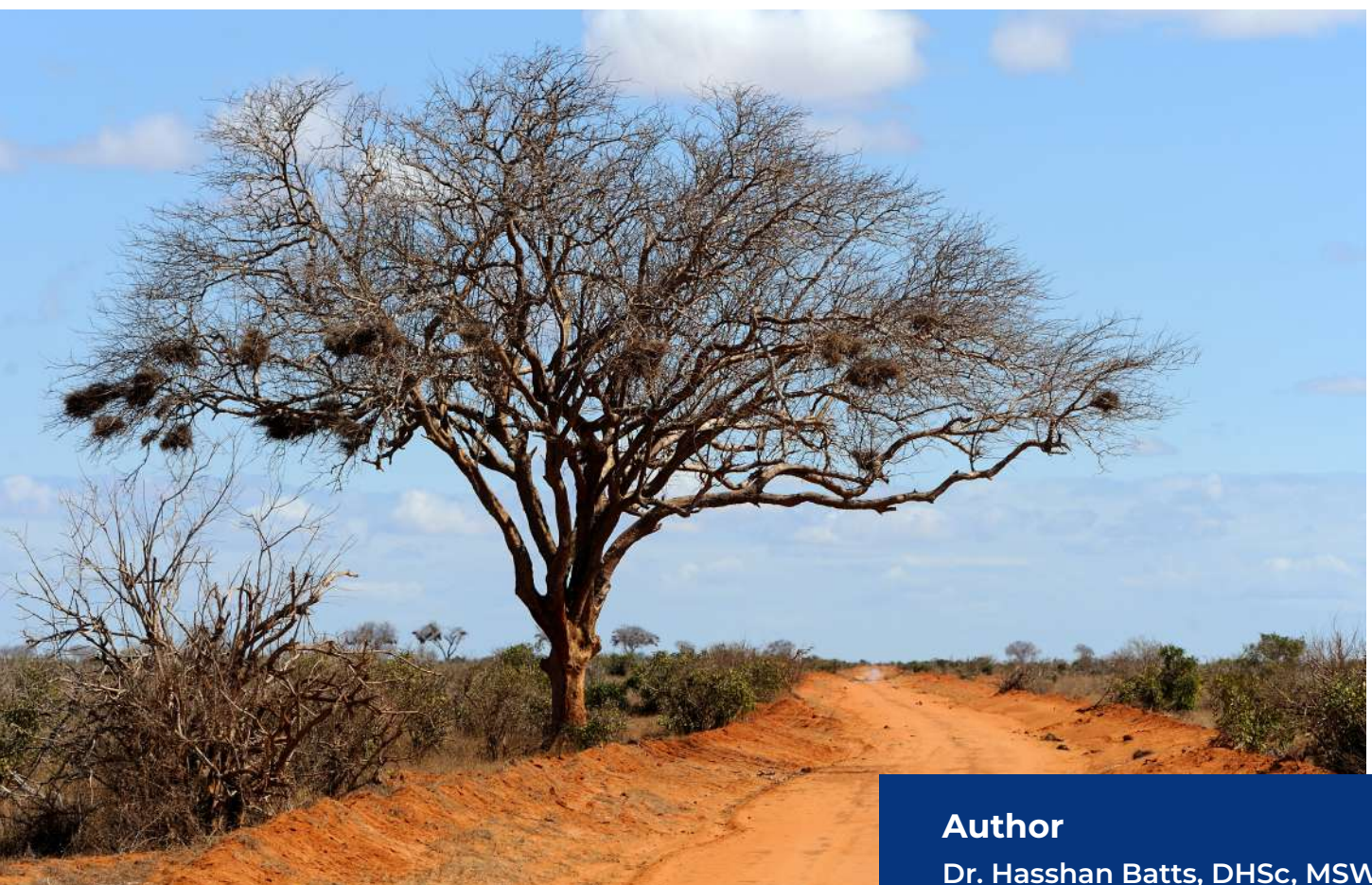Batts Development Group

ANCESTRAL
MEASUREMENT PRAXIS

What We Measure Shapes What We Build:
Leadership, Governance, and Accountability
for Systems That Produce Life

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EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

Why how we measure determines who is harmed, who heals, and what endures

Most organizations believe they are measuring impact. Few are measuring harm.

In the nonprofit, public, and philanthropic sectors, evaluation has become synonymous with compliance, dashboards, reports, and outcomes that satisfy external requirements while often obscuring the lived realities of the people most affected by our decisions. This concept paper challenges a fundamental assumption: that measurement is neutral.

It is not.

What we choose to measure, and what we ignore, shapes culture, governs behavior, allocates power, and ultimately determines whether systems heal or harm.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis offers a values-centered, praxis-based approach to leadership, governance, and evaluation that moves beyond technical compliance toward intergenerational accountability. It builds on the author's foundational work on the Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model (RWERM), extending the concept of belonging and engagement into the realm of measurement, decision-making, and systems responsibility.

At its core, Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks a simple but disruptive question:

Are people healing, or being harmed, in the systems we are creating?

Rather than rejecting data, this praxis reframes it. It insists that dignity, safety, belonging, repair, and

continuity are legitimate and necessary indicators of success. It recognizes that harm is inevitable in human systems, but denial of harm is a leadership failure. Reconciliation and healing, therefore, must be treated as skills, capacities, and governance responsibilities.

This concept paper is written for boards, funders, executive leaders, and system stewards navigating complexity, uncertainty, and shifting resources. It argues that:
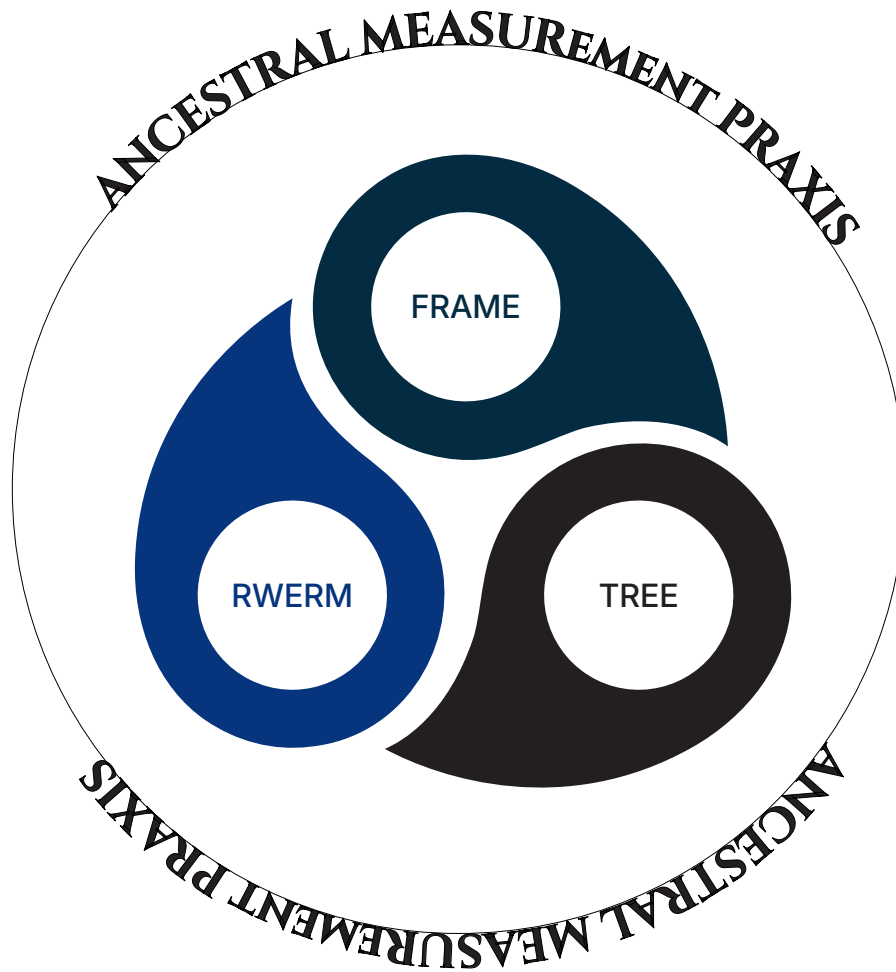
- Budgets are values statements

- Calendars reveal true priorities

- Decision-making and conflict resolution are core leadership competencies

- Compliance without care perpetuates harm

Through the integration of four interconnected frameworks:

- FRAME (Foundation, Regulation, Alignment, Mindset, Energy),

- TREE (Trauma-informed care, Restorative practices, Emotional intelligence, Equity),

- RWERM (Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model), and

- Ancestral Measurement Praxis, this paper provides a coherent approach to governing and leading in ways that produce life rather than extract it.

Importantly, this is not a call for perfection. It is a call for honesty.

When we know better and want better, we have to be better and do better.

ANCESTRAL MEASUREMENT PRAXIS

FRAME

RWERM

TREE

- ■ Foundation, Regulation, Alignment, Mindset, Energy
- ■ Trauma Informed Care, Restorative Practices, Emotional Intelligence, Equity
- ■ Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model

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An integrated system for leadership-based governance, belonging, and accountability

Integrated Praxis Framework

Ancestral Measurement Praxis functions as an outer evaluative and ethical lens, holding and interpreting three interconnected leadership frameworks: FRAME (internal leadership operating system), TREE (relational governance and culture), and RWERM (structural belonging and community engagement). Together, these models operate as an integrated system rather than discrete tools.

The Measurement Problem We Rarely Name
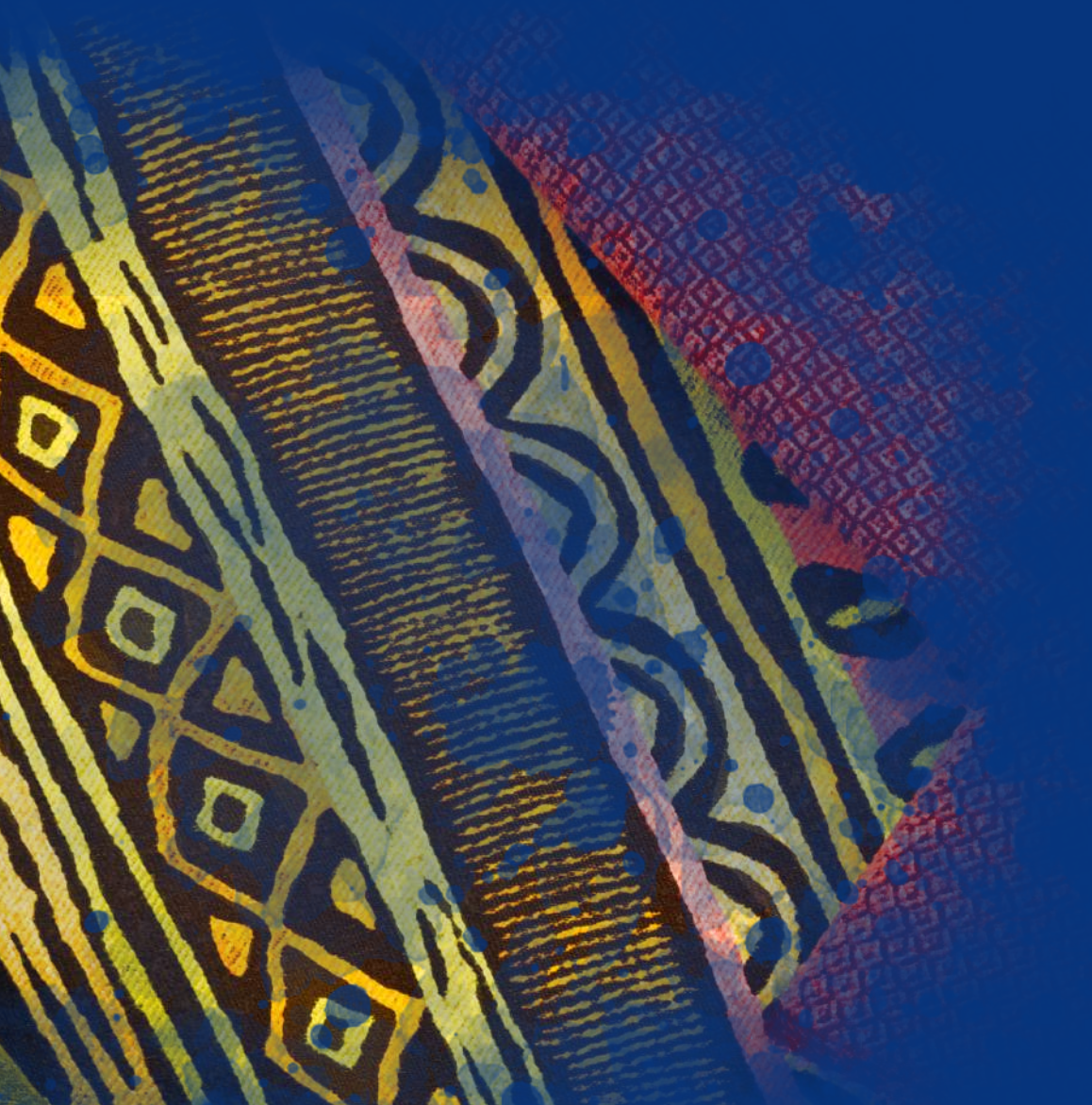
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The Measurement Problem We Rarely Name

Most organizations do not fail because they lack data.

They fail because they measure the wrong things, and then mistake activity for impact.

Across nonprofit, public, philanthropic, and institutional systems, measurement has become a proxy for accountability. Dashboards, indicators, performance metrics, and compliance reports are often treated as evidence of effectiveness. Yet these tools rarely ask the most important questions:

- Who is being harmed in the process of achieving these outcomes?

- Who bears the cost of efficiency?

- Who is asked to adapt to the system, rather than the system adapting to people?

These questions are rarely named, not because leaders are indifferent, but because the dominant measurement culture is not designed to surface them.

Measurement is not neutral

Measurement frameworks are often presented as objective, technical, and apolitical. In practice, they are none of those things. What gets measured reflects what is valued. What is excluded reveals what is tolerated.

When success is defined narrowly by outputs, timelines, compliance thresholds, or short-term deliverables, systems are incentivized to optimize performance rather than care. Relational work becomes invisible. Harm becomes externalized. Healing is postponed until "after the grant period" or "once stability is achieved."

In these environments, leaders may genuinely believe they are doing well while staff, participants, and communities experience strain, burnout, distrust, or quiet disengagement. The data looks clean. The human cost does not appear on the report.

Compliance has replaced conscience

Compliance is necessary. It protects organizations, ensures legal and financial stewardship, and creates baseline accountability. But compliance alone does not produce healthy systems.

When compliance becomes the ceiling rather than the floor, it crowds out other forms of responsibility:

- Responsibility to people, not just funders

- Responsibility to relationships, not just results

- Responsibility to repair harm, not just manage risk

Over time, organizations learn what is rewarded. If care, reflection, and repair are not measured, they are deprioritized. If speed is rewarded more than sustainability, burnout becomes normalized. If outputs matter more than outcomes, communities become sites of extraction rather than partners in transformation.

> ❝❝ **This is not a failure of intention. It is a failure of design.**

Efficiency is often framed as a virtue. In reality, efficiency without ethical grounding can become a mechanism of harm.

When systems prioritize speed, scale, and throughput without attending to context, history, and power, they often:

- Exclude those who require flexibility or accommodation

- Penalize trauma-impacted communities for not moving "fast enough"

- Treat resistance or disagreement as dysfunction rather than feedback

What is lost in the pursuit of efficiency is often the very thing organizations claim to serve: trust.

Trust cannot be rushed. It cannot be standardized. And it rarely fits neatly into quarterly reports.

When data obscures lived experience

Traditional evaluation methods privilege what can be easily counted. Attendance, outputs, completion rates, and milestones are important, but they are insufficient.

They tell us:

- What happened
- How many
- How fast

They rarely tell us:

- How people felt
- Whether they were respected
- Whether harm occurred and how it was handled
- Whether people would choose to return

When lived experience is treated as anecdotal rather than evidentiary, systems lose access to the very information that could help them improve. Community voice becomes "qualitative context" rather than central knowledge. Story is relegated to the margins, while numbers are elevated as truth.

This creates a dangerous gap between what organizations claim and what people experience.

Measuring success while producing harm

One of the most difficult realities to confront is this:

- Systems can meet every metric and still cause harm.

- Staff can burn out while programs scale.

- Communities can disengage while outputs increase.

- Leaders can be celebrated while culture deteriorates.

Without measurement frameworks that explicitly attend to dignity, safety, belonging, and repair, harm becomes normalized as collateral damage. It is treated as unfortunate but inevitable, rather than as information that should shape decision-making.

> **This is the measurement problem we rarely name.**

Not because it is abstract.

But because naming it requires courage.

It requires leaders, boards, and funders to accept that effectiveness is not just about what is delivered, but about how it is delivered, who is protected, and who is exposed along the way.

The sections that follow offer a different approach, one that does not abandon rigor, but deepens it. One that insists measurement must answer not only what worked, but for whom, at what cost, and with what lasting impact.

That is the work of Ancestral Measurement Praxis.

Systems of Harm and the Cost of Silence

2

Systems of Harm and the Cost of Silence

Harm in systems is rarely loud.

More often, it is quiet, normalized, and explained away as unavoidable.

It shows up in the spaces between policies and practice.

In the gap between values statements and lived experience.

In the decisions no one wants to revisit once momentum has begun.

Most harm in organizations is not the result of malice. It is the result of silence, misaligned incentives, and unchecked power.

Harm is structural, not episodic

Organizations often treat harm as an isolated incident, something that happens occasionally and requires containment. But harm is more accurately understood as structural.

When harm is framed as episodic, responsibility is individualized. When harm is understood as structural, responsibility becomes collective.

This distinction matters.

Without a structural lens, organizations spend energy managing fallout rather than addressing root causes. Patterns repeat. People disengage quietly. Trust erodes slowly.

And leadership wonders why culture feels fragile despite strong outcomes on paper.

> *Silence is not neutrality*
>
> *Silence is often mistaken for professionalism, restraint, or strategic patience. In reality, silence is a signal.*

It is embedded in:

- Who gets to decide

- Whose voice is considered credible

- Whose discomfort is tolerated

- Whose well-being is treated as expendable

When harm occurs and leaders do not respond, systems learn that:

- Speed matters more than people

- Stability matters more than truth

- Reputation matters more than repair

> *Silence protects power. It rarely protects people.*

Boards and senior leaders are especially influential in this regard. What they ask about, and what they do not, sets the tone for the entire organization. When questions about culture, harm, and relational health are absent from governance conversations, staff and community members quickly learn what is safe to name and what is not.

- The absence of inquiry becomes its own form of direction.

- Power without accountability multiplies harm

- Power is not inherently harmful.

- Unexamined power is dangerous.

Every system allocates power, through roles, budgets, decision-making authority, and access to information. Harm emerges when power is exercised without accountability, reflection, or feedback from those most affected by decisions.

Common patterns include:

- Decisions made far from their consequences

- Communities consulted but not empowered

- Staff asked to absorb risk without support

- Leaders shielded from the impact of their choices

When power is insulated, harm is externalized. It becomes someone else's problem, often those with the least ability to influence outcomes.

The emotional labor tax

One of the least measured forms of harm is the emotional labor placed on staff and community members, particularly those from groups that historically have experienced marginalization.

They are often expected to:

- Educate leadership about harm

- Translate community pain into acceptable language

- Remain calm while naming injustice

- Continue producing outcomes while trust erodes

When systems fail to recognize or redistribute this labor, they extract it. Burnout follows. Turnover increases. Institutional memory is lost. And the system records this as a staffing issue rather than a leadership failure.

When harm is denied, it deepens

Perhaps the most damaging response to harm is denial, especially when framed as defensiveness or fear of liability.

Denial does not prevent harm.

It intensifies it.

When people experience harm and are told it did not happen, the injury becomes layered:

- The original harm

- The dismissal of their experience

- The loss of trust in leadership

This is where disengagement becomes inevitable. People stop offering feedback. They stop raising concerns. They stop believing repair is possible.

The system appears stable, until it isn't.

The responsibility of leadership and governance

Leadership is not defined by the absence of harm, but by the response to it.

Boards and executive leaders hold a unique responsibility:

- To ask questions others cannot

- To slow decisions when needed

- To insist that values are operationalized, not just articulated

This responsibility cannot be delegated downward. Culture does not change through memos. It changes through modeled behavior and sustained attention.

When boards avoid difficult conversations in the name of unity, they often sacrifice trust. When funders prioritize outcomes without interrogating conditions, they unintentionally reinforce harm. When leaders equate criticism with disloyalty, they silence the very people trying to help the system improve.

The cost of silence

The cost of silence is not abstract.

It shows up as:

- Staff burnout and turnover

- Community disengagement

- Loss of credibility

- Reactive leadership

- Fragile systems that collapse under pressure

Perhaps most importantly, it shows up in missed opportunities for healing.

Silence delays repair.

Delay deepens harm.

The sections that follow introduce a different approach, one that treats harm as information, repair as a leadership skill, and measurement as a moral practice.

To move forward, systems must be willing to replace silence with inquiry, defensiveness with reflection, and compliance with care.

That shift begins by changing not only what we do, but how we measure what matters

From Radical Welcome to Ancestral Measurement

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From Radical Welcome to Ancestral Measurement

Ancestral Measurement Praxis did not emerge in response to a technical gap.

It emerged in response to a relational failure.

Long before organizations struggled with how to measure dignity, belonging, or harm, they struggled with how to engage communities without suppressing them. How to invite participation without extraction. How to speak about inclusion while maintaining systems that quietly excluded.

The Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model (RWERM) was developed to name and interrupt this pattern.

Engagement suppression precedes measurement suppression

RWERM surfaced a core reality: communities are often invited into systems that are not prepared to receive them. Participation is encouraged, but influence is constrained. Voice is welcomed, but only within predefined boundaries. When engagement threatens power, it is managed rather than honored.

This phenomenon, engagement suppression, occurs when institutions:

- Invite community input without intention to change

- Solicit feedback but control outcomes

- Treat participation as symbolic rather than consequential

What followed, predictably, was measurement suppression.

When communities could not meaningfully shape decisions, their experiences also could not meaningfully shape evaluation. Metrics were designed upstream, far from lived realities. Harm went unnamed because it was never measured. Belonging was discussed but never assessed. Repair was expected, but never resourced.

Measurement became another site where power was exercised quietly.

> *Radical Welcome as a structural intervention*

RWERM reframed belonging as a structural condition, not an interpersonal gesture. It asserted that welcome must be designed into systems, not left to individual goodwill.

Through its six stages: passionate invitation, radical welcome, authentic belonging, co-created roles, prioritization of community-identified social issues, and individual and collective action, RWERM provided a roadmap for engagement that was accountable, relational, and restorative.

But as RWERM was applied across organizations, communities, and systems, a new tension became visible:

Even when engagement improved, evaluation often did not.

Organizations could practice welcome, co-create roles, and prioritize community-defined issues, yet still be evaluated using frameworks that erased those very practices.

The question became unavoidable:

How do we measure success in ways that do not contradict our values?

When values and metrics diverge

This divergence is one of the most destabilizing experiences in organizational life.

Staff are told to lead with care, but evaluated on speed.

Communities are invited to belong, but assessed through outputs.

Leaders speak of healing, but fund harm-blind metrics.

Over time, people learn which signals matter. When relational work is invisible to evaluation, it becomes unsustainable. When repair is not resourced, harm accumulates. When belonging is not measured, exclusion hides behind success narratives.

RWERM addressed how we engage.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis addresses how we evaluate what follows.

Measurement as the final gatekeeper

Measurement is the final gatekeeper of legitimacy. It determines:

- What is funded

- What is scaled

- What is rewarded

- What is replicated

If measurement frameworks remain rooted in efficiency and compliance alone, even the most relational models will be constrained. Systems will revert under pressure. Values will be compromised in the name of sustainability.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis emerges at this intersection, not as a replacement for RWERM, but as its necessary extension.

It insists that:

- Belonging must be measurable

- Harm must be named

- Repair must be resourced

- Power must be visible

- Continuity must matter

From engagement to accountability

Radical Welcome asked institutions to change how they receive people.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks institutions to change how they judge success.

Together, they form a coherent arc:

- Engagement without suppression

- Belonging without performance

- Accountability without erasure

This shift is not academic. It is operational.

It challenges boards, funders, and leaders to ask not only whether programs worked, but for whom, under what conditions, and at what cost. It reframes evaluation as an ethical practice rather than a technical exercise.

The next section defines Ancestral Measurement Praxis explicitly, what it is, what it is not, and why it is necessary in this moment.

Because once engagement is restored, measurement must follow. And when engagement is suppressed, measurement inevitably reflects that suppression. What organizations choose to hear, record, and reward is shaped long before data is collected, by whose voices are welcomed, whose concerns are taken seriously, and whose experiences are treated as legitimate knowledge. Ancestral Measurement Praxis begins here: at the point where engagement, belonging, and accountability are either protected or eroded.

Defining Ancestral Measurement Praxis

4

Defining Ancestral Measurement Praxis

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is a values-centered approach to evaluation, governance, and leadership accountability that measures not only outcomes, but the conditions under which those outcomes are produced.

It is grounded in a simple premise:

> *If a system produces results while causing harm, it cannot be considered successful.*

Ancestral Measurement Praxis does not reject data, rigor, or accountability. It rejects the false assumption that existing measurement frameworks are neutral or sufficient. Instead, it insists that evaluation must be aligned with dignity, belonging, safety, repair, and intergenerational responsibility.

What Ancestral Measurement Praxis is

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is:

- Values-driven, not value-neutral

- Relational, not transactional

- Intergenerational, not limited to reporting cycles

- Grounded in lived experience, not abstract indicators

- Concerned with power, not just performance

It treats measurement as a moral and leadership practice, one that reflects what an organization truly prioritizes, protects, and perpetuates.

At its core, this praxis asks leaders to consider:

- Who benefits from how success is defined?

- Who bears the cost when harm is ignored?

- Who is protected when systems are under pressure?

- What will endure beyond this leadership tenure or funding cycle?

These are not philosophical questions. They are governance questions.

What Ancestral Measurement Praxis is not

> *To avoid dilution or misapplication, it is important to be explicit about what this praxis is not.*

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is not:

- A replacement for compliance requirements

- A rejection of quantitative data

- A "soft" or optional framework

- A branding exercise

- A one-time assessment tool

It is also not a substitute for accountability. In fact, it raises the standard of accountability by making harm, repair, and relational integrity visible rather than optional.

Why "ancestral" matters

The term ancestral is intentional.

It signals an orientation beyond immediacy and individualism. It invokes continuity, memory, and responsibility to those who came before and those who will come after. It reminds leaders that systems are inherited and bequeathed, not merely managed.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks:

- Would our ancestors recognize this as progress?

- Would they say this work produces life, dignity, and continuity?

- Would they see care, restraint, and responsibility or speed at any cost?

This orientation challenges dominant leadership norms that prioritize growth over grounding, expansion over stewardship, and outcomes over people.

Measurement as stewardship, not surveillance

Traditional evaluation often functions as surveillance, monitoring compliance, enforcing conformity, and minimizing risk to institutions.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis reframes measurement as stewardship.

Stewardship asks:

- What are we responsible for protecting?

- What relationships require tending?

- What harm must be acknowledged and repaired?

This shift changes how success is defined and how failure is understood. Failure becomes information rather than indictment. Harm becomes a signal rather than a scandal. Repair becomes a leadership competency rather than an exception.

The ethical center of the praxis

The ethical center of Ancestral Measurement Praxis is dignity.

Dignity is not treated as a byproduct of success, but as a condition of it. If dignity is compromised, the work must be reevaluated, regardless of outcomes achieved.

This stance requires courage. It requires leaders to resist the pressure to present clean narratives when reality is complex. It requires boards and funders to ask harder questions and accept less certainty in exchange for greater integrity.

Why this matters now

In a time of resource constraints, political polarization, and institutional distrust, many systems are reverting to control-based leadership and compliance-driven evaluation. The instinct to tighten metrics and minimize risk is understandable, but insufficient.

Without an evaluative framework that centers care, responsibility, and intergenerational impact, systems will continue to meet goals while eroding trust, exhausting people, and reproducing harm.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis offers a different path, one that does not abandon rigor, but deepens it.

What We Measure Shapes What We Build

5

WHAT WE MEASURE SHAPES WHAT WE BUILD

Measurement is not a passive act.

It is a design choice.

What we choose to measure determines what receives attention, resources, protection, and patience. Over time, it shapes culture, behavior, and belief. Systems do not drift toward health by accident; they move in the direction of what is consistently measured and rewarded.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis identifies five interrelated domains that must be made visible if systems are to produce life rather than harm. These domains do not replace traditional indicators, they reframe what counts as success.

01   Dignity as an Outcome

Most evaluation frameworks treat dignity as assumed. Ancestral Measurement Praxis treats dignity as measurable.

This requires asking:

- Are people treated with respect throughout the process, not just at entry points?

- Do individuals feel regarded, listened to, and taken seriously?

- Are people reduced to data points, or recognized as whole human beings?

Dignity shows up in tone, process, responsiveness, and follow-through. It is reflected in whether people feel safe to speak honestly, whether feedback is welcomed or penalized, and whether those with less power are treated as credible knowers of their own experience.

If a system produces outcomes while diminishing dignity, it is not functioning well, regardless of performance metrics.

02   Safety, Harm, and Repair

All human systems produce harm.

The question is not if, but how it is handled.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis requires that systems measure:

- Whether harm is acknowledged when it occurs

- How quickly and transparently it is addressed

- Whether repair is attempted, or avoided

- Who is supported during moments of rupture

This shifts evaluation away from the false goal of harm-free systems toward the more honest goal of repair-capable systems.

Repair is not an interpersonal courtesy. It is a leadership and governance responsibility. Systems that cannot name harm cannot heal it. Systems that punish truth-telling silence the very information they need to improve.

03 Belonging and Continuity

Belonging is often discussed rhetorically and measured superficially. Ancestral Measurement Praxis treats belonging as a condition that can be observed over time.

Key questions include:

- Who stays engaged beyond initial participation?

- Who leaves and why?

- Who returns after conflict or disruption?

- Who is trusted with leadership and decision-making roles?

Continuity matters. Systems that appear inclusive but experience constant churn are not producing belonging; they are producing exhaustion. Retention, return, and shared ownership are stronger indicators of health than attendance or enrollment alone.

Belonging is revealed not in moments of celebration, but in moments of tension.

04 Power, Decision-Making, and Responsibility

Power is always present. The only question is whether it is visible and accountable.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis insists on measuring:

- Who makes decisions and how

- Whose knowledge is prioritized

- Who benefits from success

- Who bears the cost of failure

This domain challenges the assumption that decision-making structures are neutral. It asks leaders and boards to examine whether authority is centralized or shared, whether community voice is influential or symbolic, and whether responsibility is aligned with power.

When those most impacted by decisions have the least influence, harm is predictable.

05 Intergenerational Impact and Stewardship

Traditional evaluation is constrained by time, grant cycles, fiscal years, leadership tenures. Ancestral Measurement Praxis expands the horizon.

It asks:

- What capacity has been built that will outlast this initiative?

- What relationships have been strengthened or weakened?

- What harm has been avoided, not just mitigated?

- What future has been made more possible for the next generation?

Measurement as an act of courage

Measuring these domains requires courage because it surfaces complexity, discomfort, and contradiction. It resists tidy narratives. It invites critique. It slows decision-making when reflection is needed.

But avoiding these measures does not eliminate risk, it displaces it onto people with the least power to absorb it.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis does not promise ease.

It promises honesty.

The Role of Leadership: FRAME as an Internal Operating System

6

The Role of Leadership: FRAME as an Internal Operating System

Systems do not measure independently of the people who lead them.

What leaders attend to, tolerate, and avoid becomes institutionalized over time.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis recognizes that evaluation frameworks are shaped long before indicators are selected or reports are written. They are shaped by leaders' internal operating systems, their values, regulation, alignment, mindset, and energy. This is where FRAME becomes essential.

FRAME is not a personality assessment or a self-care tool. It is a leadership operating system that determines how power is exercised, how decisions are made, and how harm is handled.

Foundation: What leaders stand on

Foundation refers to a leader's core values, ethical grounding, and sense of responsibility. It shapes what leaders believe is acceptable, negotiable, or off-limits.

When a leader's foundation is unclear or unexamined:

- Measurement drifts toward what is easiest rather than what is right

- Decisions prioritize optics over integrity

- Values statements become symbolic rather than operational

Leaders with a clear foundation are more likely to ask difficult questions, resist pressure to distort data, and insist that dignity and care be reflected in how success is defined.

Foundation determines whether measurement is used to learn or to protect reputation.

Regulation: How leaders manage pressure

Regulation refers to a leader's capacity to remain steady under stress, conflict, and uncertainty. Dysregulated leadership often produces reactive measurement practices.

Common indicators of dysregulation include:

- Over-reliance on metrics to create a sense of control

- Avoidance of qualitative or relational data that feels "messy"

- Punitive responses to feedback or critique

- Accelerated timelines that bypass reflection and repair

Regulated leaders are better able to tolerate complexity. They can sit with uncomfortable information, hear harm without defensiveness, and allow evaluation to inform change rather than justify existing decisions.

Measurement integrity depends on leadership regulation

Alignment: When values and behavior match

Alignment asks whether leaders' stated values are reflected in their actions, priorities, and decisions.

Misalignment often appears when:

- Care is named as a value but not resourced

- Community engagement is encouraged but not influential

- Repair is expected but not supported

- Equity is discussed but not embedded in decision-making

In misaligned systems, measurement becomes performative. Indicators tell a story leaders want to hear rather than one that reflects reality.

Aligned leadership, by contrast, ensures that evaluation frameworks reinforce, not undermine, organizational values.

Mindset: How leaders interpret information

Mindset shapes how leaders make meaning of data, feedback, and critique. It determines whether evaluation is seen as a threat or an opportunity.

Fixed or defensive mindsets often lead to:

- Minimizing harm to protect morale or reputation

- Treating disagreement as disloyalty

- Framing critique as personal rather than systemic

A growth-oriented, accountable mindset allows leaders to view harm as information and failure as a source of learning. This mindset is essential for Ancestral Measurement Praxis, which depends on honesty rather than perfection.

Energy: What leaders protect and prioritize

Energy refers to what leaders consistently invest in and protect; time, attention, emotional labor, and relational capacity.

Leaders signal priorities through:

- What they make time for
- What they inquire about
- What they intervene in and what they ignore

When leaders protect only outcomes and deadlines, relational health erodes. When they protect people, process, and repair, systems become more resilient.

Energy allocation shapes measurement priorities more than policy ever will.

Leadership as the first measurement site

Before systems measure programs, they measure leadership, informally and continuously. Staff and community members pay attention to what leaders respond to, what they avoid, and what they reward.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis begins here.

If leaders are unwilling to examine their own operating systems, no evaluation framework, no matter how well designed, will produce healing or accountability. Conversely, leaders who commit to FRAME create the conditions for measurement that is honest, humane, and transformative.

The Role of Teams and Boards: TREE as Relational Governance

7

The Role of Teams and Boards: TREE as Relational Governance

Leadership does not operate in isolation.

Culture is produced collectively.

Boards, executive teams, and staff together determine whether values are operationalized or merely articulated. While FRAME addresses the internal conditions of leadership, TREE addresses the relational conditions of governance, culture, and collective responsibility.

TREE: Trauma-informed care, Restorative practices, Emotional intelligence, and Equity, is not a set of interpersonal preferences. It is a governance framework. It defines how harm is understood, how conflict is handled, and how trust is sustained within systems.

Trauma-informed care: Governing with historical awareness

Trauma-informed governance begins with the recognition that people do not enter organizations as blank slates. Staff, community members, and leaders alike carry histories shaped by inequity, exclusion, loss, and survival.

- Boards that lead with trauma-informed care:

- Avoid interpreting stress responses as resistance

- Understand disengagement as information, not failure

- Design policies and timelines that account for human capacity

When governance ignores trauma, it often accelerates harm. Expectations become unrealistic. Feedback is misread. Accountability becomes punitive rather than corrective.

Trauma-informed care allows systems to respond with clarity instead of control.

Restorative practices: Repair as a leadership responsibility

Conflict and harm are inevitable in human systems. The question is not whether they occur, but how they are addressed.

Restorative governance treats repair as a core competency. It asks:

- How does this organization respond when harm is named?

- Who is responsible for initiating repair?

- Are there clear pathways for reconciliation or only discipline?

Boards play a critical role here. When boards default to avoidance or legal containment, they unintentionally reinforce a culture of silence. When they model repair, reflection, and accountability, they create conditions for trust.

Restorative practices do not eliminate conflict. They prevent it from becoming corrosive.

Emotional intelligence: Leading beyond logic

Governance is often framed as a purely rational exercise. In reality, emotions shape every decision, whether acknowledged or not.

Emotional intelligence in governance involves:

- Awareness of how decisions are received, not just intended

- Attention to relational dynamics in meetings and processes

- The ability to sit with discomfort without rushing to closure

Boards that lack emotional intelligence may interpret critique as threat, dissent as disloyalty, or emotion as unprofessional. This narrows the range of information available for decision-making and increases the likelihood of blind spots.

Emotionally intelligent boards expand the system's capacity to learn.

Governance that produces health

Healthy systems do not emerge from compliance alone. They emerge from cultures where people feel safe enough to tell the truth, skilled enough to repair harm, and supported enough to remain engaged through difficulty.

TREE provides a framework for that work.

It invites boards and teams to move beyond oversight toward stewardship, to see relational health not as ancillary to mission, but as essential to it.

Equity: Designing protection into systems

Equity is not a statement of values.

It is a design question.

Equity-centered governance asks:

- Who has influence over decisions?

- Whose knowledge is considered legitimate?

- Who absorbs risk when decisions fail?

Without intentional equity, governance structures often reproduce the very disparities organizations seek to address. Power concentrates. Marginalized voices are invited but not heeded. Accountability flows downward rather than outward.

Boards committed to equity examine not only outcomes, but process, how decisions are made and who they protect.

TREE as a shared commitment

In many organizations, staff are expected to embody trauma-informed, restorative, emotionally intelligent, and equity-centered practices, while boards remain distant from this work.

This division is unsustainable.

When staff lead with TREE but governance does not, misalignment deepens. Staff are asked to hold complexity without authority. Boards retain power without proximity.

TREE must be a shared commitment, one that shapes meeting norms, decision-making processes, conflict resolution, and accountability structures.

The Role of Community: RWERM as Structural Belonging

8

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY: RWERM AS STRUCTURAL BELONGING

Community is often described as the beneficiary of systems. RWERM insists that community is a co-designer of them.

Too many organizations claim community engagement while maintaining decision-making structures that remain closed, hierarchical, and insulated from lived experience. Participation is invited, but power is retained. Feedback is collected, but outcomes are predetermined. Belonging is performed, but not structured.

RWERM challenges this pattern by reframing belonging as a structural condition, not an interpersonal gesture.

From access to influence

RWERM distinguishes between access and influence.

Access allows people to attend meetings, respond to surveys, or participate in programs. Influence determines whether their knowledge shapes priorities, budgets, timelines, and outcomes.

Structural belonging requires that communities:

- Shape how problems are defined

- Influence which issues are prioritized

- Participate in designing solutions

- Share responsibility for action

Without influence, engagement becomes extractive. Communities are asked to give time, story, and trust without receiving power in return.

The six conditions of structural belonging

RWERM articulates six conditions that move systems from symbolic engagement to shared accountability.

01 Passionate invitation signals that participation is desired, not tolerated. It communicates care, clarity, and intention.

02 Radical welcome replaces suspicion with dignity. It challenges systems to receive people as they are, not as institutions wish them to be.

03 Authentic sense of belonging is evident when people feel safe enough to speak honestly, disagree openly, and remain engaged even when tension arises.

04 Co-created roles ensure participation is meaningful. People are not simply consulted; they are entrusted with responsibility and authority.

05 Prioritization of community-identified social issues ensures that systems address what matters most to those most impacted, not just what is fundable or convenient.

06 Individual and collective action translates belonging into movement. It connects shared understanding to shared responsibility.

Measuring belonging without flattening it

Belonging cannot be reduced to attendance counts or satisfaction scores. Ancestral Measurement Praxis insists on measuring belonging through patterns, not moments.

Key questions include:

- Who continues to engage after conflict or disappointment?

- Who steps into leadership roles over time?

- Who feels safe naming harm or disagreement?

- Who disengages quietly, and why?

Belonging is revealed in continuity, not enthusiasm. Systems that claim belonging but experience constant churn must interrogate their structures, not their communities.

Community knowledge as evidence

RWERM challenges dominant assumptions about expertise.

Community knowledge is often treated as anecdotal, emotional, or secondary to "objective" data. This hierarchy of knowledge reinforces power imbalances and undermines learning.

Structural belonging requires recognizing community knowledge as evidence, especially when it surfaces harm, contradiction, or unintended consequences.

When community insight is dismissed, systems lose access to early warning signals. When it is honored, systems become adaptive.

Accountability flows both ways

RWERM does not romanticize community participation. Shared responsibility includes shared accountability.

Structural belonging requires clarity about:

- Roles and expectations

- Decision-making authority

- Conflict resolution processes

- How disagreement is handled

This clarity protects both institutions and communities from misunderstanding, resentment, and burnout.

Belonging without accountability leads to chaos.

Accountability without belonging leads to harm.

RWERM insists on both.

Community as the measure, not the margin

When RWERM informs evaluation, community experience is no longer treated as supplemental context. It becomes a central indicator of system health.

This does not mean communities define success alone. It means success is co-defined, co-interpreted, and co-owned.

Systems that embrace this shift gain something metrics alone cannot provide: legitimacy.

Budgets, Calendars, and Decisions: Where Values Become Visible

9

BUDGETS, CALENDARS, AND DECISIONS: WHERE VALUES BECOME VISIBLE

Values are not revealed in mission statements. They are revealed in budgets, calendars, and decisions.

These are the everyday mechanisms through which power is exercised and priorities are enforced. Ancestral Measurement Praxis treats them not as administrative artifacts, but as primary sources of evidence about what an organization truly values.

Budgets as moral documents

Budgets are often described as technical tools, neutral instruments for allocating resources. In reality, budgets are moral documents. They tell a story about what is protected, what is postponed, and what is expendable.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks leaders and boards to examine budgets with different questions:

- What work is consistently funded and what is repeatedly deferred?

- Are care, repair, and relational labor resourced or assumed?

- Who absorbs the cost when funding is tight?

- What investments signal long-term stewardship versus short-term performance?

When dignity, repair, and community partnership are not resourced, they become optional. When they are optional, harm becomes predictable.

A budget that funds outcomes but not care is not neutral, it is instructional.

Calendars as truth-tellers

If budgets reveal values in theory, calendars reveal them in practice.

Calendars show:

- What leaders make time for

- What is rushed

- What is postponed indefinitely

- Who has access to decision-makers

Organizations often claim that culture, relationships, and healing matter, yet calendars tell a different story. Meetings focus on deliverables and deadlines. Time for reflection, repair, or community engagement is "added when possible," rather than protected.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis treats calendars as data.

When leaders consistently make time for:

- Listening

- Relationship-building

- Conflict resolution

- Reflection and learning

They signal that these activities are not ancillary, they are core to the work.

> **Decision-making as the site of accountability Decisions are where values become consequential.**

Who is involved, how information is weighed, and how dissent is handled all reveal the ethical posture of a system. Ancestral Measurement Praxis insists that decision-making processes themselves must be evaluated, not just outcomes.

Key questions include:

- Who is present when decisions are made?

- Whose knowledge carries weight?

- How is disagreement framed and addressed?

- What happens when harm is anticipated or named?

When disagreement is treated as misalignment rather than information, systems narrow their field of vision. When dissent is silenced in the name of unity, risk increases rather than decreases.

Healthy systems distinguish between disagreement and misalignment. They create space for challenge without punishment.

Conflict resolution as a leadership competency

Conflict is inevitable in systems that are doing meaningful work. Avoidance does not eliminate conflict, it displaces it.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis reframes conflict resolution as a leadership and governance competency. It asks whether organizations have:

- Clear pathways for naming harm

- Shared language for addressing tension

- Agreed-upon processes for repair

- Leadership willing to slow down when needed

When conflict resolution is absent or informal, harm accumulates quietly. When it is explicit and practiced, systems become more resilient.

Conflict handled well strengthens trust.

Conflict ignored weakens it.

Making the invisible visible

Budgets, calendars, and decisions often escape evaluation because they are seen as internal matters. Ancestral Measurement Praxis challenges this assumption
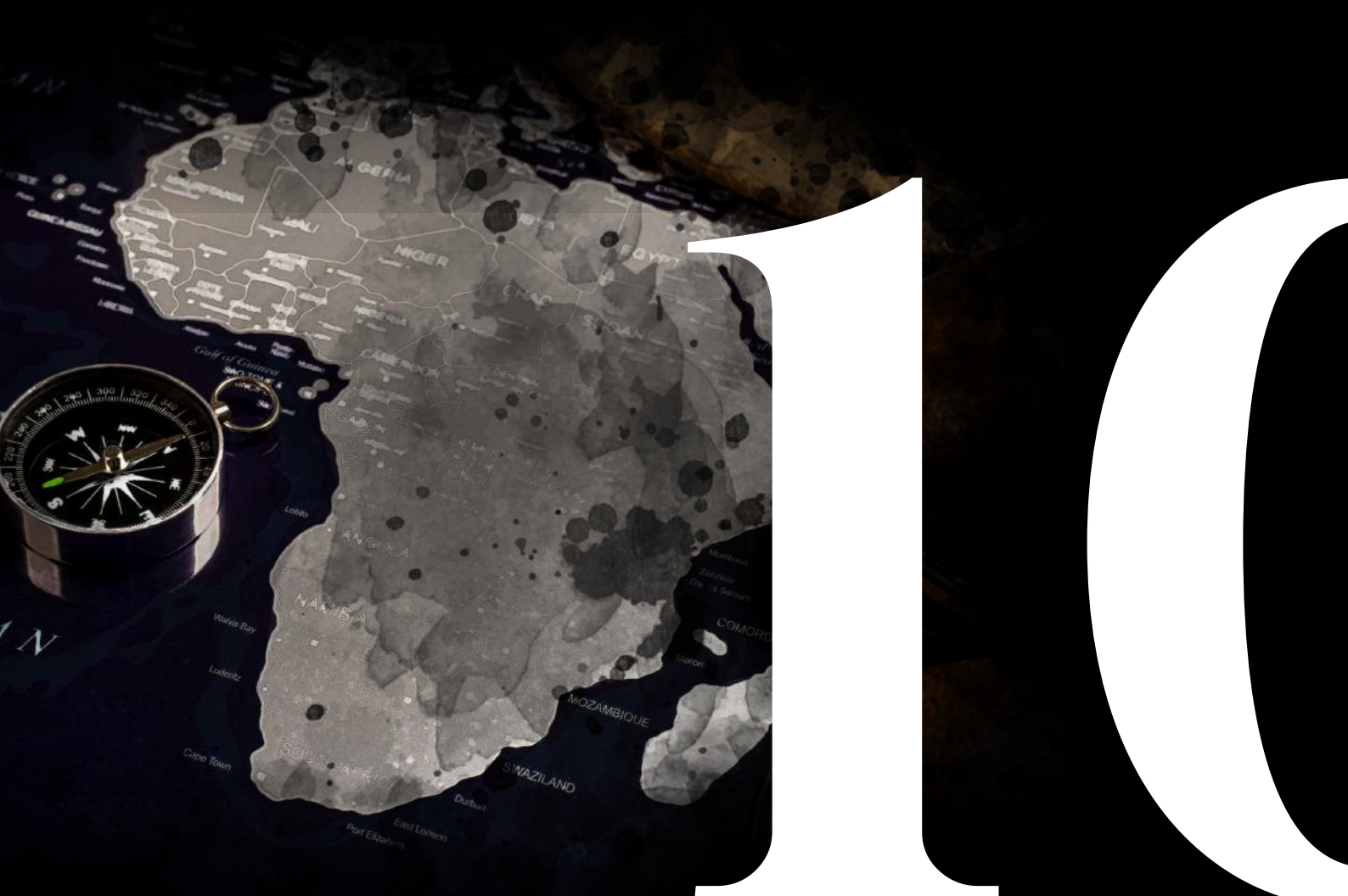
These sites are where:

- Values are enacted

- Power is exercised

- Harm is either interrupted or reinforced

By bringing them into the evaluative frame, organizations gain a clearer picture of their true priorities and the gap between intention and impact.
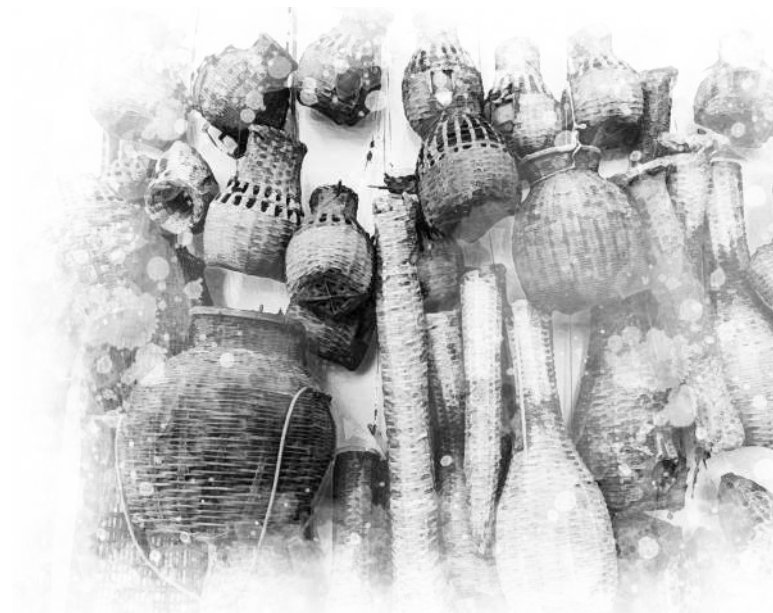
What Boards and Funders Must Do Differently

What Boards and Funders Must Do Differently

Boards and funders are often described as stewards of mission and resources. In practice, they are also stewards of culture, power, and consequence.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis requires boards and funders to move beyond a narrow conception of oversight toward a deeper form of responsibility, one that recognizes how governance choices shape what organizations prioritize, tolerate, and become.

This is not a call for more control.

It is a call for better questions, clearer accountability, and greater courage.

Move beyond compliance-only governance

Compliance is a baseline, not a destination. When boards equate effective governance with financial audits, legal adherence, and policy review alone, they leave critical dimensions of organizational health unexamined

Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks boards to expand their scope of inquiry to include:

- Culture and climate

- Staff and community well-being

- How harm is handled and repaired

- Whether values are operationalized or symbolic

This does not diminish fiduciary responsibility, it strengthens it. Organizations that ignore relational health expose themselves to greater risk, not less.

> ❝ *Ask different questions and stay with the answers*

Boards and funders powerfully shape behavior through the questions they ask. When those questions focus exclusively on outputs, timelines, and efficiency, organizations learn what matters.

Different questions produce different systems.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis encourages boards and funders to ask:

- What conditions made these outcomes possible?

- Who experienced strain or harm along the way?

- What repair was required and was it resourced?

- Who was protected by this decision, and who was exposed?

Equally important is the willingness to stay with the answers, even when they are uncomfortable or complex. Listening without rushing to fix or defend is itself a leadership practice.

Fund relationships, not just results

Many funders express commitment to equity, community engagement, and systems change, yet fund primarily short-term outcomes and deliverables. This creates misalignment.

Relational work requires time, trust, and continuity. It cannot be rushed without consequence.

> Ancestral Measurement Praxis calls on funders to:
>
> - Resource engagement, repair, and learning, not just implementation
>
> - Accept iterative progress rather than premature certainty
>
> - Value qualitative insight alongside quantitative data
>
> - Support organizations through complexity, not only success

Funding relationships rather than transactions signals seriousness about impact.

Share risk and responsibility

Too often, risk is transferred downward. Organizations and communities are expected to absorb uncertainty, experimentation, and public scrutiny, while boards and funders remain insulated.

Shared responsibility requires shared risk.

> This means:
>
> - Standing with organizations when harm is named, not withdrawing support
>
> - Viewing setbacks as information rather than failure
>
> - Resisting punitive responses to transparency

When boards and funders punish honesty, they incentivize silence. When they reward learning, they strengthen systems.

Model the culture you expect

Boards and funders are not external to culture they are central to it. How they conduct meetings, respond to critique, and handle disagreement sends powerful signals.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis asks boards and funders to model:

- Trauma-informed care in governance processes

- Restorative approaches to conflict

- Emotional intelligence in deliberation

- Equity in decision-making structures

This alignment between expectation and behavior builds trust and coherence across the system.

Stewardship over control

Ultimately, Ancestral Measurement Praxis reframes the role of boards and funders from controllers of performance to stewards of conditions.

Stewardship involves:

> - Protecting people as well as programs
>
> - Valuing continuity over optics
>
> - Measuring what produces life, not just results

This shift requires humility. It asks those with power to remain open to learning, to accept limits on certainty, and to recognize that the most important indicators of success are often relational and long-term.

Measuring What Produces Life: A Call to Leadership

11

Measuring What Produces Life: A Call to Leadership

Every system is producing something.

The question is not whether our organizations, institutions, and partnerships are generating outcomes, but what kind of life those outcomes make possible, and for whom.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis insists that leadership in this moment requires more than technical competence or compliance. It requires ethical courage, the willingness to look honestly at how power is exercised, how harm is handled, and how people experience the systems we steward.

When we know better, wanting better is not enough

Many leaders today know better. They understand that systems designed without care reproduce harm. They recognize that exclusion, burnout, and disengagement are not anomalies, they are signals.

> **But knowing better is not sufficient.**

Wanting better without changing how we measure, decide, and govern simply reproduces the status quo with better language.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis challenges leaders, boards, and funders to move beyond intention and into accountability, to align values with structures, and aspiration with practice.

Measuring what produces life

To measure what produces life is to ask different questions and accept different answers.

It means measuring:

- Whether people are treated with dignity
- Whether harm is named and repaired
- Whether belonging is sustained over time
- Whether power is shared responsibly
- Whether future generations are better positioned than the last

These measures are not soft. They are rigorous. They require attention, humility, and restraint. They demand that leaders resist the pressure to present tidy narratives when reality is complex.

They also require patience, because the most meaningful outcomes cannot be rushed.

Leadership as stewardship

Ancestral Measurement Praxis reframes leadership as stewardship rather than control.

> Stewardship asks:
>
> - What are we responsible for protecting?
> - What must be nurtured rather than optimized?
> - What should endure beyond our tenure?

This orientation shifts leadership away from performance toward responsibility. It recognizes that systems are inherited and bequeathed, not merely managed.

Refusing harm as the cost of doing business

One of the most dangerous assumptions in systems work is that harm is an acceptable byproduct of progress.

It is not.

> *Harm is information. Silence is a decision. Avoidance is a signal.*

Leaders who refuse to measure harm do not eliminate it, they displace it onto those with the least power to absorb it. Leaders who choose to see, name, and respond to harm create the conditions for trust, resilience, and legitimacy.

The invitation of this work

This concept paper is not an endpoint. It is an invitation.

An invitation to boards to govern with courage rather than distance.

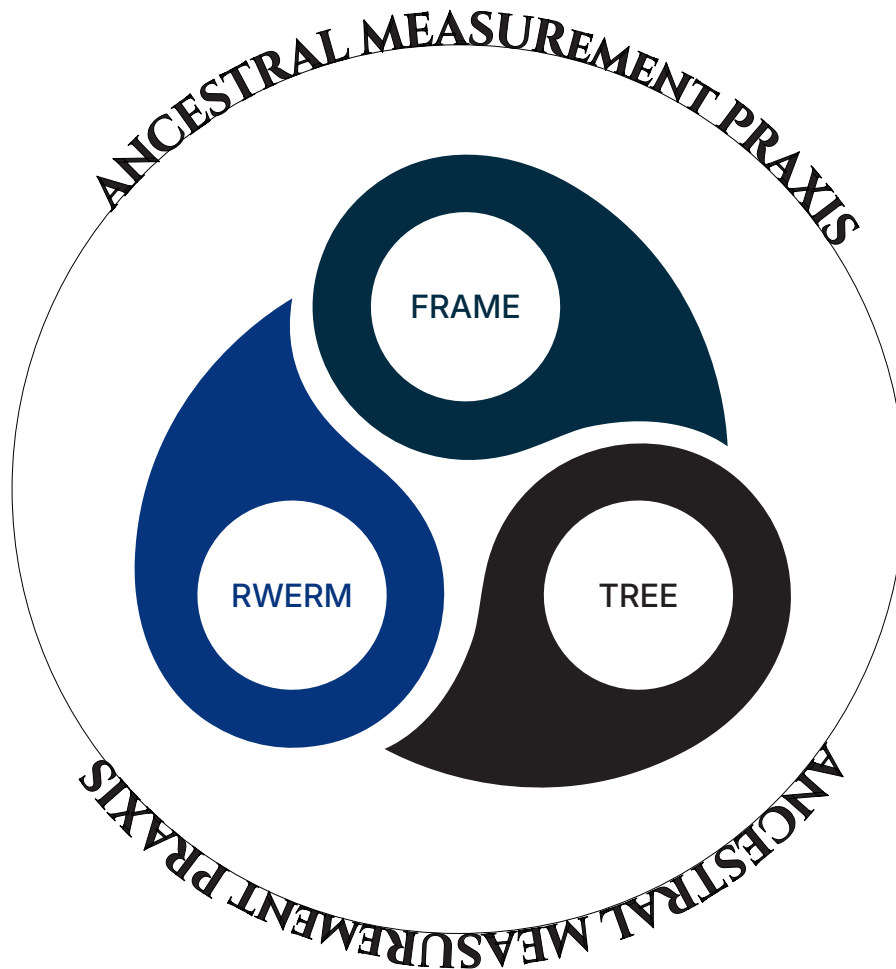An invitation to funders to resource relationships rather than extract results.

An invitation to leaders to align their internal operating systems with the futures they claim to want.

An invitation to systems to measure what produces life, not just what can be counted.

The future will be shaped not by the sophistication of our metrics, but by the integrity of our leadership.

When we know better and want better, we have a responsibility to be better, and to do better.

That responsibility begins with what we choose to measure.

ANCESTRAL MEASUREMENT PRAXIS

FRAME

RWERM

TREE

| ■ Foundation, Regulation, Alignment, Mindset, Energy | ■ Trauma Informed Care , Restorative Practices, Emotional Intelligence, Equity | ■ Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model |

An integrated system for leadership-based governance, belonging, and accountability

Integrated Praxis Framework

Ancestral Measurement Praxis functions as an outer evaluative and ethical lens, holding and interpreting three interconnected leadership frameworks: FRAME (internal leadership operating system), TREE (relational governance and culture), and RWERM (structural belonging and community engagement). Together, these models operate as an integrated system rather than discrete tools.

APPENDIX

Reflection Questions for Boards and Leaders

These questions are intended to support honest reflection, not defensiveness. They are designed for use in board meetings, retreats, leadership development, and facilitated conversations. They should be approached slowly, collectively, and with a willingness to sit with discomfort.

Measuring Harm and Healing

- Where might our systems be producing harm while still meeting stated goals or metrics?

- When harm occurs, how is it named, acknowledged, and addressed?

- Who is responsible for repair, and is that responsibility resourced and supported?

- What forms of harm are currently invisible in our measurement practices?

Dignity, Belonging, and Trust

- Do people experience dignity throughout their engagement with our organization, not only at entry points?

- Who feels a sense of belonging here, and who does not?

- Who stays engaged over time, and who disengages quietly?

- What signals do we send, intentionally or unintentionally, about who is valued and whose voice matters?

Power, Decision-Making, and Accountability

- Who holds decision-making power, and how transparent is that power?

- Whose knowledge is treated as credible when decisions are made?

- Who bears the cost when decisions fail or cause harm?

- How do we distinguish between disagreement and misalignment in leadership and governance spaces?

Leadership and Governance Responsibilities

- How do our internal leadership practices (FRAME) shape culture, behavior, and measurement?

- Are boards and senior leaders holding relational responsibility alongside staff, or delegating it downward?

- How do trauma-informed care, restorative practices, emotional intelligence, and equity (TREE) show up in governance, not just operations?

- What work are we asking staff or community members to hold that we are unwilling to hold ourselves?

Budgets, Calendars, and Priorities

- What do our budgets reveal about what we truly value and protect?

- What does our calendar tell us about our real priorities?

- Where are care, repair, and relationship-building funded and where are they assumed?

- What decisions are rushed that might require more time, reflection, or dialogue?

Measurement, Evaluation, and Integrity

- What are we measuring because it is easy or required, rather than because it matters?

- What would change if we measured dignity, safety, belonging, and repair as indicators of success?

- How do our evaluation practices reinforce or challenge existing power dynamics?

- In what ways might our measurement practices be shaping behavior in unintended ways?

Intergenerational Responsibility

- What are we building that will endure beyond this leadership tenure or funding cycle?

- How might future generations experience the systems we are stewarding today?

- What would it mean to lead with intergenerational accountability rather than

short-term performance?

- Would those who come after us say this work produced life?

Closing Reflection

- When we know better and want better, what must we do differently?
- What is one concrete change we are willing to make as a result of this reflection?

Suggested Uses of This Concept Paper

This concept paper is intended to be used as a reflective and practical resource for leaders, boards, funders, and system stewards. It is not a prescriptive manual or implementation guide. Its value lies in how it is engaged, discussed, and applied over time.

The following uses reflect ways this paper can support leadership, governance, and systems work without reducing the praxis to a checklist or compliance exercise.

Board Reflection and Governance Alignment

Boards may use this concept paper to:

- Ground conversations about values, culture, and accountability
- Examine how governance practices shape organizational climate and trust
- Reflect on how harm, disagreement, and repair are addressed at the board level
- Align oversight responsibilities with ethical stewardship rather than compliance alone
- Used in this way, the paper supports deeper governance inquiry beyond routine reporting.

Leadership Development and Orientation

This paper can serve as a foundational resource for:

- Executive onboarding and leadership transitions
- Leadership development programs and retreats
- Reflection on personal leadership practices and use of power

It reinforces the idea that measurement, care, and accountability are leadership responsibilities, not technical functions delegated elsewhere.

Facilitated Conversations and Retreats

- Organizations may pair this concept paper

with facilitated conversations to:

- Surface unexamined assumptions about success and impact
- Create shared language for discussing harm, repair, and trust
- Slow decision-making to allow for reflection and learning

Facilitation supports collective sense-making and reduces the risk of reactive or defensive engagement.

Board–Staff Alignment Conversations

- This paper may be used to support dialogue between boards and staff by:
- Clarifying shared responsibility for relational health and repair
- Examining where relational labor is held and how it is supported
- Naming tensions between values, expectations, and capacity

These conversations are most effective when approached with humility and openness rather than performance or justification.

Funder Learning and Partnership Conversations

Funders may use this concept paper to:

- Reflect on how funding structures shape behavior and priorities
- Examine the conditions under which outcomes are produced
- Explore how to support relationships, learning, and repair alongside results

In these contexts, the paper supports more aligned and responsible partnership rather than transactional funding.

Integration with Existing Frameworks and Practices

This concept paper is designed to be used alongside:

- FRAME as an internal operating system for leadership
- TREE as a model for relational governance and team culture
- RWERM as a framework for structural belonging and community engagement

Together, these frameworks provide a coherent approach to leadership, governance, community

partnership, and evaluation.

Ongoing Reference and Reflection

- This paper is not intended for one-time use. Organizations may return to it:

- During moments of conflict, transition, or uncertainty

- When revisiting strategy, evaluation, or governance practices

- As a shared reference point for ongoing learning and accountability

Its purpose is to support continuous reflection rather than definitive answers.

A note on use

The most meaningful use of this concept paper begins with curiosity rather than certainty. It is designed to prompt inquiry, invite dialogue, and support responsible leadership over time.

Handled with care, this paper becomes a tool for alignment, not enforcement; reflection, not performance; stewardship, not control.

Common Misuses and Warnings

What This Praxis Is Not and How It Can Be Harmed When Misapplied

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is not a neutral tool. It is a values-centered lens that carries ethical obligations. When adopted superficially or selectively, it can reproduce the very harms it seeks to interrupt.

The following misuses are not hypothetical. They are patterns that emerge when systems adopt relational language without changing structures, power, or accountability. Naming them explicitly is necessary to protect communities, staff, and the integrity of the work.

Using relational language without resourcing repair

One of the most common misuses of relational frameworks is the adoption of language without the investment required to sustain it.

Organizations may speak fluently about care, healing, belonging, and trauma-informed practice, while failing to:

- Allocate time for reflection, repair, and relationship-building

- Resource conflict resolution and restorative processes

- Adjust timelines or expectations when harm occurs

In these contexts, relational language becomes a performance rather than a practice. Staff and community members are encouraged to bring their full humanity into systems that are structurally unwilling to respond to it.

This is not relational leadership. It is extraction

When repair is not resourced, harm is not eliminated, it is deferred and displaced, often onto those with the least power to absorb it.

Measuring belonging without sharing power

Belonging cannot be measured authentically in systems where power remains centralized and unexamined.

A common misstep is to assess belonging through surveys, focus groups, or participation metrics while decision-making authority remains unchanged. Community members may be asked how included they feel, while having little influence over priorities, budgets, or outcomes.

This creates a false signal.

Belonging is not about presence alone. It is about influence, continuity, and shared responsibility. Measuring belonging without redistributing power turns evaluation into surveillance rather than accountability.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis requires that questions of belonging be paired with questions of authority, decision-making, and protection.

Treating Ancestral Measurement Praxis as an add-on instead of a lens

Another frequent misuse is to treat Ancestral Measurement Praxis as an additional component layered onto existing evaluation frameworks.

When positioned as:

- A supplemental indicator

- A qualitative appendix

- A "nice to have" alongside "traditional" metrics

its impact is neutralized.

This praxis is not additive. It is interpretive. It changes how all other data is understood. It asks leaders to reconsider what counts as success, what counts as failure, and what must be examined even when outcomes appear strong.

When treated as an add-on, it becomes symbolic.

When treated as a lens, it becomes transformative.

Expecting staff to hold care while governance remains extractive

Perhaps the most damaging misuse occurs when relational responsibility is delegated downward.

In many organizations, staff are expected to:

- Practice trauma-informed care

- Navigate conflict restoratively

- Hold emotional complexity and community pain

while boards and senior leadership remain distant from this work.

When governance structures continue to prioritize efficiency, risk avoidance, and compliance alone, staff are placed in an impossible position. They are asked to embody care without authority, to absorb harm without recourse, and to sustain relationships without structural support.

This is not resilience. It is institutionalized imbalance.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis requires that boards and funders hold relational responsibility alongside staff, not above it, and not apart from it.

When relational frameworks are used to avoid accountability

Relational language can also be misused to soften or deflect accountability.

In some cases, harm is acknowledged rhetorically but not addressed materially. Conversations replace action. Intent is emphasized over impact. The language of grace is invoked to avoid difficult decisions or necessary change.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis rejects this dynamic.

Care and accountability are not opposites. Repair requires both honesty and follow-through. Relational leadership does not mean avoiding consequence; it means ensuring that consequence is humane, proportionate, and oriented toward healing rather than punishment.

Why these warnings matter

These warnings are included not to discourage adoption, but to clarify responsibility.

They signal that:

- This work requires structural change, not just language change

- Integrity matters more than optics

- Community trust is fragile and must be protected

- Relational frameworks, when misapplied, can cause harm

Naming these risks demonstrates maturity of practice. It acknowledges that no framework is immune to misuse, and that ethical leadership requires ongoing reflection, restraint, and humility.

A note to leaders, boards, and funders

If any of these warnings feel familiar, the response is not defensiveness. It is inquiry.

The purpose of Ancestral Measurement Praxis is not to expose failure, but to create conditions where honesty, repair, and shared accountability are possible.

This requires leaders willing to ask:

- What are we asking others to hold that we are unwilling to hold ourselves?

- Where have we adopted language without changing structure?

- What harm might we be unintentionally perpetuating?

These questions are not indictments. They are invitations.

Handled with care, they become the foundation for systems that do more than perform impact, they produce life.

Suggested Board Resolution or Commitment Statement

The following resolution is offered as an optional governance tool for boards that wish to formalize their commitment to ethical stewardship, relational accountability, and intergenerational responsibility.

This resolution is not intended as a symbolic gesture. Its purpose is to anchor board practice, decision-making, oversight, and evaluation, in the values articulated throughout this concept paper. Boards are encouraged to revisit this commitment regularly and to treat it as a living orientation rather than a one-time action.

Sample Board Commitment Statement

Resolved, that the Board commits to measuring success in ways that reflect dignity, belonging, repair, and intergenerational responsibility.

The Board affirms that compliance alone is

insufficient, and that ethical stewardship requires attention to the conditions under which outcomes are produced.

The Board commits to asking how power is exercised, how harm is named and addressed, and how leadership and governance practices shape culture, trust, and continuity over time.

The Board further commits to supporting leadership, staff, and community partners in this work by resourcing care, reflection, learning, and repair as essential components of organizational effectiveness.

This commitment will be revisited as part of the Board's ongoing governance and evaluation practices.

Condensed version:

"Our board commits to measuring success in ways that reflect dignity, belonging, repair, and intergenerational responsibility..."

How to Engage Further

An Invitation, Not an Implementation Plan

This concept paper is not intended to be consumed once and set aside. It is designed to be engaged, revisited, and applied through reflection, dialogue, and practice.

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is not a checklist or a tool to be adopted mechanically. It is a lens that shapes how leaders think, govern, decide, and evaluate over time. Its value is realized through use in relationship with others, not in isolation.

The following are suggested ways leaders, boards, and institutions have engaged with this work to deepen accountability and alignment.

Use this concept paper in board retreats and governance conversations

Boards have used this paper as a shared reading to:

- Examine how values are operationalized in governance practices
- Reflect on culture, trust, and accountability at the board level
- Explore how harm, disagreement, and repair are handled in leadership spaces

When used in retreat settings, the paper provides a common language for discussing difficult questions that are often avoided in routine meetings.

Pair this work with facilitated conversations

Ancestral Measurement Praxis is most effective when explored collectively.

Facilitated conversations can help boards, leadership teams, and staff:

- Surface assumptions about success and impact
- Identify where relational work is unsupported or invisible
- Practice naming harm, disagreement, and misalignment constructively

Facilitation supports depth, slows reactive dynamics, and creates space for reflection that day-to-day operations often crowd out.

Integrate into leadership development and onboarding

Organizations have integrated this concept paper into leadership development by:

- Using it as a foundational orientation for new leaders
- Pairing it with reflection on personal leadership practices and power
- Connecting internal leadership development to organizational values and culture

This integration reinforces the idea that measurement, governance, and care are leadership responsibilities, not technical functions.

Use alongside FRAME, TREE, and RWERM practices

This concept paper is designed to function as part of an interconnected practice ecosystem.

When used alongside:

- FRAME (Foundation, Regulation, Alignment, Mindset, Energy)
- TREE (Trauma-informed care, Restorative practices, Emotional intelligence, Equity) RWERM (Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model)

leaders and organizations gain a coherent approach that links internal leadership conditions, relational governance, community belonging, and evaluative accountability.

A final word on engagement

This work does not require immediate adoption. It requires honest engagement.

The most meaningful use of this concept paper begins with questions, not conclusions. It invites leaders to slow down, reflect, and examine the signals their systems are sending today through decisions, priorities, and relationships.

Handled with care, this paper becomes more than a document. It becomes a shared reference point for building systems that heal, endure, and produce life.

About the Author

Dr. Hasshan Batts is a scholar-practitioner, systems leader, and community builder whose work sits at the intersection of leadership, governance, health equity, violence prevention, and community-engaged systems change.

Across more than two decades, Dr. Batts has worked with nonprofit organizations, public agencies, health systems, philanthropic institutions, and community-based partnerships to strengthen leadership, rebuild trust, and design systems that produce dignity, belonging, and continuity rather than extraction and harm. His work is grounded in both lived experience and applied scholarship, informed by close partnership with communities most impacted by inequity and institutional failure.

Dr. Batts is the originator of several integrated frameworks that guide his practice, including FRAME (Foundation, Regulation, Alignment, Mindset, Energy) as an internal operating system for leadership, TREE (Trauma-informed care, Restorative practices, Emotional intelligence, Equity) as a model for relational governance, and the Radical Welcome Engagement Restoration Model (RWERM), which establishes the structural conditions for authentic belonging and shared responsibility. Ancestral Measurement Praxis extends this body of work by naming how evaluation, accountability, and leadership ethics intersect across systems and generations.

His scholarship and practice emphasize that harm in systems is not inevitable, but unexamined harm is. He is known for helping boards, funders, and executive leaders interrogate how power, decision-making, and measurement practices shape culture, trust, and long-term impact, particularly in moments of complexity, transition, and uncertainty.

Dr. Batts holds a Doctor of Health Sciences and a Master of Social Work. He is committed to work that honors lineage, centers care, and treats leadership as stewardship rather than control.

This document is intended for boards, funders,
executive leaders, and system stewards
working in partnership with communities.