



Core Principles

Core principles guide and align our work with our beliefs and incorporate lessons learned from our partners. Why might examining and adopting core principles, as you continue or begin a new initiative, partnership or accompaniment be helpful? Are there principles not included here that are important for your context?

In our work, we actively discern God's guidance to help us embody the abundant, beloved community that we believe that God desires. We do that by the ways we listen, observe, question our own assumptions, set objectives and then practice the work, recognizing that how we are "showing up" matters as much as what we are doing.

Presbyterians working to eradicate poverty and to build sustainable communities commit ourselves to:

1. Be present with, listen to and be led by those who live in impacted communities, trusting that God moves, speaks in and provides communities with the skills and solutions to their challenges.

Practices and approaches:

- We learn and practice cultural humility and mutuality and commit to examine and transform some of our own preconceived notions that perpetuate cycles and systems of poverty.
- We listen to how those living with poverty view their challenges, if there is a desire for accompaniment and what appropriate roles in a partnership or accompaniment 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 to share models of community empowerment and hope.
- We work together to 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 to evaluate the partnership in which we engage, and act on recommended changes.

- We set objectives and evaluate the impact of the work together with the participants of the partnership, initiative or accompaniment participants.
- 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 and make sure they are at the decision-making tables.

Practices and approaches:

- a. Diverse voices of those who are fighting against poverty, have experienced poverty and have established/respectful/mutual relationships with those living with poverty are centralized in the decision-making, planning, staffing and coordination of any initiatives, partnerships or accompaniment efforts.
- b. Leadership is prioritized of those who have historically been disenfranchised, including 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:

- We recognize that individual choices are important and also recognize that systemic poverty cannot be reduced to individual behavior, nor can it be adequately addressed with individualized solutions.
- We pay attention to the intersectionality of poverty with race, gender, class, ability, nationality, age, immigration status and other markers of social location.
- We look at our denominational doctrines, traditions, theology, worship practices, policies, and scriptural interpretation through the lens of people living with poverty.
- We collaborate, network with, and include ecumenical and interfaith perspectives and resources on eradicating systemic poverty.
- We assert that poverty is not inevitable and we are called as people of faith to dismantle systems that perpetuate poverty.

Drawn from:

The Poor People's Campaign; Soul Fire Farm equity principles; Jemez Principles; US Food Sovereignty Alliance adaptation of Jemez Principles; Faith in Action resource books