Support the **Native American Youth Climate Conference!**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the United States, numerous Native American communities will need to move in the next 30 years due to climate change. The next generation of climate change leaders needs to be prepared to face the numerous challenges of climate change forced relocation; however, not many opportunities exist to prepare these future leaders to lead their communities through climate change issues.

Interviews with tribal leaders have highlighted the important role young people will play in relocation, and many of the elders have limited education and technology skills. They rely on their young members, aged 16 to 25, to engage with outsiders, look for funding, and use technology to support their communities’ efforts.

To help prepare these future Native American climate change leaders, the BRACE Institute is seeking to facilitate a conference for 25 - 30 Native American youth climate change leaders at the Stevenson Center for Community Development at Illinois State University for leadership training and grant training on climate change relocation. We will invite at least three young people from each community to attend the workshop.

**OUR PLAN**

To prepare the next generation of Native American climate change leaders, we are seeking to raise $100,000 each year to:

1. Facilitate a 5-day **Native American Youth Climate Conference** for 25 - 30 Native American youth climate change leaders. The conference will feature:
	1. Informational sessions focused on climate change and relocation;
	2. Professional development and leadership coaching sessions;
	3. Access to climate change leaders;
	4. Networking opportunities for youth to learn from other communities facing similar issues;
	5. Training on how to apply for grants and funding to help support relocation efforts.
2. Provide travel, room, and board expenses covered for participants.
3. Give Native American and Native Alaskan Youth, who often have limited opportunities to travel, an opportunity to spend time on a college campus, meet with college students, and learn about higher education opportunities.
4. Create a learning network of youth who attend the workshop and create a medium such as Facebook through which they can continue to be in touch and learn from each other.

**WE ARE SEEKING**

* $100,000 to fund the conference;
* Speakers and leaders in the climate change community to offer sessions at the conference;
* Partnerships with external organizations to support and facilitate the conference and provide internships for participants.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

* Donate by visiting our crowdfunding website [gofundme.com/Native-American-Youth-Climate-Change-Conference](https://www.gofundme.com)
* Go to [www.BraceInstitute.org](http://www.braceinstitute.org) and donate directly to the cause on our [donation page](https://www.braceinstitute.org/donate).
* Connect us to leaders and partners in the climate change space.

Help us prepare the next generation of

Native American Climate Change Leaders.

 Donate to the

**Native American Youth Climate Conference**

**ABOUT THE BRACE INSTITUTE**

The BRACE Institute is a new initiative of Heartlands International, Ltd. Heartlands International has over 30 years of community development experience in over 70 countries adapting classic community development strategies to help communities define their problems and work together to find solutions. As Heartlands has extensive technical expertise in community organization, economic development, gender issues, and health care, we are uniquely poised to provide the technical assistance these communities need.

Heartlands' focus is on community organization, working with a wide range of community leaders in multiple countries to gather information and make informed choices about how to resolve problems. Heartlands has used this proven methodology to build municipal and state governments (Lebanon, Viet Nam, Ethiopia), for improved access to potable water (Belize, Haiti, Indonesia, Ecuador, Columbia, India), for training community health workers in over 20 countries on issues of maternal and child health, vaccinations, HIV/AIDs prevention, malaria prevention and other health issues.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY**

BRACE’s approach is holistic in that it not only focuses on building capacity and livelihood skills for relocating communities but assisting the relocating community to integrate into their new communities in a way that improves life for all residents as well as for the environment. With the free and informed consent of all stakeholders, The Institute will focus on relocation with an emphasis on improving the lives of the people who move as well as those who reside in the communities to which refugees are displaced.

BRACE will work closely with target communities, or help in the design of new ones, that integrates climate refugees into communities slowly and focusing on the building of communities using design models that foster community, cooperation, and environmentally positive features such as solar energy, green space, family gardens, hydro-electric power and other green technologies.

**OUR METHODOLOGY**

BRACE uses participatory action research methodology that emphasizes participation by the community. It recognizes the importance of people's lived experiences, approaches the gathering of knowledge as a collaborative process, and centers social and individual change. It evolved from Participatory Rural Appraisal methods that have been used in international development programs over the years. Heartlands President developed many of the tools that are used in this method and has used them extensively in over 50 countries worldwide.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

For additional information, please contact Shirley Buzzard, President of Heartlands at sbuzzard@heartlands.us or Tel: 202-554-6316 or SKYPE: shirleyanne1080.