

LETTING VALUES LEAD



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What

When organizations or groups are trying to engage in activities that foster a connected community, their work is built on a foundation of values and principles. Values and principles are not simply statements of belief, they are the touchstones that guide decision making. Effectively using values and principles in this way starts, as so much does, with a co-created and overarching purpose statement or theory of change. The Connected Community Approach focuses on working within the existing systems to shift them over the long term. The existing paradigm in many of these systems is competitive, has reward systems that value outcomes over people and is invested in the status quo. This paradigm often needs to be disrupted in order to create shared principles that are collectively created, co-operative, has reward systems that value community and is able to evolve, adapt and change to live into a shared vision.

Why

The role of community based network weaver, integrator or community backbone organization requires a form of leadership that is rare in our mainstream organizations: it is agile, collective, creative and values driven. This is systems leadership and is critical to the goal of Connected Communities: to change the systems that create barriers for people living in marginalized communities rather than just help them cope with the systems as they are. This form of leadership holds principles and values at its core, and provides clarity and direction while remaining focused on effective processes.



How

Key Question(s)

- How do you live into your values and principles in ways that are actionable and meaningful?

Actions

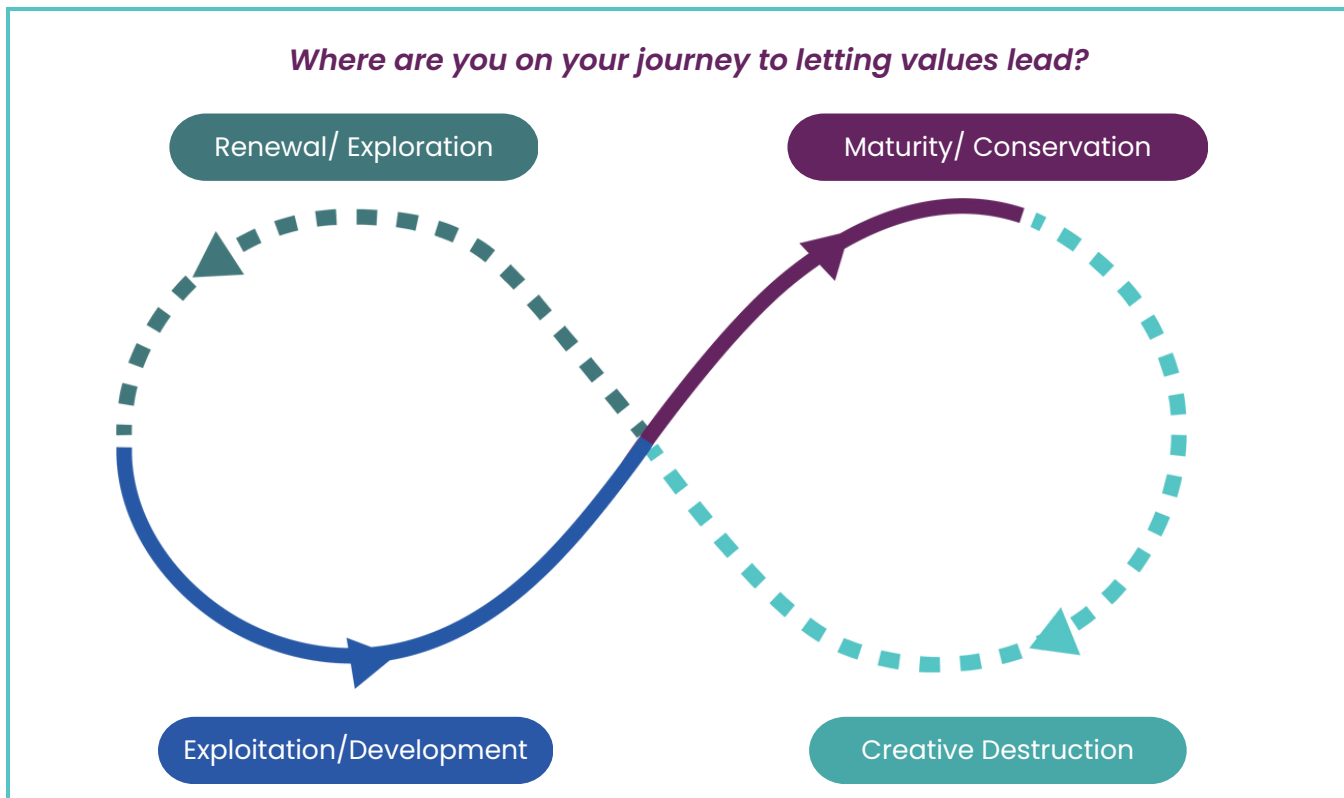
- Invest in discussions and decision making early on about the purpose values and principles that will guide your work. This can take the form of an agreed upon purpose statement, or, to really ground your team/ network/ organization in purpose and principles, invest in a [Theory of Change](#) process; an example of a CCA theory of change can be found [here](#).
- To move from the “why” of the Theory of Change to the “how”, consider investing the time, energy and resources in creating a CCA playbook. A playbook helps your team turn your theory of change into action: it is the link between day-to-day actions and organizational purpose. Each playbook is unique to the context, but an example can be found [here](#).
- A 10 keys analysis helps your team to effectively adopt and adapt the Connected Community Approach to your own context. Designed to help you centre community and reach your equity related goals, a 10 keys analysis can be used in one of three ways:
 - to better understand how current strategies/initiatives centre community;
 - to strategize on how current initiatives can be more effective
 - to design new strategies/initiatives that intentionally centre community
- By using a [10 keys analysis to develop your strategies](#), you can ensure that you are paying attention to the interrelated processes that go into leadership for Connected Communities.
- Use a variety of methods to introduce new players to the core values of the network and remind, embed, reflect on and revisit the project values and principles over time. One tool that might help you to do this is [a values survey](#).
- In an ever changing environment, you will need a leadership approach that is visionary, practical and nimble all at the same time. Strategic plans tend to be the planning tool of choice and yet when the situation changes, strategic plans can feel quickly out of date. [Interval planning](#) is a tool that can help you feel both confident in your planning process and able to adapt as necessary.

Indicators of Success

- ❑ Decision making, processes and strategies are designed in reference to the local Theory of Change
- ❑ People regularly reference to and reflection on the values and principles guiding the work
- ❑ People in the network are able to see the link between the values and principles guiding the work, the goals of the work, the work itself and local equity agendas
- ❑ Others in the ecosystem are inspired to take a values based approach to their own work

Reflection Questions

- How do your own values and principles interact with the shared values and principles articulated in the Theory of Change? Are they aligned?
- How do the values and principles as a systems leader converge or diverge from other players in the community ecosystem?
- Where are there tensions between the values and principles and realities of the work? How will you surface, talk about these tensions



We hope you find these tools useful in continuing the momentum to build on local strengths, facilitated collaborative processes and learn together. Catalysts' Circle offers workshops, coaching and strategy design services that can further help you dig deeply into these keys and explore the others that can help you make a truly Connected Community.



Catalysts' Circle can be found at www.connectedcommunities.ca or email agloger@catalystscircle.ca for more information