

# A Transformative Approach to Addressing Inequities in Governance: The Rooted in Mindfulness Policy Framework

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## Abstract

This paper introduces the *Rooted in Mindfulness Policy Framework* (RMPF) as an innovative theoretical model addressing embedded inequities in policymaking through a qualitative methodological approach incorporating Appreciative Inquiry. Grounded in a critical examination of systemic and historical disparities, the RMPF confronts the lasting impact of colonial doctrines on marginalized populations, particularly American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN). While developed in this context, the RMPF serves as a universal model for fostering equity and intentional policymaking. The RMPF is structured around four core elements—Humanity, Discernment, Mindfulness, and Stewardship—collectively known as the Rooted Wheel. These interconnected principles provide a flexible structure enabling policymakers to integrate diverse voices, cultures and needs at every stage of the policy process. By leveraging Appreciative Inquiry as a transformative methodology, RMPF shifts policy development from deficit-based governance to a strength-based, ethical, and relational approach.

Aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—(4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (10) Reduced Inequalities, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and (17) Partnership for the Goals—the RMPF provides a people-centered framework for sustainable policy transformation. The RMPF empowers policymakers to develop just, equitable, and practical solutions for diverse communities by fostering deep inquiry into systemic challenges and promoting inclusive decision-making.

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