OUR VALUES

Active Empathy

Active empathy is the sustained effort to understand and validate the experiences and emotions of others that we may not have felt ourselves. Working alongside and for the common good of people is at the root of what we do. The work of understanding, rethinking, dismantling, designing, and improving human systems requires an ongoing and intentional commitment to honoring the dignity of every person, including ourselves.

Changemaking Creativity

Changemaking creativity brings together ideas, action, and project management in order to turn imagination into innovation. To make social change and impact, we must wrestle with questions and issues about life—not just about how things are, but how things could be. We stress not only the creative confidence to imagine and reimagine, but the careful work of creating through reliable processes and plans of action. We sum this up using the Design Question: "How might we...?"

Community Voice

Our target communities are not people who react to innovation. Rather, they are a part of its creation. Through collaboration and active empathy, target communities become partners. Every idea for change starts with centering and listening to the people involved. We work with people, not for them. With everyone together: What do we want? What might we be missing that we don't see? What ideas have already been tested or executed?

OUR VALUES

Justice & Equity

We believe in working together for the sake of restoration and renewal. The work we do in innovation seeks to reconcile what is with what should be in order to decrease the space between people and perspectives. Thus, we aim to foster expansive projects and spaces where validation, support, access and reform are championed. Justice and equity are not merely by-products, but the building blocks for our works of community development.

Diversity & Inclusion

This work is complex. With every intersection between industry, location, identity, and experience that impact a project, more critical perspectives are needed. Asking human questions and solving human problems requires the voice and input of the many, not the few. This requires intentionality regarding who is setting the table and who sits there. We believe that active empathy thrives in a diverse and inclusive environment that challenges people to engage with new lenses through which to see the world.

Sustainability

From the ideation stage to the implementation stage, we stress the ability of a project or solution to be sustained despite the test of time, institutional pushback, economic systems, or structural inequities. Sustainable innovations are built to last because they are made resilient through thoughtful design. This can look like resilient leadership, diverse revenue models, membership growth, and collaboration models.

THE IMPACT GUILD
OUR METHODS
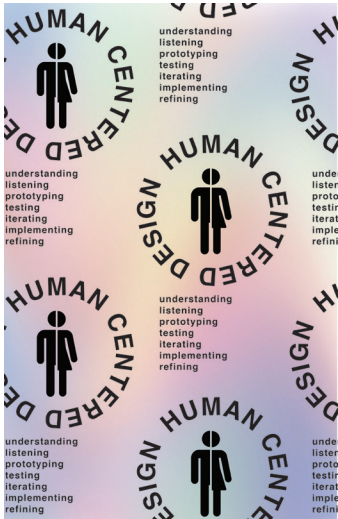
Human Centered Design

This method to design builds community voice, empathy, diversity & inclusion, and changemaking creativity to a project. As designers of projects that are solutions to felt-needs in a community, human centered design stresses **listening to and understanding our target communities** **before** the ideation stage. It then builds in active empathy and diverse inclusion by requiring their input and participation throughout the process of prototyping, testing, iteration, implementation, and refining.

Asset-Based Community Development

This practice builds sustainability, community voice, and diversity & inclusion into a project. Resources are not just financial—or even tangible. Nor are they far from home. **Learning to map and activate local networks, partnerships, businesses, neighborhoods, and the work of others as potential** resources opens up a wealth of existing opportunities to make our projects resilient, expand them when we want to, pivot when we need to, and integrate as many diverse voices as possible.
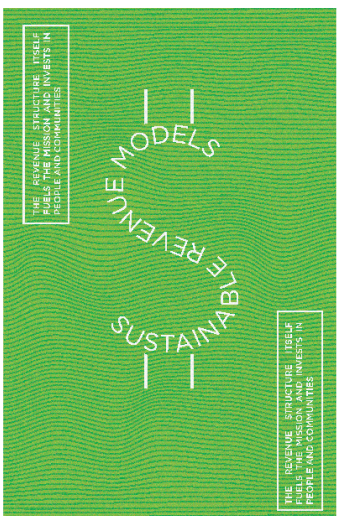
Sustainable Revenue Models

This approach builds projects in which **the revenue structure itself fuels the mission and invests in people and communities**, promoting sustainability and community voice. We work towards a deep alignment between the way an organization acquires and distributes resources and the good they aim to create—what does their revenue model incentivize and what are the practical ways to activate good? With an array of modeling and planning tools, mapping out diverse revenue streams builds resiliency and ensures that a project is able to remain afloat despite roadblocks in one financial bucket.

OUR METHODS

collaboration is a long-term and intentional effort that treats networks, partnerships, businesses, and neighborhoods as potential resources

Collaboration

More than a one-time consequence of community-focused work, we view collaboration as **a long-term and intentional effort that treats networks, partnerships, businesses, and neighborhoods as potential resources** that drive a succession of collaborations on existing and new projects in the community. This opens up a wealth of opportunities to make our projects resilient, expand them when we want to, pivot when we need to, and integrate as many diverse voices as possible.

justice and equity are the guiding principles that inspire ideas, processes, methods and models

Design Justice

This practice ensures that empathy, community voice, justice & equity, and diversity & inclusion are built into projects through specific attention to deeply embedded power structures. It recognizes that **justice & equity** are not only a project's outcomes but **the guiding principles that inspire its ideas, processes, methods, and models**. By centering community input and the restoration of pain points, it ensures that the process of creating and innovating is ethical and desired rather than imposed.

Our priority is to evaluate our projects by the good we want to see in the world.

Trackable & Measurable Impact

As an organization that deals with the elusive and complex subject of social change, broadly, we stress that what is tracked and measured is what matters. **Our priorities—the good we want to see in the world—are reflected and co-constructed by the impacts we use to evaluate our work.** We do this mainly through the use of tools like the Theory of Change model and Journey Maps, which help us to define what small incremental changes look like at each stage of our project and after its implementation. This attention to setting realistic goals, meeting them in succession, and mapping them directly onto desired impacts ensures that projects promote sustainability and changemaker creativity.