



Funding Trend Analysis on **Indigenous Peoples Philanthropy**

20 Recommendations
for Future Actions

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For more than two decades, **International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP)** has had an unwavering commitment—to create a thriving philanthropic environment that promotes Indigenous leadership and the rights of Indigenous communities across the globe. Our journey has been one of forging connections, breaking barriers, and igniting change. Our mission is clear: to empower Indigenous voices, amplify their self-determination, and advocate for their rights. We collaborate with our global community, our members and partners, to shift funding practice, build relationships and deepen partnerships with Indigenous organizations. IFIP advocates for direct access to funding for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous-led initiatives, organizations, and Indigenous-led funds and promotes transparency and accountability in philanthropy.

Mission

IFIP is dedicated to shifting power, mobilizing resources, and building partnerships to amplify Indigenous leadership and to support the self-determination and rights of Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands and territories worldwide.

Vision

Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands, and territories worldwide are flourishing, recognized, self-determined, equitably funded and resourced.

20 Recommendations for Future Action

The following 20 recommendations from the results of the three research stages of this project serve as tool to funders committed to address asymmetry of power in philanthropy, center Indigenous rights and leadership, address barriers to funding Indigenous Peoples and put in practice IFIP's values the 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy.



IFIP's 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy Category

Recommendations For Funders



Recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples rights, and worldviews. Seek to uphold the principles articulated in the UN Declaration of Rights for Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Work directly with Indigenous communities to advance these principles and to gain understanding about their aspirations, solutions and initiatives.

THEME

Center Indigenous Rights and Self-determination

1. Centre Indigenous self-determination

Strengthen Indigenous self-determination through philanthropy by allowing Indigenous organizations and communities to shape the funding process—including application and reporting processes, governance structures, and funding priorities—rather than having to shape their practices to fit the agenda of funders.

2. Honor Indigenous worldviews in philanthropy

The importance of working globally and collaboratively in ways that respect Indigenous nationhood was noted by interview participants. This call for connection was echoed in secondary research (International Funders for Indigenous Peoples 2014b), and includes collaboration among funders, which participants suggested would be helpful for advancing Indigenous communities generally. Such approaches also incorporate how Indigenous communities can engage with funders, with participants suggesting that it is important to develop more holistic systems of philanthropy that connect to Indigenous communities and other stakeholders and facilitate Indigenous participation in these systems.

3. No ecological justice without Indigenous participation

It is important that philanthropic activities on the subject of ecological justice or conservation taking place anywhere within the territories or regions inhabited by Indigenous People substantively include them. The defense of Indigenous rights must go hand in hand with environmental conservation. It is inadvisable that any conservation, climate change, or ecology project in lands, oceans and territories inhabited by, or belonging to, Indigenous Peoples take place without their input nor in violation of their rights.

4. Engage cultural ambassadors and advocates able to liaise between funders and communities

We recommend the increased engagement of Indigenous cultural ambassadors and advocates to liaise between funders and communities. These individuals can play an important role in helping to deliver local funding in ways that are culturally appropriate. This means that they should either be from funded communities and/or should understand the language, worldviews, and contexts of the Indigenous communities with whom they work.

5. Addressing regional funding discrepancies across the globe

The vast majority funding for Indigenous Peoples is spent by philanthropic organizations in North America. Though these North American funding levels should be maintained and even increased, it is also essential to ensure that the proportion spent in other regions is increased to match North American levels. Funders have a responsibility to expand its relationship to build more partnerships with Indigenous organizations around the world.

IFIP's 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy Category

Recommendations For Funders

6. Rigorous training for non-Indigenous Individuals and organizations working in the area of Indigenous philanthropy

We strongly recommend a rigorous program of cultural humility and historical legacies trainings for non-Indigenous funders such as IFIP's Indigenous Philanthropy Institute. Building genuine relationships between funders and Indigenous communities requires learning and training, especially given the colonial origins of much philanthropy work (see recommendations 16 and 18 below).

7. Coordinating funding sources for Indigenous Peoples

We recommend the continued expansion of the work of IFIP and similar organizations taking coordinated approaches to Indigenous funding. This will allow for building partnerships between and among Indigenous Peoples Organizations and funding bodies and allow these organizations to serve as nodes for access to funding by Indigenous Peoples.

THEME

Addressing Systemic Barriers



Engage directly with Indigenous communities by understanding the nature of their relationships with Mother Earth, their culture, traditions and spirituality. Build and nurture relationships based on mutual respect and trust that eliminate the tendency to exert power over another through building long-term commitments and mutual learning.

8. Favour general and long-term funding instead of "projectification"

Indigenous communities face a growing need for general operating funding and wraparound support to overcome the piecemeal funding that is a major barrier to the sustainability of Indigenous-led projects and leads to a "projectification" of Indigenous movements. Projectification refers to the phenomenon that funds often are short-term and project-based instead of long-term and operational, leaving little room for longer-term work.

9. Innovative approaches to applications

It is important to implement innovative approaches to application requirements that are more inclusive of Indigenous organizations' needs. These include processes that allow for submissions in multiple languages and in forms other than writing (such as videos). They also include placing value on lived experience, traditional and Indigenous knowledge, and other qualifications when evaluating proposals.

10. Innovation approaches to reporting

We recommend the continued implementation and expansion of innovative reporting processes that reduce the administrative burden of conventional reporting requirements. Instead of requiring written.

11. Move away from imposed timelines

Move away from the imposition of predetermined and strict timelines on communities. There is a frequent potential mismatch between the timeline expectations of funders and recipients, especially when funders are non-Indigenous and recipients are Indigenous. Indigenous communities may be focused on slower, long-term timelines and working to enact changes that take many years to implement.

IFIP's 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy Category

Recommendations For Funders



Be accountable and transparent in ensuring the effective, meaningful and intersectional representation and participation of Indigenous Peoples where critical decisions that affect them are made. Use funding processes and approaches that are accessible, adaptable, flexible, transparent, and accountable.

THEME

Strengthen Data Infrastructure

12. Implement Indigenous data standards and recommended practices

Data standards can inform the practices of existing open data repositories to ensure their datasets are relevant and accurately reflect Indigenous Peoples. Data repositories use a series of concepts, definitions, and filters to ensure data is accurate and accessible. Data standards defined by Indigenous People will ensure repository practices are equitable and inclusive.

13. Collect demographic data

Funders should collect and use demographic data on grantee organizations, including leadership, staff, and participants. Existing data on philanthropy provided by funders fails to capture the realities of grantees. Demographic data on grantees provides a fuller picture of inclusive practices and funding access. This data collection should attuned to intersectional realities and multiple identities, Indigenous women, youth, Elders, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

14. Curated dataset on Indigenous philanthropy

Although data on Indigenous People is available through existing resources, curated datasets can ensure available data is organized, managed, and accessible in a way that Indigenous People can draw insight from the data in a meaningful way. This includes ensuring data is specific to Indigenous Peoples and not grouped with other racialized or marginalized identity communities (except when identifying intersections).

THEME

Rethink the power relationship of philanthropy to overcome colonial legacies and mindsets

15. Fostering Indigenous leadership

Challenge ongoing colonial assumptions and norms, as well as tokenism, within philanthropy by increasing Indigenous leadership in decision-making processes. Increase representation of Indigenous Peoples within the philanthropic sector, and particularly in positions of leadership within funding organizations. Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Women, youth, Elders, Peoples with Disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, should also be part of the adjudication processes of funding organizations.

16. Reckon with colonial roots of philanthropy

Educate foundations and the wider public on the colonial roots of philanthropy. This includes honest self-reflection about how the wealth was accumulated and where and how colonial power dynamics continue to thrive in philanthropy. Furthermore, critical self-reflection is needed to understand where philanthropy can be used as a guise for furthering colonial dispossession of Indigenous Peoples.



Practice the essence of Indigenous ways of living, giving and sharing that connects people, their beliefs and actions. Be open to learning, unlearning, and receiving. Giving and receiving from a place of mutual benefit and solidarity is also part of a virtuous circle of healing principles.

17. Fund holistic approaches

Fund programs that prioritize community empowerment and holistic approaches. Throughout this project, research participants have emphasized the need for support that incorporates the holistic approaches common to many Indigenous communities. Respecting holistic Indigenous worldviews also means seeing different funding areas as interconnected; for example, conservation and cultural revitalization are intertwined.

THEME

Re-envisioning the Approach



Practice redistribution based on Indigenous Values and ways of living, sharing and giving to shift towards a just and equitable world. Do this through building trust, ensuring Indigenous People are at the decision-making table and directly funding Indigenous-led solutions, initiatives and organizations worldwide.

18. Favour transparency

Non-Indigenous organizations should practice transparency regarding the origins of funds, as not doing so sometimes leads to the alienation of Indigenous Peoples from funds they view as stemming from unethical or unjust sources. All 27 interview participants interviewed by Archipel for this project were unanimous in their shared perspective that philanthropic wealth has often been built through colonization, Indigenous dispossession, and racism. Many communities may be hesitant to access funds from such sources. Increased transparency, including acknowledging and reflecting on the potentially unethical sources of philanthropic wealth could also help to reframe philanthropy to a focus on redistribution and restitution (see recommendation 19 below). This could inspire enduring and long-term community trust.

19. Rethink philanthropy as restitution

We recommend reimagining charitable wealth, including acquisition, meaning, and function, as a form of restitution, reparation, and healing. Organizations should move from the charity paradigm underlying philanthropy, where funds are given to those in need out of a feeling of goodness, toward frameworks of justice, redistribution, and reparation. This is an especially urgent paradigm shift because of the aforementioned unethical origin of some philanthropic wealth (see recommendation 16).

20. Favour Indigenous-Led Funds and Indigenous organizations as key partners

Indigenous-led funds are interested in and prepared to receive and responsibly manage large philanthropic investments. Indigenous Led Funds offer a pathway to reconciliation and the decolonization of philanthropy. Indigenous organizations tend to be more effective in understanding and responding to the needs of Indigenous communities. Indigenous-Led Funds and Indigenous organizations also have built-in structures of accountability, which help to foster trust and healthy, sustainable relationships.

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