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Cycles of Life

Henry J. Foreman

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HENRY JAKE FOREMAN

Candidate

MASTER OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Department

This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Thesis Committee:

Ted Jojola , Chairperson

Beverly Singer

Ric Richardson

Laura Harjo



by
HENRY JAKE FOREMAN

BACHELORS OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES (B.U.S.),
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT MANAGEMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 2010

THESIS

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Requirements for the Degree of
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This Thesis is first and foremost dedicated to our ancestors and the generations yet to come. The idea of this project was gifted to me in a dream from my late father Henry Foreman Jr. and I am honored to have completed this cycle of healing. Thank you Mom for always supporting my passions and reminding me that every moment is a learning moment. Much respect to my sister Lisa and brother Michael for supporting Cycles of Life from the beginning and being the best “Ate” and “Kuya” that I could have ever hoped for.

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The Native American Community Academy has been a vital partner in creating and designing Cycles of Life and I want to share a special thanks to Arlyn John and all of the youth I have worked with throughout the 4 years of my research process. Artists like JayCee Beyale blessed this project with amazing art and for this I am eternally grateful. We are the change we wish to see!

Lastly, I would like to thank my beautiful wife Kalika for always believing in the power and value of Cycles of Life. I love all of my relations living on this magnificent planet we call Earth. May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

-Henry Jake Foreman
September 16th 2015

CYCLES OF LIFE

by

HENRY JAKE FOREMAN

(B.U.S.), CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT MANAGEMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 2010

Engaging storytelling is both the means and medium of Cycles of Life(COL). This thesis project consists of a video documentary and curriculum magazine that highlights the visioning process, implementation, and cyclical design of this transformative learning model. Throughout the COL co-creative process, students collectively utilize Indigenous research methodologies to examine innovations in planning, design and education from diverse sources including guest speakers, social media, and contextual multi-sensory experiences. Incorporated into the COL curriculum is a regenerative process where students vision their own curriculum model that impacts health, education, planning and design. It is my hope that these seed projects will grow into applied “disruptive” innovations that promote foundational goals of freedom, justice and equity that nurture thriving life.



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PROLOGUE

My story begins at my first breath. For 11 seconds, an umbilical cord postponed my birth and left a reminder of the truth of suffering by slightly hindering the development of the right side of my body. This experience began my quest to transform suffering into happiness.

The history of colonization is something that deeply permeates the world around me because, indeed, I am interconnected with it in every way. I began to awaken to the impacts of historical trauma on Indigenous peoples of the World after my father passed away in the late winter of 2010. The Absentee Shawnee, the tribe of my Father and all our relations before him, have felt the brunt force of US military aggression and was once the Nation's "public enemy number one." To rub our wound a little deeper, my Father never had the chance to learn the language, culture, and ceremonies from our relations, nor did he have the chance to know his father. My Mother and all our family in the Philippines have experienced colonization at the hands of multiple oppressors. The belief in the superiority of one race has and continues to have a bluntly painful effect on all humans especially Indigenous peoples. Institutionalized and historical racism has systemically devalued Indigenous knowledge, beliefs, languages, worldviews and physical being.

Growing up I was in a constant state of reaction. Reacting to 9/11, the Iraq War, immigration policies and constant injustices. I have experienced incredible amounts of anger aimed at me because I asked critical questions and brought up inconvenient truths about our shared history in the classroom. Learning about diverse cultures kept me curious and focused during these turbulent times. Youth sub-cultures made me feel a part of something larger than myself and gave me an outlet to express my identity and culture.

I was in a ska band throughout high school and I gained skills in designing and planning by playing shows in the “Duke City”. Printing band shirts and burning our own CDs gave me a first insight into the power and accessibility of technologies that enable us to self-produce media that bypasses conventional producers and markets. More importantly, I discovered the “soft” power of co-creating culture through producing media. A simple shirt can communicate a plethora of information through the color, design, message and cut. This type of knowing is learned through pop culture rather than in the classroom.

UNM seemed intellectually distant, even though it is less than two miles away from my alma mater, Albuquerque High School. I witnessed violence, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs, and education policies that hindered our learning experience yet I also developed an acute appreciation and pride in the cultural and physical landscape of our city. The school district encompasses many historic communities and is predominately Hispanic. Martineztown, Barelas, Old Town, San José, the “Valle Sur” and my own Altura Heights neighborhood were the “playgrounds” of my youth. What makes these communities so unique and culturally significant is how history resonates; the past interacts with the present. This is where my passion began. These communities encouraged me to continue my education so I could serve and create positive change and promote educational equity.

When I got accepted to UNM, I began working at the Santa Barbara/Martineztown Learning Center (SB/MT) through the UNM Service Corps. This provided me the opportunity to work in a community that has been historically underrepresented and continues to face issues such as gentrification, high crime rates, lack of access to resources, and lower levels of income. In spite of these adversities, SB/MT continues to thrive in large part due to community champions and collaborative leadership initiatives.

Working with SB/MT inspired me to be engaged and active in the community to learn, share and reflect on ways to increase democratic and inclusive processes that value contextual knowledge and protocols. Service work was fundamental in my success as an undergraduate student because I was able to apply what I was learning in my classes directly to impact others. By purposefully engaging in professional and academic internships, I was able to further specialize in activities such as grant and proposal writing, research, project management, evaluation, and networking.

During my final semester before graduation my father passed away from cirrhosis of the liver from chronic alcohol abuse. The death of my father was the catalyst that brought about the motivation and desire to quit drinking and live healthier. I reflected deeply on the impermanence of all phenomena and through the realization of the dynamic state of all life, I came to treasure my breath like never before. The more that I became aware of the preciousness of our time on this planet, the more I desired to live in the moment and to be close to life. This is when *Cycles of Life* was visioned and it started with a question: “How can I embody health, happiness, balance and relieve suffering?”

I knew this wasn't a question that can be easily answered but it was rather a challenge put forth to myself to see what I can accomplish throughout my life. It anchored me and provided purpose in my time of healing. I began answering this question through a process of visioning that goes through different stages of understanding and culminates with one becoming their vision. I went on my own journey of healing and transformation to reclaim and validate Indigenous teachings that emphasize experiential, spiritual and contextual knowledge. After four years of being on this journey and in the UNM Community and Regional Planning program, I have come to the conclusion that not only is it possible to transform yourself; it is also possible to transform your environment

and those around you through your intentions and actions. I was able to document my experiences around the world and tell a story to the youth about the importance of visioning and service to others. Ultimately, my goal is to inspire people to take action to revitalize the cycles of life that our Mother Earth provides us.

Through this 21st Century Indigenous research process, I have come to understand that Indigenous peoples value relationships with all phenomena. This is done not just through words or actions, but rather through a process of learning that is holistic, multidimensional and transformational. Contrasting Indigenous and Western worldviews illuminate the shortcomings of a society whose ideology is based on the scarcity of resources and competition. This is in direct contrast to cultures and ethics of Indigenous peoples that value all beings, not as commodities, but sacred interdependent parts of a larger whole. They are based on the dynamic flux of all phenomena and interconnected relationships of all things. The systems of learning in Indigenous societies are complex, intergenerational and place-based. My mentor Dr. Greg Cajete explains that Indigenous thought incorporates cosmic, spiritual and ecological knowledge through stories and lived experiences to relate and make connections in life. These foundations lay at the heart of the 21st century Indigenous education and create the roots of philosophies that describe and honor these largely ignored areas in Western education.

When we explore diverse ways to understand, we expand our view of what constitutes knowledge and intelligence. By acknowledging the validity, history and application of diverse epistemologies, we can transform the domination of one particular way of knowing to an inclusive view that values co-creation, diversity and place-based knowledge.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This curriculum “zine” highlights applied decolonizing methodologies that can be used in programs, institutions and neighborhoods across New Mexico and throughout the World to collectively indigenize our society and ecology.

The conceptual framework of *Cycles of Life* is designed around a process that incorporates Indigenous worldviews and research methodologies to co-construct a regenerative educational model. This model is an amalgamation of cultural, theoretical and intuitive knowledge that I have learned and put into practice. It has evolved to become a pedagogy or way of teaching that values voices and writings of Indigenous scholars, elders and youth to transform ourselves and environment around us. From a planning perspective, it provides a model of visioning and co-creating a youth program that is based on the works of illuminaries in the fields of Indigenous research, planning, design and education.

The need for planning that integrates Indigenous worldviews and voices could not be greater due to the continued environmental degradation and health challenges Indigenous peoples face in the 21st Century. Indigenous planning and design is experiencing a re-emergence as a distinct discipline and innovation in the way we conceptualize this field of study. As Hirini Matunga states in the chapter, *Theorizing Indigenous Planning*, Indigenous planning must have as its fundamental aim, “the construction of theory, practice, and methodologies to ‘plan’ these communities out of this state and in so doing refuse/reject their continued oppression” (Matunga 2013). Indigenous theory put into practice can enhance our understanding of how we “come to know” and what accounts for knowledge. It is an epistemological quest that is inherently co-creative and experiential. It can also be conceptualized as a form of Insurgent planning that is “transgressive, counter-hegemonic, and imaginative” (Miraftab 2009).

Trangressing dominant culture takes imaginative language, theories, and communication that are based in compassion. Praxis is a reflective process that incorporates theory with practice. As defined by Paulo Freire it is, “Action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (Freire 1970). It is a pedagogy or way of teaching that is holistic, co-creative and transformative. It is a critical engaged pedagogy of hope that values humans as co-creators of knowledge and culture. The critical reflective component establishes the dynamic and regenerative process of this practice. It allows for a process that critiques dominant ideology, epistemology and values to critique and enhance our understandings. I feel this process is similar to traditional Indigenous education because it allows for everyone’s voices to be heard and values contextual and subjective knowledge. This allows for customization of language and learning to best suite the situations and needs of people and ecologies.

With praxis as the foundation of my research, I began reading books pertaining to Indigenous planning, design and education as well as articles relating to health equity and diffusing innovations. *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* provided me with an Indigenous research process of visioning. Dr. Greg Cajete expresses a 7-stage process of “Asking, Seeking, Making, Having, Sharing, Celebrating, and Being” that he himself went through writing his book and developing Indigenous science curricula. In 2010 I began to put my knowledge into action by visioning and planning a research process using this 7 stage process. The first stage of visioning can be likened to a prayer or continual ritual of asking for help and guidance. At this stage I stilled lacked the language and theoretical understandings of Indigenous research methodologies. It was through Seeking that I began to understand the interdependence of art, science and spirituality in Indigenous cultures.

Unifying these interdependent elements of culture became an integral component of my research process because it allowed me to justify and validate the spiritual, place-based and action-oriented design of this project. Modeling a way of living that is based on compassion and service provided me opportunities to enhance my skill set and metacognitive awareness. I focused on ways that I learn best which included teaching as a way of retaining information and demonstrating praxis in action. It required immersion into a community-based action research process which helped refine my message and skills.

The books *Indigenous Research Methodologies* by Dr. Margaret Kovach and *Decolonizing Methodologies* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith provided examples of a structure I could use to conceptualize and decolonize my research process. Key concepts of ethics, epistemology, decolonization and situating self, purpose, culture and context in Indigenous inquiry gave me both permission and a language to continue my research and include these elements in my curriculum. As defined in the book, *For Indigenous Eyes Only*, decolonization activities are “peaceful, intelligent and courageous challenges to existing institutions of colonialism as well as questioning our own complicity in those institutions” (Waziyatawin A. W. a. M. Y. B. 2005). It is an expansive definition that takes creativity to implement. These scholars describe how dominant scholarship devalues spiritual and experiential knowledge to the detriment of not only Indigenous peoples but also to the inquiry of knowledge itself. My research process was beginning to mirror the stories that I was reading in these texts because there was something changing within myself. My mind was expanding I knew I had to document my journey into Indigenous thought, philosophy and history. I decided to digitally document my research process over the course of four years to visually articulate my personal story of healing using a vehicle of transformation: *Cycles of Life*.

Cycles of Life is conceptualized as a youth program that creates a space that supports, encourages, and strengthens youth to realize their innate potential as compassionate leaders for the 21st century through bicycling, composting, Gardening, and Art. It utilizes a holistic approach to health and education by stimulating the mind, body, heart and spirit through dialogue and applied praxis to transform it. The aim for providing this foundation is to encourage students to take action to create positive changes that support healthier people, communities and bioregions. We promote a global vision with local action, social and environmental responsibility, and nurture capacity for innovation.

Film captivates audiences and communicates like no other medium before. I created a self-directed learning plan where I watched as many films from the UNM Fine Arts Library as I could. I averaged around five movies a week for over 3 years and developed an affinity for French “New Wave”. The rapid shooting style of François Truffaut and visual montages and monologues of Jean-Luc Godard inspired my filmmaking. Truffaut point out that film making has always been an art of young people because they are are keenly aware of emerging things. The notion of constantly seeking the edge of innovation is a form of research that youth do naturally. In fact, the youth I was working with contributed by collaboratively documenting our experiences and it acted as a form of reflection and connection. Video participatory processes are something that I learned both in theory and practice. As both an educator and planner, I was able to use film as a way to document our process and assess the growth of individual students. From a programatic perspective, I was able to use this documentation to aquire resources and contracts to continue *Cycles of Life*. The book *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning* became indispensable to my research process because chapters dealing with topics like film as a community planning intervention validated the power of film as a catalyst for social transformation.

Story as methodology is an important tool for Indigenous researchers to utilize. It provides a frame of reference while reframing the notion of objectivity through illuminating the subjective viewpoint of the researcher. As a 21st Century Indigenous scholar, I learned to search not only for myself but for all life. I am grateful to have documented over 3000 hours of mentorship and service including pedaling hundreds of miles across New Mexico, building and maintaining gardens and composts and educating on leading edges in sustainability, health, education, communication, planning and design. As a planner I have been very strategic in building and maintaining good relations with Indigenous peoples and planners around the world through telling my story and I am continually seeking out people who have wisdom and knowledge.

The importance of understanding and incorporating my “indigeneity” into my research process came to me as an inspiration from UNM professor and founder of the Indigenous Design and Planning Institute, Dr. Ted Jojola. Professor Jojola explained the need for increased internal capacity within the tribes, increased intergenerational engagement, and a values-based process that utilizes a seven generations planning model. He encouraged me to design my thesis around *Cycles of Life*. Indigenous education plays a critical role in addressing these issues and it is for this reason I decided to join the front lines of secondary education. I enrolled in an alternative teaching licensure program entitled Growing Educators for Native American Communities (GENAC), through a partnership with CNM and the Native American Community Academy (NACA). As a teacher at NACA I further developed the *Cycles of Life* curriculum to incorporate Common Core Standards and Indigenous principles. I was mindful of archetypes like the 5 elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space and numerical patterns found in nature. As the 4 cardinal directions orientes our location, so to can the number 4 be utilized to orient students understanding.

Dr Greg Cajete provided me a pedagogy that is based on the creative praxis of First Insight, Immersion, Application and Reflection. This helped me organize my scope and sequence to always include hands-on activities and a time for group reflection. This praxis can also integrate the Formative, Normative, Integrative and Transformative stages of assessment that provides greater breadth and depth for understanding curriculum content. These methodologies became the foundation for my planning and teaching praxis because they were gifted to me by a local Indigenous elder who pioneered the movement to indigenize education. His writings of Indigenous science and education were immediately applicable to my research because they were designed for the Southwest. As Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith asserts, “Local theoretical positioning is the modality that renders critical theory effective in the emancipatory process” (Smith 2001). It is a way to diffuse information by using cultural elements of language, customs, theories and practices. Utilizing decolonizing methodologies was my way of valuing the contribution and scholarship of Indigenous peoples and sharing it with my local environment. People of all ages can engage with their community in positive ways through Indigenous research methodologies because they are inherently co-creative and action-oriented.

Indigenous scholarship offers a leading edge in re-visioning education that can reframe our perception of who we are and how we relate to the World around us. The hegemony of Western academia with predominantly ethnocentric scholarship does not reflect the demographic of New Mexico nor adequately address the complex and interconnected issues we collectively face. Ultimately, a sustainable solution is co-creating a culture where students will be interested in continuing their education to further help address community needs. These partnerships can expand the field of Indigenous planning and design by ensuring that youth have the skills, passion and motivation to help their own communities.

EPILOGUE

My process of transformation is like a circle because it has no beginning or end yet I know my conscious commitment to embody health, happiness and relieve suffering is where my story continues.

Indigenous Education has been the driver of innovation across centuries in large part due to intergenerational mentorship and context specific knowledge. Rituals and ceremonies continue cycles of traditions and teachings that continue to grow despite policies and histories designed to terminate Indigenous ways of being. American Indian education policy is marred with prejudicial policies that continue to impact both natives and non-natives alike. It is appalling to learn the history and origins of western education and it's function as a tool of colonization. Transforming our education system will take generations to vision and implement because the trauma spans centuries. A long term solution can be found in seven generation planning. It is for this reason that education will play an important role in the way we plan to include goals and activities that go beyond conventional planning. We need to understand that the two are interconnected and must collaborate to truly transform our society and culture.

As both a student and teacher I see the *Cycles of Life* documentary and zine as a way to utilize story as methodology and also teach about Indigenous scholarship in a tangible and culturally resonant way. Knowledge is shared and used to promote life and I hope this project inspires youth to take action to nurture life. Our mentorship program has evolved to utilize different technologies such as a seriography, vinyl cutter, and other liberation technologies that utilized the natural renewable qualities of life. We constantly integrate the leading edges of entrepreneurship and technologies into our curriculum to expand our enterprise and stay resonant in these turbulent times.

Education is ultimately the key to sustaining economic competitiveness and long-term resilience of our bioregion. This learning process will take place outside of classrooms and will involve diverse people, institutions, organizations and businesses. I have been moving forward in building a collective of people organized to address issues of public concern to make a collective impact. I continue to manifest the vision of *Cycles of Life* through a newly formed business enterprise: *Karuna Colectiva*. We create value by selling products and services that directly support local youth enterprising that includes producing learning tools as a way to nurture a culture that values nature and life. We are currently building partnerships with schools and agents of transformation to best serve the institutions and the students it serves. By framing *Karuna Colectiva* as an educational production company, we have begun to acquire larger contracts from organizations such as the UNM Health Science Center and Native American Chamber of Commerce. This September, we were accepted into Native American Entrepreneur in Residence program and awarded \$15,000 from NM Community Capital and a business mentor to further develop this enterprise.

I conceptualize *Cycles of Life* as a “resonant diffusion of innovation” because it is an idea and practice that is perceived as new and is communicated through diverse channels of communication from web-based applications to print and visual media. Our learning tools are intentionally co-created and customized with our youth target audience to promote shared ownership and increased resonance. We have utilized “channels of communication” like local growers markets, feast days and special events to diffuse our learning tools and sell merchandise for fundraising purposes. I am answering the challenge put forth by diffusion scholar Everett M. Rogers to move beyond the proven methods and models of the past, to recognize their shortcomings and limitations, and to broaden our conceptions of the diffusion of innovations (Rogers 1995).

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LOGIC MODEL

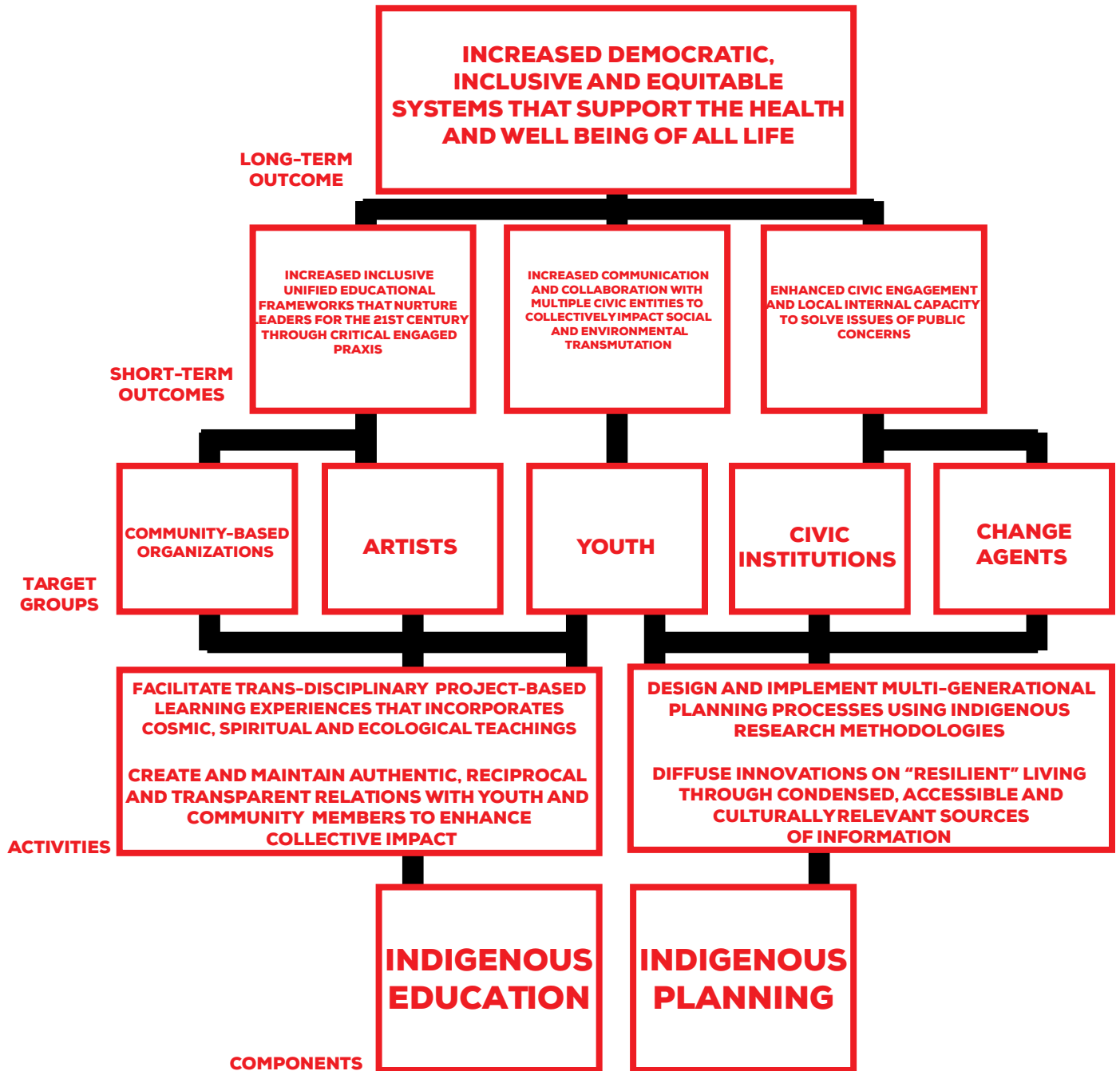
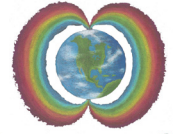
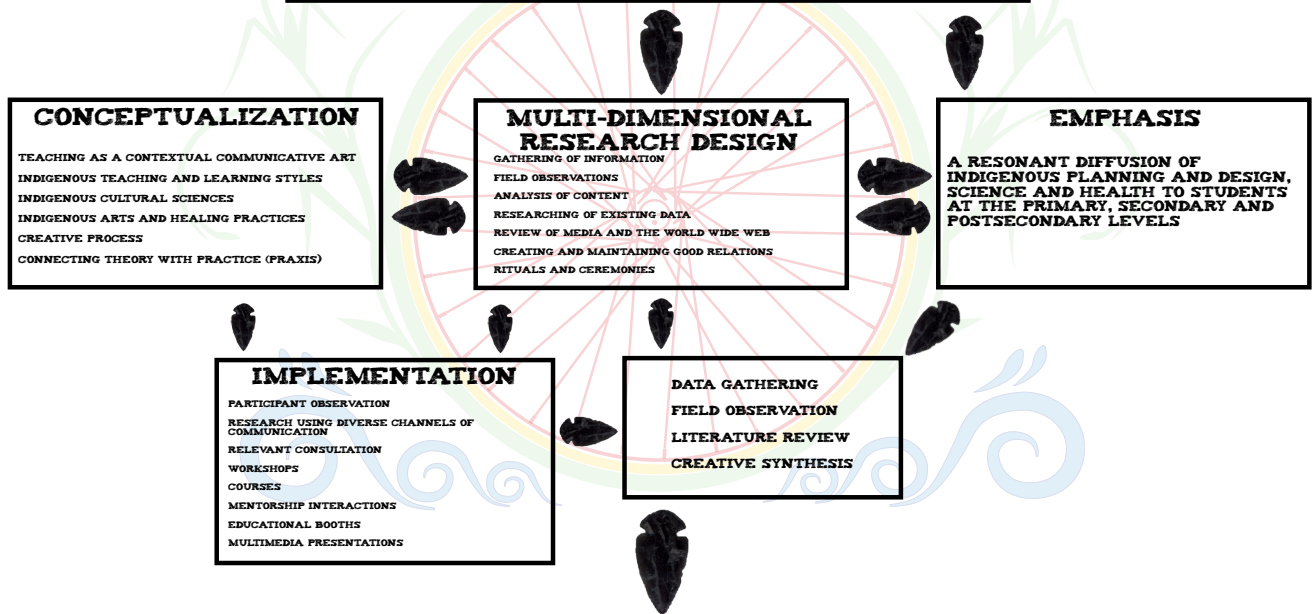


CHART OVERVIEW THE RESEARCH DESIGN



CYCLES OF LIFE HARMONIC CURRICULUM MODULE



CURRICULUM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT A FOUNDATIONAL MODEL				
	AIMS	CONTENT	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION
COMPONENTS	INDIGENOUS SCIENCE LITERACY INDIGENOUS HEALTH LITERACY INDIGENOUS PLANNING AND DESIGN LITERACY NURTURE AND EXPAND CONSCIOUSNESS CREATE AND STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS	INDIGENOUS SCIENCE INDIGENOUS PLANNING AND DESIGN INDIGENOUS HEALTH WESTERN SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES EASTERN SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP	MULTISENSORY HIGH CONTEXT COMMUNICATION EXPERIENTIAL LEFT RIGHT BRAIN LEARNING CRITICAL THINKING DE-COLONIZING ACTIVITIES SERVICE LEARNING	VIDEO PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES MICRO ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY AND DOCUMENTARY MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENTS STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS FACILITATOR'S PERCEPTIONS PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT INTEGRATED REFLECTIVE CURRICULUM MODEL
	EPISTEMOLOGY	SOCIETY/CULTURE	THE LEARNER	LEARNING THEORY
FOUNDATION	INDIGENOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS WESTERN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY DIVERSE COSMIC SPIRITUAL ECOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGIES EMERGENT EVOLUTIONARY CULTURE	SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS MULTICULTURALISM INDIGENOUS CONTEMPORARY CULTURE INDIGENOUS SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS TECHNOSPHERE	HOLISTIC ORIENTATION PEER CULTURE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AND PERSONALITY CONFIGURATIONS TECHNOLOGICALLY SAVVY	HOLISTIC LEARNING THEORY HUMANISTIC ORIENTATIONS MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES CONSTRUCTIVISM INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY SOCIAL LEARNING TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING TECHNO SHAMANISM

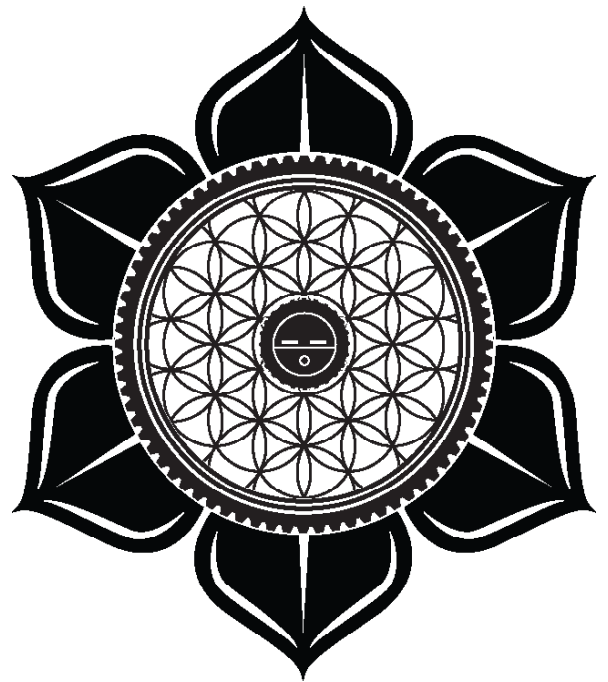
1.3 LOGOS

2012

2010



2013



Cycles of Life