Progress is More

Looks like:

- The belief that success and progress is synonymous with 'bigger' and **'more' is rooted in capitalism**.

- Progress is understood as **organizational expansion** (e.g., adding staff or projects) or the ability to serve more people, regardless of how well the community is being served.

- This attitude gives little to no consideration for the cost associated with expansion. For example, growth might also mean: increased control over your organization by funders or other external stakeholders.

- The exploitation, exclusion, or underserving of the community as focus shifts to quantity over quality.

- The **burnout** of staff and volunteers treated as a necessary evil in the name of unchecked growth.

Key Questions to Help Y'all Reflect and Discuss:

- Do the projects being pursued have meaning for our wider community?

- Does their relevance extend beyond the moment of engagement and connect with longer term priorities and goals?

- How are our activities woven into community life and existing community activities?

- How are community priorities being integrated into our projects?

- Does the organization work to challenge 'work-over-people' culture? Is the well being of our staff and volunteers important to us? Do we invest time, energy, resources and reflection in assuring this well being?

- Is it really our desire to grow as an organization? Could we be more precise about our desire and vision for our organization— for example, is our desire actually to be continually learning, or continually improving? Instead of growing as an organization, has there been a consideration for strengthening partnerships with organizations who have resonant missions and values?

Progress is More (cont.)

- For those who work with youth, how are they engaged at various levels of the organization? Are these engagement techniques aligned with the values of the organization and are they structured in a way which makes sense for the organization?

Antidotes:

- Take the time to think about the vision you have for your organization in 25, 50, or even 100 years.

- Make sure that any cost-benefit analysis includes all (i.e., human) costs, not just financial ones. Human costs may include, for example, the impacts on morale, credibility, and use of resources.

- Include process goals in your planning, such as how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do.

- Ask the people you work with to evaluate how growth and change management affects them.