A Legacy of Violence Against Native Women

According to Native American traditions, “violence against women is one of the most pervasive human rights abuses. It is also one of the most insidious, it happens in private between family members, and at the hands of strangers and it affects women in every country in the world.” Indigenous peoples have fought to have the USA face deeply entrenched marginalization – the result of a long history of systemic and pervasive abuse and persecution. Sexual violence against Indigenous women today is informed and conditioned by this legacy of widespread and serious human rights abuses.

An international study by UNFPA, provides clear evidence that Indigenous women, and young people from a higher prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence compared to men. American Indian women are at risk for higher rates of sexual assault, spousal abuse, and perpetrated violence, and are more vulnerable to sexual violence than any other group of women. Unfortunately, data is lacking for Native American women and girls. Indigenous women and girls cannot be separated from the broader context of discrimination and exclusion to which indigenous peoples as a whole are often exposed in social, economic, cultural and political life.”

Source: UNFPA (2012)

Native women have to overcome more challenges to have the lowest health coverage, the highest poverty rate, they are among the least likely to attend at least a bachelor’s degree, and the least to have a job with a higher degree or higher salary than other women. These factors position Native women as the most vulnerable and at highest risk to experience different forms of violence in their lifetime.

The Need

NAP acknowledges the importance of equality, collecting more in depth and regular data for developing effective policy solutions for preventing issues affecting Native communities in rural and urban areas. Consequently, there are several major tasks that lie ahead for Native Americans in Philanthropy.

Investment Opportunities to Impact Violence Against Native Women and Girls

A holistic approach to impact violence must aim to empower Native women, adolescents, girls and their communities and nations.

More than 1 in 3 American Indian and Alaska Native women will be raped during their lifetime in their lifetime.

Source: Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime

Source: Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

No Other Group of Women Experience in Their Lifetime the Alarming Rate of Violence as Native Women

Native American women have among the highest poverty rates, the comparable figure for the USA as a whole is less than one in five.

Source: Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The legacy of widespread and egregious human rights violations and persecution.

Recent studies have shown that American Indian and Alaska Native women are more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than any other group of women in the United States. Nationally, American Indian and Alaska Native women make up the group with the highest poverty rate, they are among the least likely to attend at least a bachelor’s degree, and the least to have a job with a higher degree or higher salary than other women. These factors position Native women as the most vulnerable and at highest risk to experience different forms of violence.

Investment Opportunities to Impact Violence Against Native Women and Girls

A holistic approach to impact violence must aim to empower Native women, adolescents, girls and their communities and nations.

• PREVENTION: Prevent all types of violence from occurring against Native women and children.

• AWARENESS: Raise public awareness of causes of violence against Native women and children that take place under one roof, community or neighborhood

• SOVEREIGNTY: Protect Tribal Sovereignty to protect Native women and children

• HEALING: Cultivate spiritual, emotional, and psychological healing for Native women, adolescents, and children.

• EMPowerMENT: Empowerment of Native women, adolescents and children to increase in wealth, health, and wellbeing

• DATA AND POLICY: Collection of in depth and regular data for developing effective policy solutions to end violence against Native women and children.