



# Reclaiming sovereignty in the Growing Resilience action-research collaboration

Porter, *Bowers, Weed, Harris, Harris, Wechsler*, Pat White, Kathryn  
Lone Fight, *Melvin Arthur*, & Rachael Budowle

Native American Nutrition Conference, September 2019

# Today's Story



**Introducing the Growing Resilience project**



**Recounting stories and their morals for reclaiming sovereignty**



**Learning from gifts offered by CAB and others**



**Discussion panel that follows**



**GROWING RESILIENCE**

**Introducing *Growing Resilience: an RCT on the health impact of gardens with Wind River Indian Reservation***

**~~Christine M. Porter~~ Alyssa M. Wechsler (non-Native)**

Research Scientist and Project Manager  
University of Wyoming (UW)

# Project origins



Credit: Jim Sutter, Blue Mountain Associates

## Project origins

What are the impacts  
of home gardens  
on family health  
in Wind River?

# Community Advisory Board (CAB)

**Aim 1: Gardening intervention**

**Aim 2: Delayed intervention  
RCT on health impacts of home  
gardens**

**Blue Mountain Associates**  
Garden intervention design

- Materials and installation
- Training and mentorship

**University of Wyoming**  
Data collection & analysis

- Survey, blood draw, biometrics
- Talking circles, Sovereign Storytelling

**Tribal Health partners**  
Family recruitment and retention

**WY Health Fairs**

- Blood draws
- Share individual health reports

# Project timeline



## Project Co-Design





# Where we are now

**96 families**

**196 adults**

**157 kids**

**63 home gardens (so far!)**





**GROWING RESILIENCE**

## **The Community Advisory Board (CAB)**

**Rhonda Bowers (Northern Arapaho)**

Growing Resilience Community Advisory Board Chair

UW Wind River Reservation Extension Administrator, Senior

Wind River Tribal Farmers Market Manager

# About Us

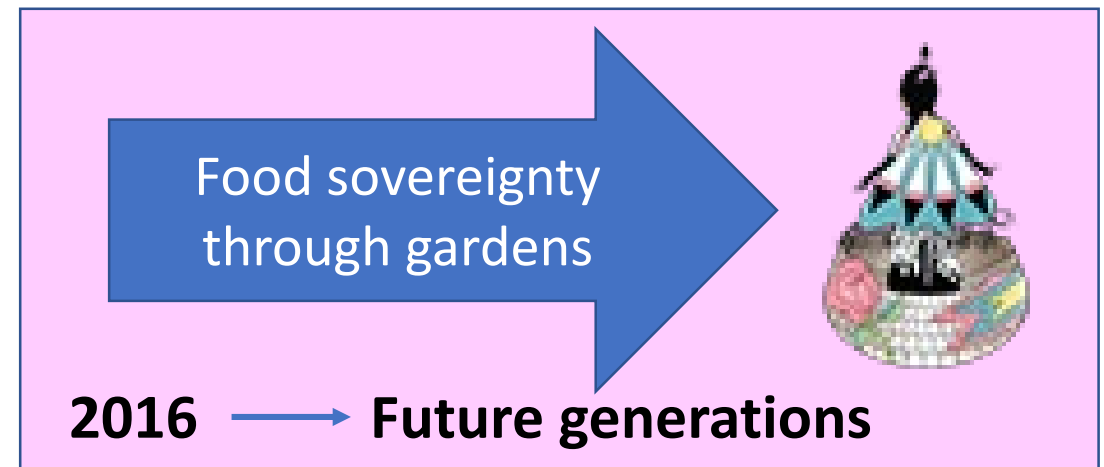
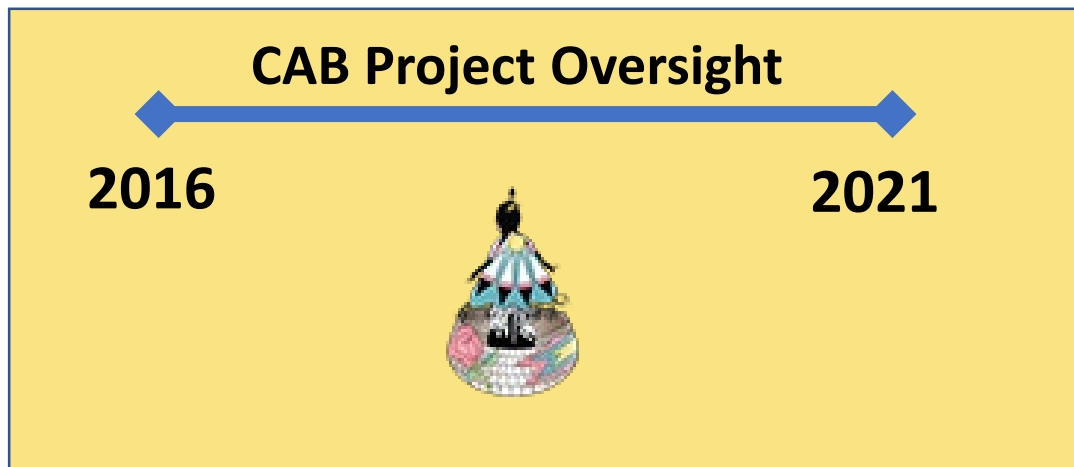
- Current Members: Rhonda Bowers (Chair), Ina Weed, Pat Harris, Clarisse Harris, Pat White, Kathryn Lone Fight
- Broad experience: Agriculture Extension, farmers markets, installing participant gardens, being a project participant, broad range of ages, all of us garden!



# Challenges

- CAB brought on late
- Picking the right members
- University's vision for the CAB vs...

... Our vision for ourselves.



# Successes

- All-native board
- Restructured CAB to ensure community outreach and sustainability beyond project
  - Set our own leadership structure
  - More frequent meetings
  - Attend and present at conferences
  - Gained own project budget – built demonstration community garden, set up own farmers market (next year)
  - Fundraising for future





**GROWING RESILIENCE**

## **An Unexpected Garden Journey**

**Ina Weed (Eastern Shoshone)**

Growing Resilience Community Advisory Board Member since 2018

HR, Staff Development Coordinator, Eden Educator at Morning Star Care Center

Was pilot project partner, with Eastern Shoshone Tribal Health, in 2013

Family gardening participant in Growing Resilience, 2016-17

# Pilot Project

## My role: Tribal Health Diabetes Outreach

- Community involvement
- Family health promotion
- Impacted the whole family environment/home
- Some challenges of processing data collection



# Project Participant

## My role: Gardener

- Carry on gardening tradition from previous generations
- Healthy food options/recipes
- Physical activity levels heightened as a family
- Storytelling



# Community Advisory Board

## My role: CAB Member

- What I brought to the CAB
- Involvement with community
- Share experience
- Presently work with Elders







# GROWING RESILIENCE



**Learning from gifts offered by the CAB and other Indigenous mentors, colleagues, and partners**

**Christine M. Porter (non-Native)**

Principal Investigator, Associate Professor

Wyoming Excellence Chair in Community & Public Health

University of Wyoming (UW)



# Considering academia as part of the fence

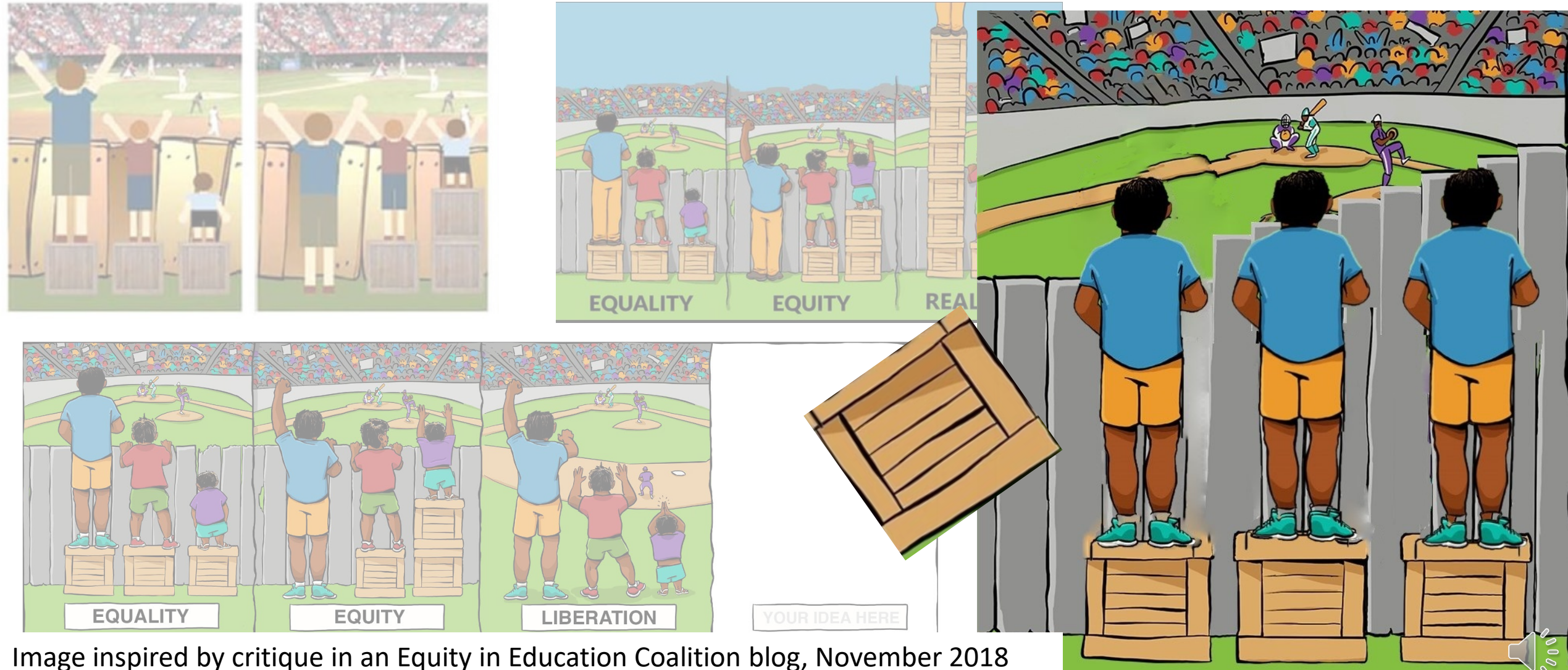
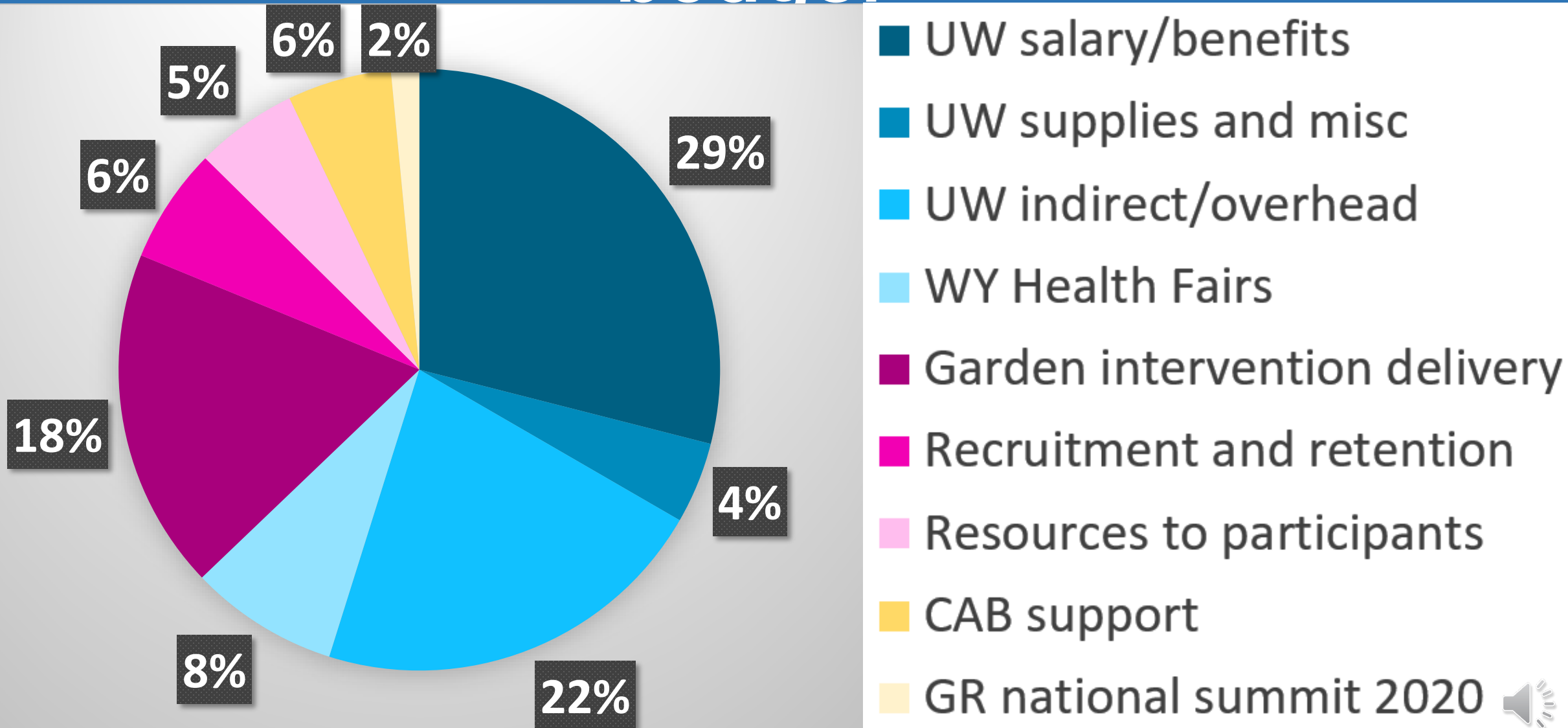
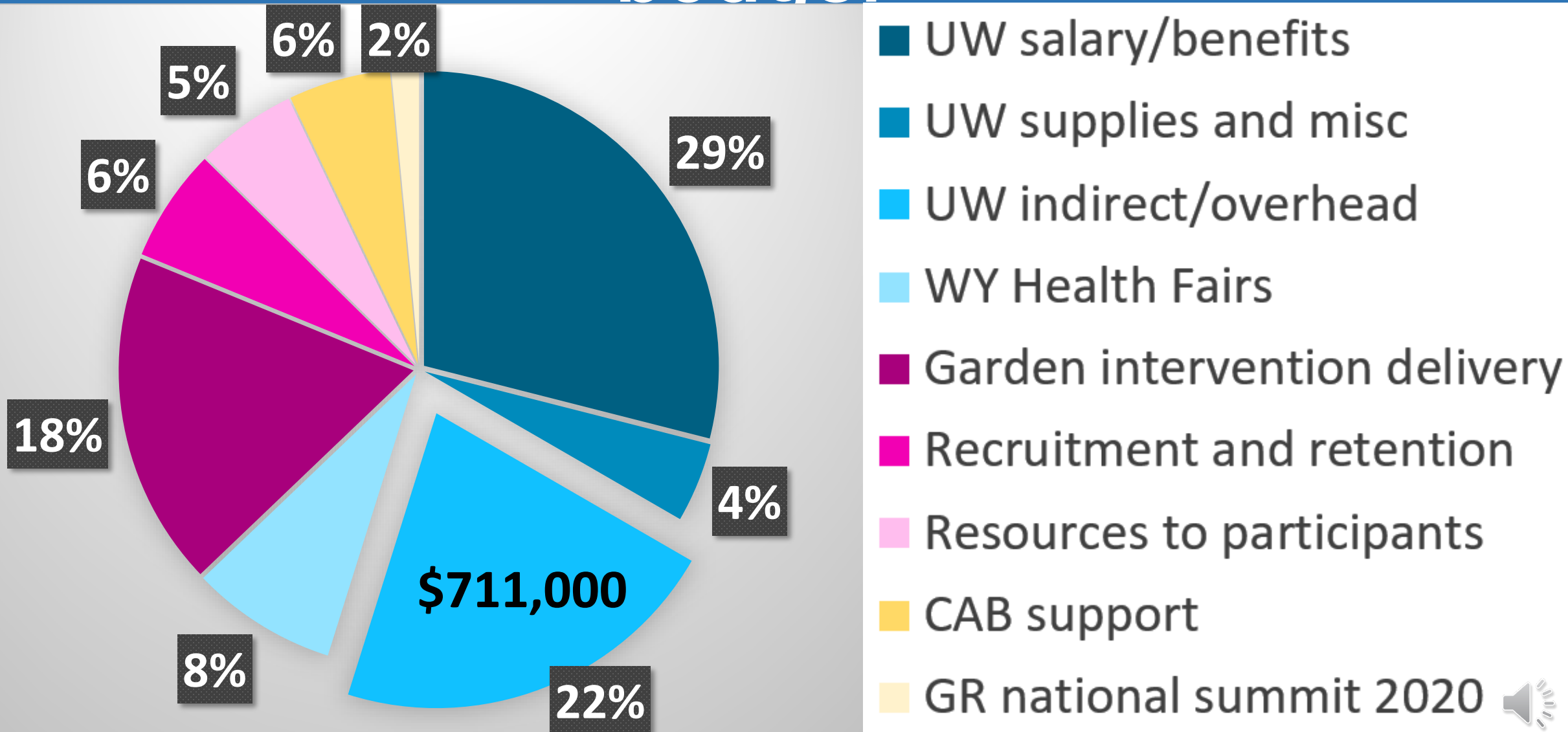


Image inspired by critique in an Equity in Education Coalition blog, November 2018

# Academic supremacy, e.g. \$3.3m GR budget



# Academic supremacy, e.g. \$3.3m GR budget



# Dollars for dismantling fences

Nail-prying financial strategies we have learned to use include:

- Give subawards to tribal and community partners.
- Negotiate with university to pay subawards in advance (not arrears).
- Increase direct subaward support to tribal and community partners, e.g., to cover rent.
- Reduce or forgo faculty summer pay.
- Include professional development and dissemination support, especially travel budgets. Need to plan for cash advances.
- Beyond the work-around: e.g., increasing indirect rates, awarding tribal partners, fighting for more equitable pay.



# Reclaiming sovereignty through co-design



1. Co-designed study in pilot

2. Family gardening

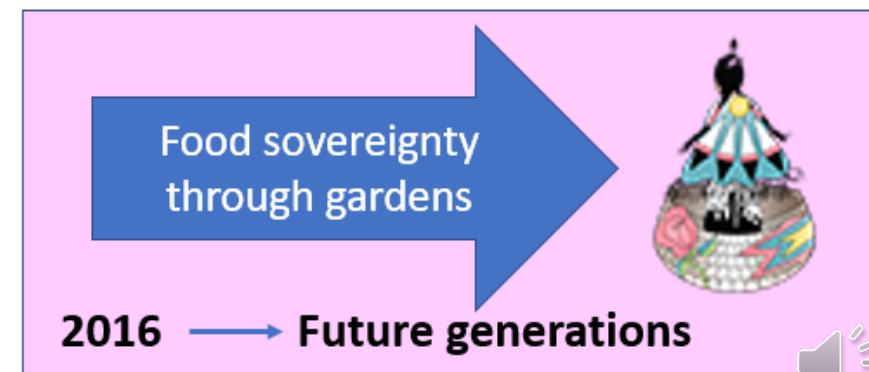
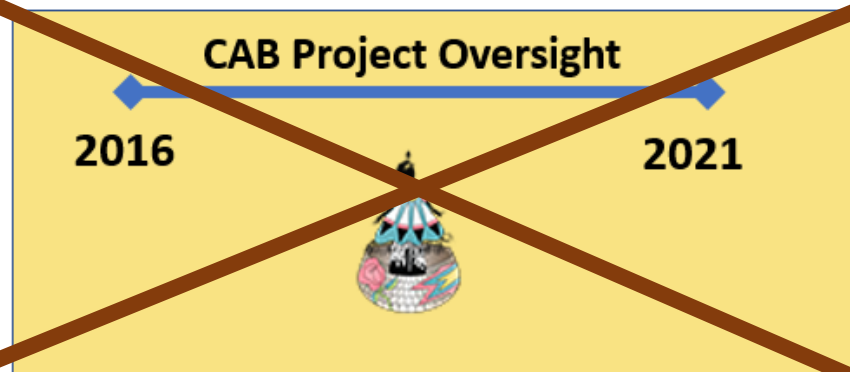


Credit: Dodge Family 

# Reclaiming sovereignty through co-design



## 3. CAB leadership



# Reclaiming sovereignty through co-design

## 4. Sovereign Storytelling method



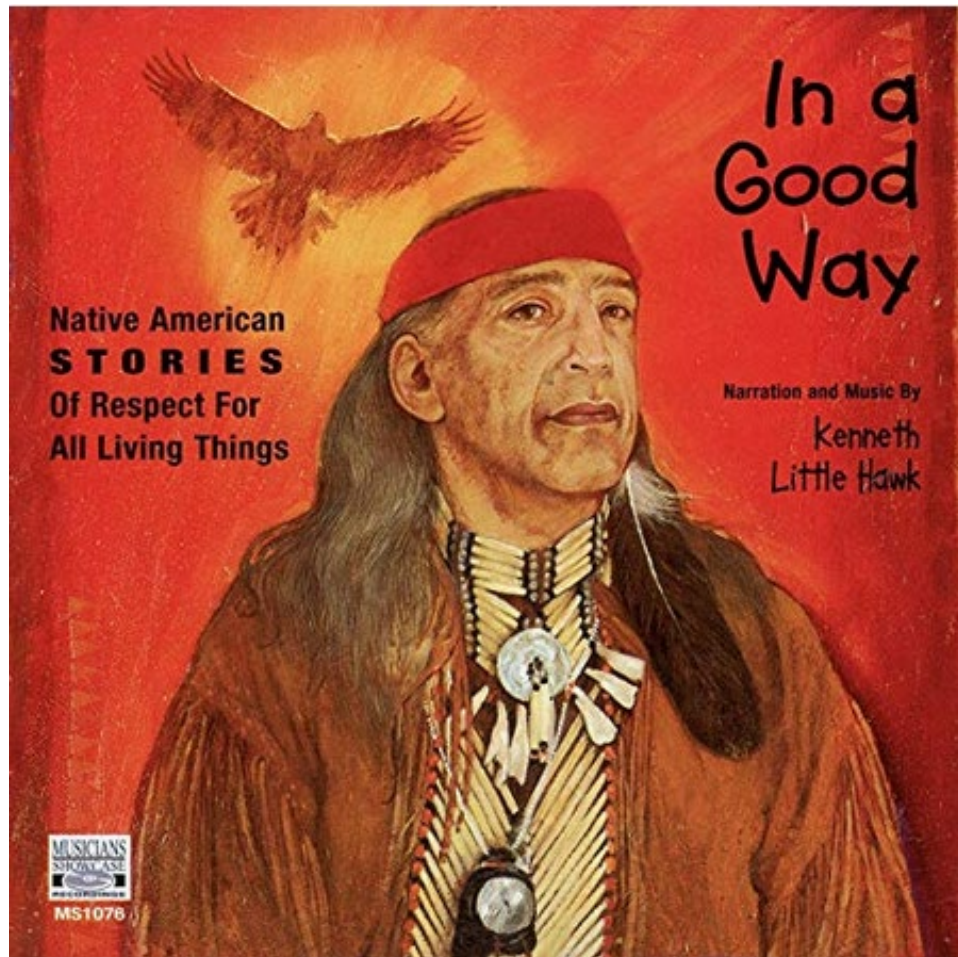


# But, we need new paradigms

Harmony and Balance in Life: Applying the Social-Ecological Model in AI/AN Communities



# Gifts offered, to all of us



# On the joint discussion panel that follows

**Pat Harris (Northern Arapaho)**

Growing Resilience Community Advisory Board Member since founding  
Gardening mentor and tiller supporting Blue Mountain Associates

**Clarisse Harris (Northern Paiute)**

Growing Resilience Community Advisory Board Member

& ~~Christine Porter~~ **Alyssa Wechsler (non-Native),**  
research scientist and project manager





# GROWING RESILIENCE

## Thank you!

**Food Dignity** was supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2011-68004-30074 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture ([www.fooddignity.org](http://www.fooddignity.org)).

The **Growing Resilience** pilot was supported by grants from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (8 P20 GM103432-12) from the National Institutes of Health.

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([www.growingresilience.org](http://www.growingresilience.org)). Soon we will have online sign up for those interested to stay posted about the GR 2020 conference!