

ESF 2016, Hyderabad: Working Group Essential Principles and Core Values

10 August 2016

Foundational Principles

As guiding principles, keep in mind the overarching principles that run throughout all human development and support all EsF work:

1. **Be mindful of the Human Tendencies that exist throughout life**

It is through the full exercise of the human tendencies that human potential can be fully realized. So we can work keeping in mind the needs of every person to express and fulfill their needs, including:

- Orientation
- Communication
- Order and consistency
- Exactness and precision
- Meaningful work

Resources:

Mario Montessori, "The Human Tendencies and Montessori Education"

2. **Be mindful of the Fundamental Needs of all cultures and societies**

Material needs (food, shelter, clothing, etc.)
Spiritual needs (art, religions, education, etc.)

Resources:

Mario Montessori, "Cosmic Education"

3. **Be mindful of the Planes of Development**

As Montessorians we know the characteristics and needs of the human being in all the planes of development. So the composition of the group we are working with (0 -6, 6-12, 12-18, 18-24, adults and the later years of life in the case of the elderly) should guide how we approach the work.

Resources:

Maria Montessori, "The Four Planes of Education"

Essential Principles for EsF Work

1. Preparation for the work

- Being grounded in the Foundational Principles of EsF Work
- Inner preparation of the adult:
 - Come with an attitude of humility.
 - Be open-minded and non-judgmental. Come with a willingness to observe, listen, and learn.
 - We realize that there is much we do not know: we come in with questions and not the answers.
 - This involves an awareness and understanding of the culture of the community, group, family, etc.
 - It requires respecting and honoring the culture, and a sincere appreciation of diversity.
 - Adaptation to time and place of work.
- Inquiry
 - Discover the needs of the community through observation and communication. Ask them what their needs are, and respect for their freedom of choice
 - This work will be successful only if it is what the people need and want, so that they will support it and take ownership of it
 - Just as in the classroom, the real learning takes place when the work is freely chosen and meets a true developmental need
 - Orientation to the environment and the people. We need to understand the framework, structures and relationships (government, community, family, etc.) so that we can work within them
 - Identify potential partners including local stakeholders, community organizers and funders

Resources:

1. Renilde Montessori, “Educateurs sans Frontières as Builders of Peace”
2. www.virtuesproject.org
3. A.M. Joosten, “The Spiritual Preparation of the Adult”
4. Lao Tzu, “Tao Te Ching”

2. Engagement in the work

- Build relationships and create trust
 - This work can only be done through collaboration and partnership. It is not something that one person, or a group of volunteers, can come in and do. We must cultivate relationships within the community (family, etc.) and gain people’s trust, confidence, and willingness to participate.
 - This involves observation, listening, communication.
 - It also requires clear and transparent communication.
 - It requires dependability. People must know that our word is our bond.
 - Rejoice in the success of collaborators and partners.
- Allow the work to develop at its own pace
 - The goal is not to accomplish a project to fix something. Rather it is to create work through collaboration that will be able to be sustained by the community after we are gone, and this can take a long time.
 - This requires patience and also flexibility. There may be twists and turns on the path, and we must be prepared to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves, even if they do not seem to be directly in line with our vision of the work.

Resources:

1. TED Talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen?language=en
2. Robert K. Greenleaf, The Servant as Leader Pamphlet, The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2015)
3. Russell, Robert F. and Stone, A. Gregory, A Review of Servant Leadership Attributes: developing a practical model. Leadership and Organization Development Journal 23/3 (2002) 145-157
4. Edberg, Henrik, Gandhi's Top 10 Fundamentals for Changing the World. Positivityblog.com
5. Briggs, John and Peat, F. David, Seven Life Lessons of Chaos
6. Change theory

3. Sustainability of the Work

- Empower the people to do the work themselves, rather than doing the work for them, so that the work will be sustainable.
 - Cultivate leadership within the community and encourage the use of local resources, including any necessary funding.
 - Provide help and guidance as long as it is needed, offering assistance (rather than “intervention”) in the way that is least intrusive.
 - Remember the Montessori sayings: “Help me to do it myself” and “As you become more, I become less”.
 - Our goal is to work ourselves out of a job!

“The great leader speaks little, he never speaks carelessly. He works without self-interest and leaves no trace. When all is finished, the people say, ‘We did it ourselves.’” Lao Tzu

Resources:

1. Community processes
2. The Principles of Resilience:
<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2015-02-19-applying-resiliencethinking.html>
<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/download/18.10119fc11455d3c557d6928/1459560241272/SRC+Applying+Resilience+final.pdf>

Core Values for EsF Work

We value:

1. Joyful engagement with the work
2. A non-judgmental attitude, open-mindedness, humility and willingness to listen and learn
3. Faith, optimism and a sense of humour
4. Flexibility, patience and perseverance
5. Respect for the community, culture, individuals
6. Respectful communication
7. Respect for freedom of choice of the people
8. Relationships based on trust, dependability and integrity
9. Responsibility and accountability to all stakeholders
10. Facilitation of local ownership through involvement in all aspects of an initiative in order to achieve sustainability
11. Collaboration towards a shared goal
12. Exchange of knowledge and experiences

Quotations

“Civilization is the process in which one gradually increases the number of people included in the term we or us and at the same time decreases those labeled you or them until that category has no one left in it.”

– Howard Winters, American archeologist

“I never teach my pupils...I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”

– Albert Einstein

“The great leader speaks little, he never speaks carelessly. He works without self-interest and leaves no trace. When all is finished, the people say, ‘We did it ourselves.’”

– Lao Tzu