

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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SOCIAL WORK COMMUNITY ORGANIZING MACRO PRACTICE VALUES

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Social work macro practice values are often expressed as promoting social justice and equality for all people, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, or socio-economic class. Typically, the social work values associated with macro practice do not extend beyond the profession's "foundational values." While, of course, these basic values are indispensable, they do not fully address the particular circumstances of macro practice.

The Internal Organizational Value-Objectives and External Societal Value-Objectives for macro practice outlined here are far from definitive; they simply represent our own professional experience and perspective. But they may nonetheless serve as take-off points for community and faith-based organizers, planners, and developers engaged in macro practice.

Internal Organizational Value-Objectives

- Political, economic, and personal empowerment of the powerless
- Flourishing of *every* life as the root and measure of the commonweal
- Creation of ways and means for bottom-up sponsorship (legitimization and funding) to develop political, economic, social, and moral-spiritual infrastructure that serves the commonweal
- Promotion of rights, roles, and resources that enable spiritually fulfilling and materially rewarding participation in civic life
- Initiation of community formation, the development of face-to-face relationships of trust and mutually beneficial social action, with the potential to help prevent and treat the pathologies of social life
- Support of community autonomy, self-determination, and self-sufficiency
- Commitment to continuous broad-based leadership development, viewing virtually every organization or community member as having the capacity to demonstrate some form of leadership at some point under some circumstances for some purpose
- Defining the pivotal objective of every leader, the development of others as leaders, thus ever-widening the circle of leadership

- Professional staff concentrating primarily on identifying the strategic and tactical questions and challenges that require answers and action—not to answer or act on them but to propose them to the appropriate levels of leaders
- Professional staff committed to the development of self-directed leaders, trusting them to answer critical questions and decide on actions that serve their commonweal, with staff and more experienced leaders providing direct support, individually gauged challenges, and follow-up mentoring
- Fostering of individual and organizational ethical and moral behavior, and strategic moral vision for the sake of the commonweal
- Modeling and reinforcing organizational culture that encourages actively working for justice, demonstrating courage, expressing compassion, serving the needs of both individuals and larger social causes, and taking every opportunity to involve, teach, and learn from others
- Emphasizing the crucial importance of teamwork—building teams and teaching the essentials of participation on teams—to accomplishing organizational tasks
- Modeling directly democratic deliberation and decision-making
- Modeling knowledge of one’s own strengths and weaknesses, and the importance of active commitment to one’s own professional and personal growth
- Modeling self-analysis, self-criticism, and self-transformation by leaders and professional staff
- Teaching the value of negotiating compromise when there is disagreement, and modeling graciousness and respect towards others despite disagreements, thereby developing a culture that enables constructively surfacing and resolving conflicts
- Modeling consistent and disciplined evaluations of administrative policies, strategic plans, one-to-ones, meetings, social actions, campaigns, negotiations, etc.
- Building capacity to exercise power in the organizational field of action
- Building knowledge and skill to wage extended campaigns
- Modeling the faith and hope needed to sustain long-term support of social movements

External Societal Value-Objectives

- Equality (i.e., equal treatment for those in equal positions) in social, political, and economic policies and practices
- Equity (i.e., special treatment for those in special need) in social, political, and economic policies and practices
- Elimination of oppression (in all forms of all groups)
- Elimination of poverty
- Elimination of injustice
- Holding decision-making authorities accountable to the commonweal rather than special interests
- Promotion of redistributive justice (i.e., redistribution of political and economic resources to ensure that power is not monopolized but widely shared and that none are powerless)
- Promotion of distributive justice (i.e., fair distribution of the income on wealth in the form of opportunities, rights, protections, and responsibilities)

- Support of the right and wherewithal of all labor to organize for better wages, working conditions, health care, housing, training and education
- Support of democratization of surplus (i.e., a greater proportion of surplus capital accumulation—profits from labor productivity—allocated to benefit the public at large)
- Protection of human life from threats of institutional malfeasance and nonfeasance
- Promotion of the principles of social contract (governments are formed and exist by consent of the governed) in social action
- Support of sustainable economic enterprise and environmental conservation

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