



Core Principles

Core principles guide and align our work with our beliefs and represent lessons learned from our partners. Why might agreeing to core principles, before beginning a new project, initiative or partnership be helpful? Are there principles not included here that are important for your context?

In our work, we invite God's guidance to help us embody the abundant, beloved community that we hope to create and believe that God desires. We do that by the ways we plan, interact, and practice the work, recognizing that how we are "showing up" matters as much as what we are doing.

We commit ourselves to the following core principles to address systemic poverty:

- 1. Ask, listen to, and be led by those who live in impacted communities**, trusting that God moves in their lives, speaks to them with wisdom, and provides them with the skills and solutions to their challenges.

Practices and approaches:

- We learn and practice cultural humility and mutuality
- We ask how those living with poverty view their challenges, if there is a desire for outside support and what an outsider's role might look like
- We create spaces to listen to how those who live with poverty view the best solutions/actions and are willing to change focus accordingly
- When welcomed to do so, we highlight the work of partners
- We clarify how decision-making, strategizing, and resource distribution will work
- We recognize leadership from community partners fighting against poverty, honoring their time and availability
- We ask for feedback from impacted communities on what it is like to work with us, and act on recommended changes
- We evaluate our work based on the actual impact on those who are living with poverty
- We support personal and community ownership of images, stories, and solutions rather than appropriating or sharing them without permission and attribution

- 2. Seek equity and diversity in leadership**, believing that the early church in Acts and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our world affirm the necessity and vitality of multiple voices within the Body of Christ. Therefore, we will pay special attention to seek out the leadership of those who have been traditionally left out or marginalized.

Practices and approaches:

- a. We include diverse voices of those who are fighting against poverty, have experienced poverty and have established/respectful/mutual relationships with those living with poverty in the planning, staffing and coordination of programs
- b. We prioritize the leadership of women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), and LGBTQIA+ community leaders and movement organizers

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3. **Learn about systems, structures, and practices** that perpetuate poverty, knowing that Jesus asked questions that turned traditional understandings upside down, used stories to help challenge accepted ways of thinking, and continues to invite us into deeper understandings of situations than what may first appear.

Practices and approaches:

- a. We recognize that systemic poverty cannot be reduced to individual behavior, nor can it be adequately addressed with individualized solutions
- b. We pay attention to the intersectionality of poverty with race, gender, class, ability, nationality, age, and other markers of social location
- c. We look at our denominational doctrines, traditions, theology, worship practices, policies, and scriptural interpretation through the lens of people living with poverty
- d. We consider ecumenical and interfaith perspectives and resources on eradicating systemic poverty