PRINCIPLES

 Introductions to some of the foundational elements of education organizing, engagement, and equity work

Principles Overview

In this section, Organizing Engagement has compiled introductions to some of the foundational elements of education organizing, engagement, and equity work. Our principles are not intended to be comprehensive investigations or detailed guides, but rather introductory overviews and discussions.

The work of education organizing, engagement, and equity is extraordinarily complex and nuanced, and our principles build on decades of thinking, study, and practice. Our hope is that they will contribute an ongoing dialogue about educational equity and justice. To that end, we invite readers to **send us recommendations for revision or improvement**.

For a more detailed discussion, see **HOW PRINCIPLES WORK →**

[Accessibility](#)

The principle of *accessibility* refers to conditions or strategies that enable the full and equitable participation of community members, particularly those who have historically been marginalized, who come from diverse cultural backgrounds, or who have certain specialized needs. Because basic access is a prerequisite for participation in any project, process, or campaign, accessibility should be seen as a foundational consideration when planning and designing organizing and engagement activities. | [Read more](#) →

[Action](#)

The principle of *action* refers to the essentiality of *accomplishing something* when doing organizing, engagement, or equity work. *Action* can be contrasted with *process*—or activities such as meetings, conversations, and group planning that, while necessary and important for advancing a process, can engender feelings of fatigue, disinterest, demoralization, or general disengagement among participants if they go on too long without producing results. | Read more →

Advocacy

The principle of *advocacy* refers to actions that are taken by individuals or groups with power, authority, influence, or expertise to support, advance, champion, or protect the interests of particular individuals or groups. Advocacy is typically performed on behalf of, or in partnership with, individuals or groups who may not have the power, expertise, or other resources required to advance their own interests in a given situation, or by individuals or groups that acquire knowledge, skills, or power so they can more effectively advocate for their own interests. | Read more →

Authenticity

The principle of *authenticity* refers to individuals, groups, or organizations acting with integrity and representing themselves in genuine and faithful ways. In general, authentic actions or statements can be characterized as candid, forthright, or unpretentious, while inauthentic actions or statements are typically insincere, false, or misleading. The practice of authenticity also extends to representing oneself, or one's organization, in honest, sincere, and unaffected ways while avoiding deceitful, manipulative, or unscrupulous behavior. | Read more →

Celebration

The principle of *celebration* refers to statements, actions, and events that recognize individual or group contributions, successes, accomplishments, or milestones. As a principle of organizing, engagement, and equity work, celebration specifically applies to intentional, purposeful, and strategic acts of

celebration that can be used to achieve specific goals, such as building a stronger sense of togetherness, increasing team motivation, honoring cultural traditions, or creating opportunities for community outreach and networking. | [Read more](#) →

Civility

The principle of *civility* refers to social interactions in which participants maintain respect for one another, and demonstrate respectful behavior toward one another, even when they disagree. The practice of civility and civil discourse can help groups of people to develop a deeper understanding of one another's beliefs, values, opinions, and perspectives, and expose shared values among individuals and groups with seemingly incompatible worldviews, which can reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding, stereotyping, disputes, and conflict. | [Read more](#) →

Dialogue

The principle of *dialogue* refers to *intentional forms of conversation* that are used to improve mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect among individuals and groups, often for the purpose of facilitating a collaboration or decision-making process. As an intentional practice, dialogue is commonly used in small-group or large-group conversations that are purposefully designed and facilitated to achieve specific goals, such as helping people work together to solve a problem, develop a plan, execute a project, or resolve a conflict. | [Read more](#) →

Dignity

The principle of *dignity* refers to the intrinsic value and worth of every human being, and to words, actions, or conditions that either affirm human dignity or violate it. Dignity can be affirmed when the value of a person is recognized, validated, and honored, or it can be violated when people experience indignities that undermine feelings of self-worth, when they feel patronized or stereotyped, when their identity or culture is denigrated, or when they live or work in conditions that are humiliating,

degrading, or dehumanizing. | [Read more →](#)

Facilitation

The principle of *facilitation* refers to the practice of structuring and guiding dialogues, meetings, events, decision-making processes, and other activities using intentional strategies that help participants converse and collaborate more respectfully and productively. While there are many different styles and philosophies of facilitation, the type of facilitation most commonly used in organizing, engagement, and equity work is grounded in the intentional practice of inclusivity, fairness, mutual respect, and democratic decision-making. | [Read more →](#)

Transparency

The principle of *transparency* refers to the full and honest public accounting of all facts, information, and context essential to ensuring an informed and equitable decision-making process. Transparency also applies to the intentions and conduct of local leaders, organizers, and facilitators, including whether they encourage or suppress criticism and dissenting viewpoints, whether they share or conceal unflattering information and conflicts of interest, and whether they acknowledge or disregard their own motivations and biases. | [Read more →](#)

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*EDITORIAL NOTE: Organizing Engagement is currently developing introductions to additional principles of organizing, engagement, and equity, and they will be published upon completion.