

From Transactional to Transformative:



Strategies for Community Engagement

Goal:

Gain practical strategies and insights to elevate your organization's engagement approach, ensuring every project is responsive, accountable, and impactful in addressing the unique needs of your community.



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20+ Years in directing Community Engagement efforts in the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

- **Public Health Community Organizer**
- **Public Media Reporter and Producer working in Radio, Digital, Television, and Bilingual (English + Spanish) Print Publications.**
- **Environmental Justice Mobile-Tech-Entrepreneur**
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- **Environmental Equity and Urban Forestry**



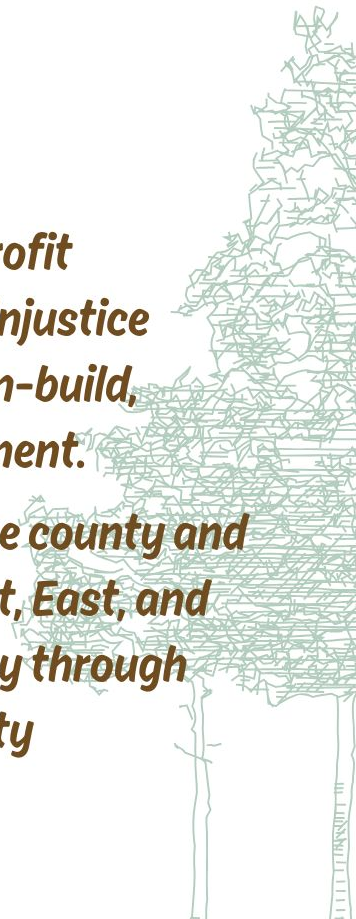


North East Trees

Bringing Nature Back

Is a 30+-year-old community-based, non-profit organization that helps heal environmental injustice through urban forestry, nature-based design-build, habitat restoration, and workforce development.

We work in underinvested communities in the county and city of Los Angeles – particularly in Northeast, East, and South Los Angeles - to build climate resiliency through stewardship, planting, design, and community engagement.



Transactional to Transformative





Transactional changes focus on direct actions within existing structures—such as providing services, improving local facilities, or implementing community programs—that deliver immediate benefits. These are often necessary and form the stepping stones toward broader goals but are limited by the constraints of existing systems and structures.

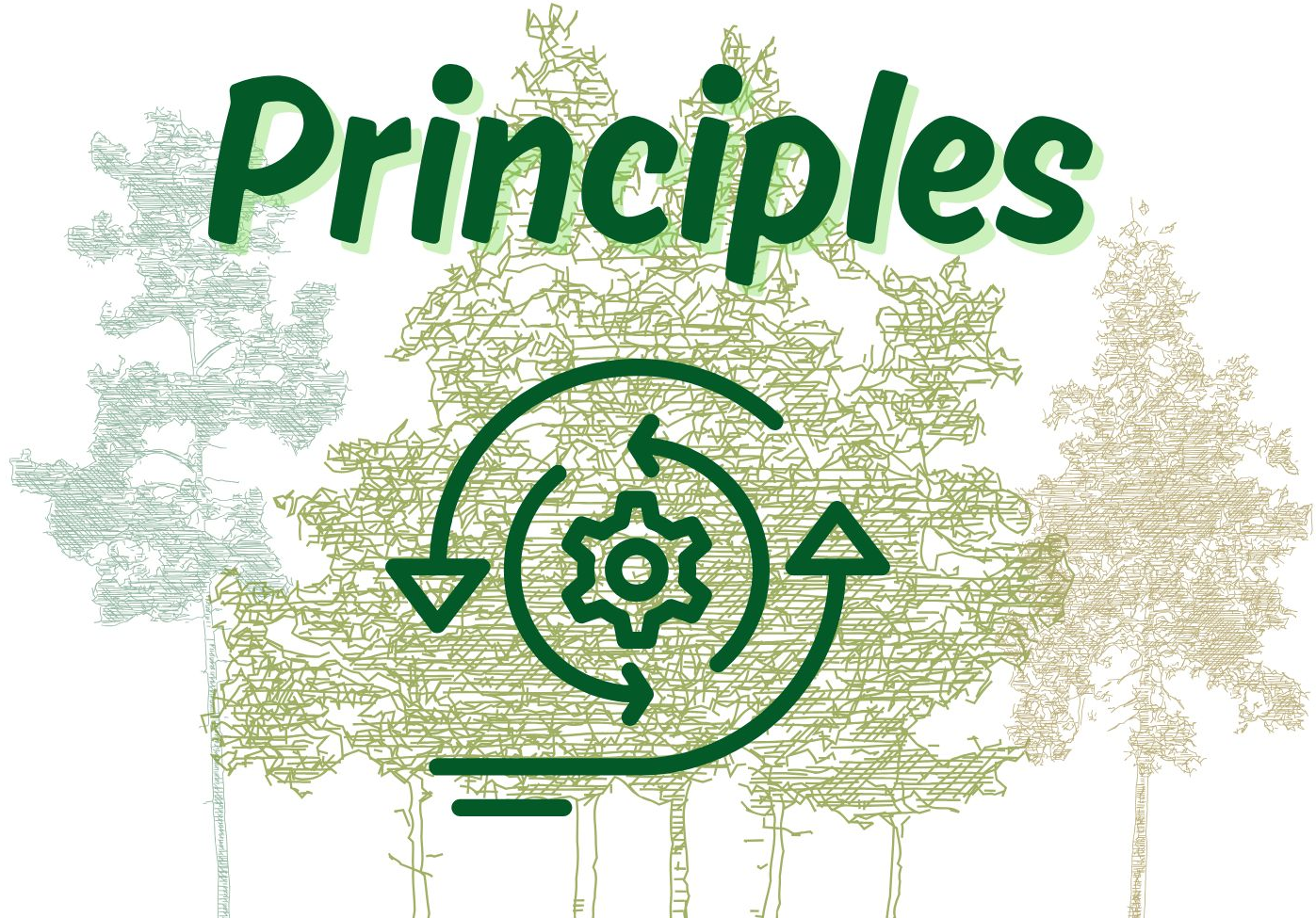


On the other hand, transformative changes seek to alter the very framework of these systems and structures. This might involve rethinking the governance models, redefining power dynamics, or reshaping economic and social policies to address root causes rather than symptoms.

For example, a community project might start by improving local healthcare access (transactional) and simultaneously work towards establishing a community-run health system that shifts away from dependency on external providers (transformative).



Principles





Commitment to Invest

The first principle revolves around investing time, resources, and money into a project within a specific community and for a select group of people. This principle is foundational to both transactional and transformative changes. In transactional change, the investments are often aimed at immediate, tangible outputs expected to benefit the community and target groups directly. These changes typically operate within the current systems and frameworks, attempting to optimize or improve specific elements of the existing structure.



Investing in Your Community:

- *You dedicate time, resources, and finances to specific projects within a particular community.*

Focus Areas:

- *Direct investments into tangible community projects.*
- *Targeted support for specific groups within your community.*

Purpose:

- *To achieve immediate and visible improvements that benefit members of your community.*





Motivation for Change

The second principle emphasizes the intent to see change, which underlies transactional and transformative efforts. This desire for change motivates the commitment to invest and drive outcomes that significantly impact your community.



Why You Invest:

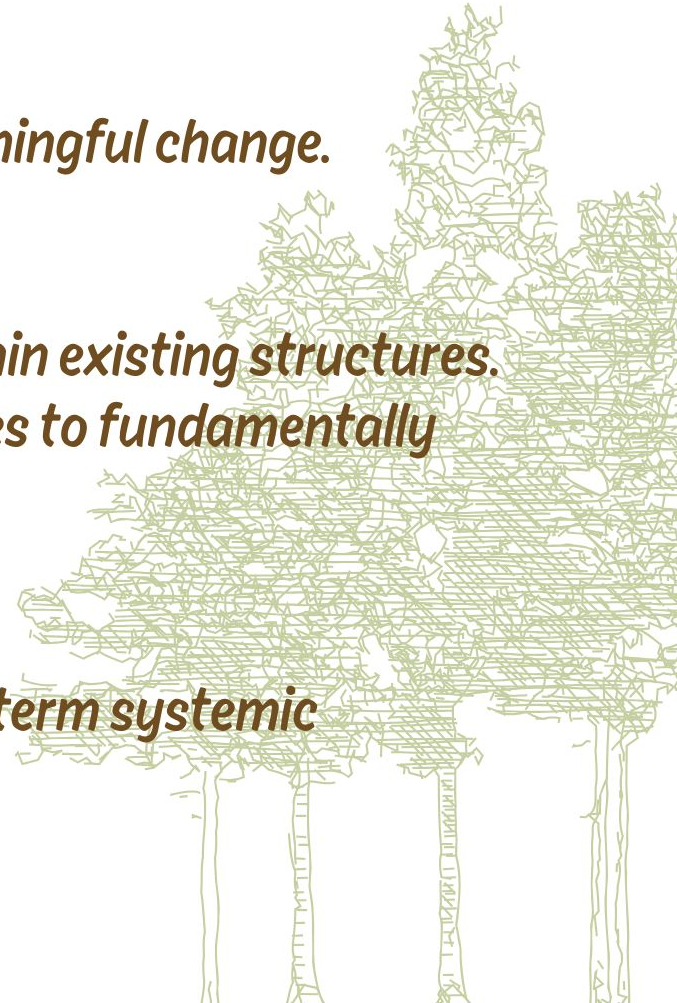
- *Your ultimate goal is to witness real and meaningful change.*

Types of Change:

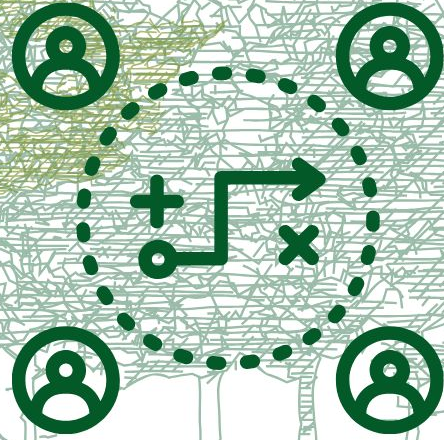
- *Transactional: Immediate improvements within existing structures.*
- *Transformative: Long-term, systemic changes to fundamentally alter community dynamics.*

Outcome:

- *Driving both short-term successes and long-term systemic transformations.*



Strategies





1 Participation & Inclusion:

This strategy emphasizes the importance of involving community members in decision-making processes. It's about ensuring that all voices, especially those of marginalized or underrepresented groups, are heard and valued. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and provides relevant and responsive initiatives to the community's needs.





2 Communication & Transparency:

Effective communication is crucial in building trust and understanding between the organization/collective and the community. This involves not just disseminating information but also actively listening to community feedback. Transparency in operations, decision-making, and resource use is essential to maintaining credibility and accountability.

3

Empowerment & Capacity Building:

Empowering communities involves providing them with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to effect change. Capacity building could include training, education, and support that enable community members to take on leadership roles, advocate for their needs, and sustain the initiatives in the long term.





4 Collaboration & Partnership:

Engaging with urban communities often requires partnering with other organizations, local governments, and stakeholders. Collaborative efforts can bring together diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources, leading to more effective and holistic solutions to community issues.



video



Q + A



Thank you!