

2024_CITIZEN-LED_MWEG_Principled Citizen

MWEG's Approach to Developing Principled Citizens

Problem Set:

1. Identities have become inextricably intertwined with political party affiliation, leading to political engagement being limited to via political party
2. We no longer have a clear national narrative
3. We no longer have shared, universal ideas/values that transcend party (e.g. democracy, right to vote, etc.)
4. We no longer have a shared sense of national purpose

Response:

1. Build Principled Citizens
 - Develop new (non-partisan) positive identities based on a strong sense of purpose and belonging to a new community
 - New identities as principled citizens/peacemakers then enable working with others unlike themselves and working across various fields
 - Build meaningful relationships
 - Result: Freedom from being a partisan actor and gaining a new pathway to act with integrity (w/o needing to compromise our core values) and see others, especially our “opponents”, as fully human
2. Give Principled Citizens Political Tools/Skills
 - Media literacy/ability to discern what is true
 - Civic engagement skills, from how to register to vote and be a principled voter to interacting w/legislators, writing opinion pieces, GOTV, etc..
 - Focusing on ethical development enables still taking positions/advocacy, but leans into the “how”/process of taking a position as much if not more than the “what”
 - Complementary Approach (TRUST Network):
 - Teach to create processes to enable groups to work through conflict and not get hung up on ideologies
3. Mobilize them to engage w/policy at the local + state level
 - Easier to see access points and how they can make a difference at the more local levels
 - People care deeply about their communities and already have pre-existing relationships there
 - Opportunities to learn and practice collaborative transpartisan political work
4. Also offer opportunities for national engagement with protecting systems
 - De-emphasizing nat'l work enables avoiding extreme toxicity at this level
 - Helps citizens recognize nested identities and responsibilities...as members of affinity group, local community, state, and national communities

Model Notes:

1. Process is [pre-figurative](#), with collaborative decision-making a key tenant
2. Intent is to avoid centering efforts around leaders but instead instilling internal power with the women themselves
3. Any project has to offer pathways to developing principled citizens--will not pursue if it's a good policy reform, but there are not clear options for meaningful member engagement

Other Observations:

- Beloved Community: Bridges must be built within sub-communities and across sub-communities, which will require tailored tactics to meet unique needs and ways of doing thing
 - Similarly, depending on locality, bridges may also need to be built between orgs as well as between citizens and orgs
 - Where this is already happening, this Working Group should be making this visible to others who want to replicate