funders of Indigenous-led funds
- The stories shared by funders of Indigenous-led funds the Alliance Magazine special feature on Indigenous Philanthropy (published March 2020 in partnership with IFIP)

Who + What

are

Indigenous-Led Funds

Indigenous-led funds are very diverse. Each one is unique and there is not one way to accurately describe or define all Indigenous-led funds, but this report will attempt to identify some of the common themes identified.

Definition of Indigenous-Led Funds

Indigenous Led Funds are guided by Indigenous worldviews and led-by and for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Led Funds strengthen self-determination and support a process that empowers the communities, at the local to the global level, to be able to change paradigms and shift power relations addressing the asymmetry of powers and resources to recognition and reciprocity.¹ (Definition created by IFIP Indigenous-led Funds Working Group)

An Indigenous-led fund is an organization, instrument, agency, or other body made up of a majority of Indigenous individuals. The primary role is to fund Indigenous organizations or community projects and whose mission is for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous-led funds also exist as different kinds of institutions¹:

Structures of Indigenous-led Funds

Non-profits or charitable organizations: Organizations seeded by and primarily funded by philanthropy, either created with the support of a donor or created by Indigenous peoples. It includes organizations initially created by non-Indigenous people but currently led by Indigenous people

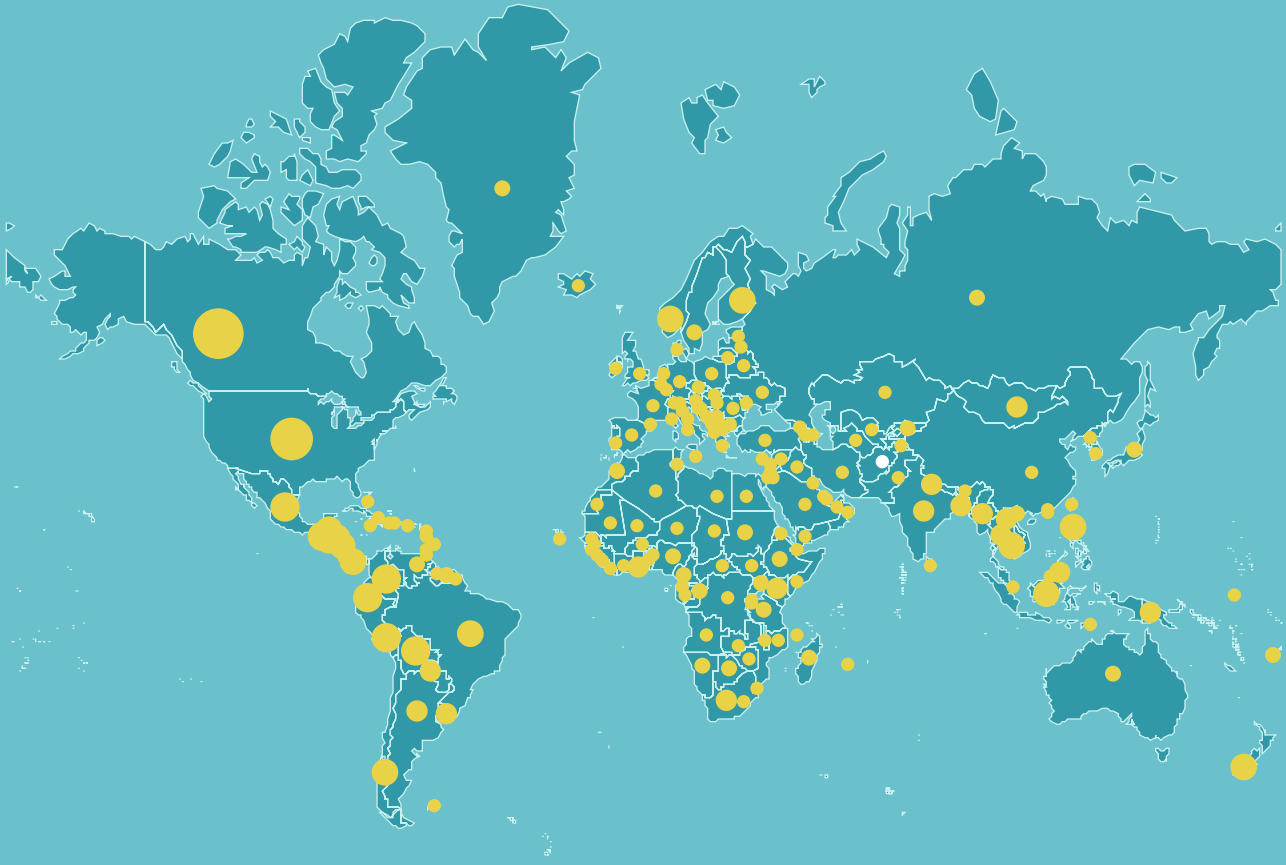
Grantmaking mechanisms set up by non-profits, NGOs, and cooperation agencies guided and managed by Indigenous peoples: Funding instruments which administration and decision making are in the hands of Indigenous peoples

Set up by Tribal, First Nations, Aboriginal Governments and Councils: Organizations created by sovereign First Nations (tribal, Aboriginal, Indigenous) governments or councils. Funding programs created by regional federations of Indigenous peoples

Set up by governments with an Indigenous decision body: National or regional institutions set up by governments and managed and administered by Indigenous people

¹ Indigenous-Led Funds Working Group Design Planning Notes

Where Are Indigenous-Led Funds



Map of Countries Funded (2017-2019)

Indigenous-led funds exist all over the world. Many are funding internationally with networks and partnerships with Indigenous communities that span several countries. They have strategies that work multi and inter-culturally, to respond to the needs of diverse Indigenous communities.

Others are national in scope, or even community-based and focused, taking a more localized approach. Their work is engrained in the history, relationships, and fabric of their own communities and cultures.

Many do not have one location from which they work, with staff based in several communities and countries.

0.4%

of all philanthropic funding
by large U.S. foundations is
directed to Native
communities in the United
States²

0.5%

of philanthropic funding in
Australia is directed to First
Nations communities³

1.2%

of all global giving by U.S.
foundations went to
Indigenous Peoples between
2011-2015⁴

² <https://nativephilanthropy.candid.org/>

³ Based on analysis provided by an FIP member of the Philanthropy Australia Foundation Maps dataset from 2014-2018.

⁴ <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/31306/31706.pdf>

How are Indigenous-Led Funds Resourced

Indigenous-led funds are resourced with financial support from philanthropic, government, and corporate donors. Some Indigenous-led funds are founded by or complimented with financial support from their tribal governments or corporations. Very few are endowed, which means most do not have access to permanent and sustainable financing.

Type of Funding Received



Type of Support Received



“Cultural Survival works toward a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples’ inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance.”

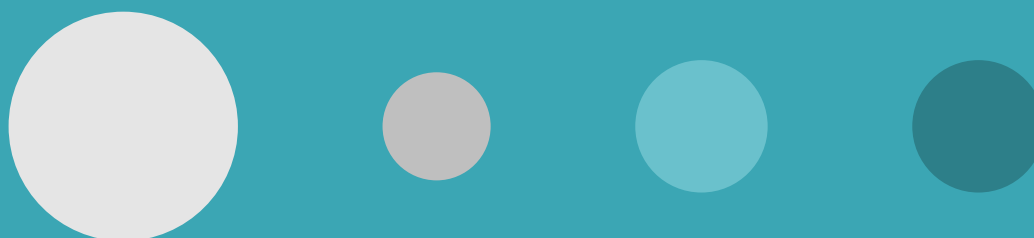
-Cultural Survival, Keepers of the Earth Fund

Annual Budgets

Annual Grantmaking Budget (Average from 2017-2019)



Annual Operating Budget including Grantmaking Budget (Average from 2017-2019)



Many Indigenous-led funds, especially those that exist as stand-alone organizations, do programmatic work in addition to grantmaking. Their operating budgets reflect that reality, where staff may collaborate closely across programs and defining the true cost of administering grantmaking programs is difficult to distinguish.

“We are teachers and learners, grant makers and conveners, committed to remembering and revitalizing traditional values and practices rooted in Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.”

– Na’ah Illahee Fund

Fundraising is a key capacity need identified by Indigenous-led Funds. The capacity directed to fundraising and managing funding partnerships, agreements, and relationships, reduces their capacity to focus on the work that responds to community needs.

Criteria for Entering Partnerships

Indigenous-led funds described the criteria that they consider before entering into a partnership to accept support from a funder to make sure that entering into a partnership with any given funder will not compromise their ability to advance self-determination, work according to their own values and principles, and respond to the needs and priorities of their communities.

Indigenous-led funds seek partners that:

- Respect Indigenous self-determination at all levels
- Support their and their communities' visions
- Align with their values
- Trust in their leadership, governance system and Indigenous ways of doing grantmaking
- Respect Indigenous rights and culture

Some of the questions they consider about a funder before entering partnerships:

- How much power and control will the funder seek to maintain?
- What strings are attached to the funding and will it impact their strategy and priorities?
- What is the funder's source of wealth?
- Who else have they funded?
- What are their internal commitments to learning and growing?
- What are the administrative and bureaucratic burdens that will be attached to managing the funding agreement and relationship with the funder?

"It is time that the mainstream philanthropy community really think of wealth beyond those numbers and zeros and bank accounts; and recognize the social capital and the cultural capital of our communities; and the incredible wealth that we already have. And yet in this capitalist system we need money to do so many of the things we need to do"

– Melissa Nelson, President/CEO, The Cultural Conservancy - Mino-Niibi

Fund

Supporters of Indigenous-Led Funds

“If you want to build strong partnerships with Indigenous people, you have to approach them as equals and on their terms”

- Monica Alemán, Ford Foundation, Alliance Magazine Feature

Supporters and Funders of Indigenous-led funds look at leadership and decision-makers as a key indication that a fund is Indigenous-led.

Reasons for Supporting Indigenous-Led Funds:

- They are closest to communities and problems being solved, and understand what works best
- Show a pathway forward for philanthropy
- It is an act of rebalancing historical inequalities and decolonizing philanthropy
- Allows Indigenous partners to do philanthropy based on their worldview and priorities to educate funders

“We live for the day when Indigenous peoples around the world are able to practice self-determination when their human, economic, social, cultural, political and territorial rights are recognized and respected; when they are free to speak their languages, maintain their sacred traditions, and continue the work of caring for their ancestral homelands.”

- Land is Life

Supporters Believe Funding Indigenous-Led Funds is Effective Philanthropy Because:

- Indigenous peoples hold inherent power and wisdom and can be effective for themselves
- There is already a plethora of knowledge of the challenges and opportunities in a community
- Understand best how to use available resources most effectively
- More natural for grant partners to connect with someone with cultural, linguistic and regional perspective
- Hold stronger trust with their communities and partners
- Avoids confusion and saves time and effort not having to educate funders
- Strengthens Indigenous peoples self-determination and reduces their dependency on outsiders



“This is an opportunity to improve your chances of impact. Working with Indigenous people, supporting their leadership, investing in their institutions is an opportunity for impact. So this is not ‘please do us a favour’, this is a proven way of making impact in the world and if you believe in justice, justice is calling and justice won’t be achieved without walking hand in hand and resourcing and supporting Indigenous Peoples, their organisations, their leadership, and believing in them.”

- Darren Walker, President of Ford Foundation, Alliance Magazine Indigenous Philanthropy Feature

Supporters of Indigenous-Led Funds - Lessons Learned

- Trust matters and it takes time to grow
- The best partnerships aren't just based on the money, but are thought partnerships as well
- Bringing Indigenous leadership on your own staff and board brings positive change
- Actively listen to the power dynamics and historical inequities between philanthropy and Indigenous communities
- Give without expectation, relinquish control, decenter yourselves, be a good ally, trust, and contribute without interfering
- Participate in a constant learning journey
- Learn to adapt and be open-minded - the socio-economic and/or cultural frameworks you are accustomed to might not be shared with your partners
- Be aware of the limitations of English and expand your way of thinking by learning the meanings embodied in Indigenous languages



Photo courtesy of Pawanka Fund

Ajunngitsumik siunertalimmik aningaasaliineq - "Giving funding to something with a good purpose"

-Tukumminnguaq Nykjaer Olsen, Arctic Indigenous Fund, Greenland Advisor

"Ayni" is a Quechua/Kichua word whose meaning is reciprocity, equality and justice from the Indigenous worldview."

- Ayni Indigenous Women's Fund, FIMI

Koondée Woonga-gat Toor-rong means "to give jointly, to share together" in Woiwurrung language"

- Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Diane Kerr, Koondée Woonga-gat Toor-rong Fund

Pawanka is a Miskito word meaning "growing and strengthening"

- Pawanka Fund

Ulnooweg, pronounced [Ul-noo-wegg], is a Mi'kmaq word which broadly translated means: "to make Indigenous or adapt beliefs, customs, and culture of the Mi'kmaq".

- Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

Luohttit min servodagaid máhtu ja dáhtu - "Trust in the knowledge and will of our communities."

-Marion Aslaksen Ravna, Arctic Indigenous Fund Sápmi Advisor

Reto means giving kindness, to uplift and give strength

- Samburu Women's Trust

"In the Maya K'icha language, it is defined as the Kuchuj the pooling of resources for the well-being of everyone."

- Teresa Zapeta, Executive Director of International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), Alliance Magazine

Indigenous Ways of Giving + Sharing

Photos courtesy of Pawanka Fund



“We have more accountability than mainstream philanthropy because we are beholden to our ancestors, communities and future generations.”

- Koondie Woonga-gat Toor-rong

Indigenous Leadership



Indigenous leadership is represented in each fund in different capacities, some with Indigenous leaders represented at various levels such as:

- Indigenous peoples on staff empowered to make decisions
- Indigenous peoples on decision-making boards and advisories
- Indigenous peoples providing guidance through non-decision-making advisory councils
- Indigenous peoples providing direction to funds through relationships and participatory processes that engage communities

In addition, the work of Indigenous leaders within Indigenous-led funds have outward benefits that further strengthen leadership capacity within Indigenous communities.

There are diverse governance models of Indigenous-led Funds, within which there may also be non-Indigenous people represented on staff or decision-making boards. Within these models, Indigenous peoples are still in foundational and majority positions of authority to make decisions.

Honouring Connectedness + Self-Determination

Indigenous-led funds were explicit that their work is rooted in:

- Supporting self-determination by being responsive to the needs of their communities
- Employing a holistic understanding and approach that honours the interconnectedness of people, land, language, and culture

Indigenous Values, Principles + Priorities



Indigenous-led funds described the Indigenous values and principles that guide the ways in which they make decisions:

- Long-term perspectives that consider the well-being of future generations
- Connected to the land with considerations for stewardship responsibilities
- Contributions to strengthening Indigenous knowledge, language, culture, and way of life
- Founded in the leadership and wisdom of Indigenous leadership and community members
- Trust-based, reciprocal community relationships and community-tailored processes
- Collaborative, collective, and consensus-based
- Humbled to continuously learning
- Grounded in ceremony and with respect for ancestral guidance and intuition

Give General Support and/or Multi-Year Grants Because:

- It is important to support process and not just projects
- Helps strengthen Indigenous organizations over time to be more strategic & plan lasting positive change
- Committed to their community partners

57%

Those that don't, would like to, but don't have stable, long-term, or unrestricted resources to do so

A Lesson in Effective Philanthropy: The Power + Practicality of Indigenous-led Funds

Indigenous-led Funds are a part of their communities so they have:

- Pre-existing relationships and trust with communities
- Inherent understanding of intricate community context and local leadership and governance systems
- Shared worldview, culture and values
- Responsibilities to their ancestors, communities and future generations

Indigenous-led Funds understand what works and what doesn't so they adapt their work to:

- Be not just culturally appropriate, but culture-based; rooted in Indigenous worldviews, languages, culture and way of life
- Use community-tailored approaches that are flexible to the needs of communities
- Respond directly to community-led priorities using a dynamic range of supports in addition to funding that advance self-determination
- Prioritize deep relationships and trust over measurement of outcomes
- Work in reciprocity with communities
- Ensure Indigenous peoples' full participation
- Support long-term and systems change
- Align internal programmatic work such as communications, research, and policy advocacy

In addition to doing grantmaking, the Indigenous-Led Funds offer communities:

- Support and coaching through the grantmaking process
- Networking and knowledge sharing opportunities with other Indigenous communities
- Networking with funders and learning opportunities about philanthropy
- Collaboration and alliance building with other sectors (such as government)
- Mentorship and capacity building support
- Platforms to amplify and share their voices and stories



Indigenous-Led Funds offer:

Strong leadership

A decolonized approach

A low risk and effective, best-practice way of doing community-based grantmaking

Introductions and connection points to communities and cultures

Opportunities to learn about Indigenous ways of grantmaking

A bridge between Indigenous and philanthropic contexts and understanding

A pathway to reconciliation and the decolonization of philanthropy

“It is time to usher in a new philanthropic standard that recognizes that Native-led philanthropy is ready and capable to serve our own.”

– Colorado Plateau Foundation

Restitution, Reconciliation + Restoring Justice: Calls to Action to Support Indigenous-Led Philanthropy

1. Invest in Indigenous-Led Funds

It is no surprise that Indigenous-led funds are in need of more funding. In particular, unrestricted, general support funding, and multi-year funding is needed to fulfill Indigenous-led priorities and self-determination. Indigenous-led funds are interested in and prepared to receive and responsibly manage large investments.

2. Support Networking

Indigenous-led funds need support to be introduced and connect with new donors that can support their work. Indigenous-led funds also need opportunities to share knowledge with other Indigenous leaders and communities. Through knowledge-sharing and mentorship, Indigenous peoples strengthen leadership and capacity.

3. Create Platforms

Indigenous-led funds need platforms where they can share their own stories, and where their community partners can share their stories. They need access to spaces where they can educate others, especially donors, about the importance of their work to decolonize philanthropy.

4. Increase Indigenous Leadership

In addition to wanting support, resources and opportunity to grow and strengthen their own internal and community leadership, Indigenous-led funds are also calling upon funders to increase Indigenous leadership within their own institutions, on staff, boards, and other decision-making bodies.

5. Decolonize

Indigenous-led funds are calling upon funders to actively review how they uphold white supremacy and systemic racism. To educate themselves to understand how they as individuals, as institutions, and as a sector are connected to and play active roles in the oppression of Indigenous communities. Through education and learning, mainstream philanthropy can identify ways to decolonize its own processes and contribute to meaningful change.

6. Give Space to Heal

Indigenous leaders in philanthropy also need their own spaces and opportunities to convene as communities and heal from decolonization together.

7. Relinquish Power

Philanthropy needs to open the doors and accept Indigenous peoples as equal partners. Non-Indigenous power and control over the world's resources needs to be relinquished to enable systemic change and a just future where Indigenous self-determination is realized.

8. Trust Indigenous-Led Funds

Indigenous-led funds are asking for trust in their work as a most effective means of granting to Indigenous communities and advancing Indigenous-led priorities.

9. Change the Narrative

Philanthropy needs to change the narrative on Indigenous regranteeing models. Indigenous-led funds are not risky investments, they are responsible ones. Investments in institutional capacity are not high overhead, they are long-term strategies. Indigenous leaders are not just administering grants, they are leading transformation of the philanthropic sector. It is time to shift perspective and change the narrative.

“It is time for philanthropy to recognize Indigenous peoples as innovators, thought leaders, active contributors in philanthropy who are bringing solutions based on resiliency from the ground-up.”

– Lourdes Inga, International Funders for Indigenous Peoples

We hope that this report has helped build understanding of the decreased risk, heightened impact, and improved effectiveness that is possible when the power over philanthropic resources is put in the hands of Indigenous leaders and funds.

References

Indigenous-Led Fund Website Links:

Arctic Indigenous Fund: <https://www.arcticindigenousfund.com/>

Alianza Milpa: <http://alianzamilpa.org/en/>

Ayni Fund: <http://www.fimi-iiwf.org/fondo-ayni/>

Coast Funds: <https://coastfunds.ca/>

Colorado Plateau Foundation: <https://coloradoplateaufoundation.org/>

Cultural Survival: <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/>

Eenou-Eeyou Community Foundation: <https://www.creefoundation.ca/>

First Peoples' Cultural Foundation: www.fpcf.ca

First Peoples' Fund: <https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/>

Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de America Latina y el Caribe: <https://www.filac.org/wp/>

Honor the Earth: <http://www.honorearth.org/>

Indian Land Tenure Foundation: <https://iltf.org/>

Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund: <https://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/indigenous-peoples-resilience-fund/>

Koondee Woonga-gat Toor-rong: <https://www.kwtfund.com.au/>

Kivulini Trust: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Kivulini-Trust-3406207812738044/>

Land is Life: <https://www.landislife.org/>

Na'ah Illahee Fund: <https://www.naahillahee.org/>

Native Voices Rising: <http://www.nativevoicesrising.org/reports/>

NDN Collective: <https://ndncollective.org/>

NWT On the Land Collaborative Fund: <http://www.nwtontheland.ca/>

Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project: <http://www.oiypp.ca/>

Pawanka Fund: <https://www.pawankafund.org/>

Podaali Fundo Indígena da Amazônia Brasileira: <https://www.fundopodaali.org.br/>

Samburu Women Trust: <https://www.samburutrust.org/new-index>

Seventh Generation Fund: <http://www.7genfund.org/apply-grant>

The Cultural Conservancy: <http://www.nativeand.org/>

Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation: <http://ulnoowegfoundation.ca/>

References

Videos:

Reimagining Philanthropy: International Funders for Indigenous Peoples: https://youtu.be/Nkk8_6zkvW0

Documents:

ILF Working Group Design and Planning Notes

Indigenous Led Funds 1st Gathering Final Report

Information/Web Links:

<https://nativephilanthropy.candid.org/>

<https://www.cof.org/content/state-global-giving-us-foundations-2011-2015>

<https://humanrightsfunding.org/populations/indigenous-peoples/year/trends/>

Masicho (thank you very much) to the 2020 Survey Respondents:

Indigenous-Led Funds:

Arctic Indigenous Fund

Coast Funds

Colorado Plateau Foundation

Cultural Survival

Eenou-Eeyou Community Foundation

First Peoples' Cultural Foundation

Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indigenas
de America Latina y el Caribe

First Peoples' Fund

Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund

Na'ah Illahee Fund

NWT On the Land Collaborative

Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project

Pacific Peoples' Partnership

Pawanka Fund

Samdhana Institute

The Cultural Conservancy

Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

Funders:

Cages Foundation

Kellogg Foundation

Nia Tero

Oak Foundation

Stul Family Foundation

Swift Foundation

Tamalpais Trust



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