



ChangemakerXchange

Team Manifesto

HOW WE WANT TO WORK AND CREATE IMPACT TOGETHER

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Why We Exist

Over many years of experience, we have identified three key areas which we believe young social innovators, and the whole social impact sphere, suffer from and which we try to tackle through our work.

1. Lack of Support Community

Changemaking can be a lonely and unconventional path to take, which often comes without the understanding of peers. It is often not financially rewarding, and it can be difficult to sustain as a way of life.

2. Self-care and burnout

A substantial number of young changemakers or someone from their teams has been close to or experienced burnout. In fact, self-care is often neglected in the sector and awareness of the importance of wellbeing is low.

3. Heropreneur paradigm

Many changemakers fall victim to the seductive paradigm of the 'heropreneur' that glorifies the role of the founder or leader. This often comes at the expense of more collaborative approaches leading to a lack of cooperation in the field.

Lost impact potential

The three factors above lead to significant unfulfilled impact potential in the youth social impact sphere and in society as a whole.

Our Purpose

Our Purpose guides everything we do, it was developed and refined together with our community members and it contains both our mission and vision.

ChangemakerXchange is a global community providing safe, supportive, fun, and empowering spaces for changemakers.



We foster profound and lasting connections, nurture wellbeing, and enable peer-learning and meaningful collaborations. We envision a world where changemakers collectively create, sustain and scale positive change for people and planet.

Foreword / Principles

We are guided by a set of working principles that directly inform the way we work together with each other, with our community, and with other organisations.

1. We prioritise wellbeing

We are aware that creating lasting impact is as much the result of well-intended interventions of people as it is of their inner state of wellbeing. One cannot do well if one isn't well. Therefore, whenever we take decisions or plan new activities, we prioritise the wellbeing and the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of our team and our community members. We bring our 'whole selves' to work, aiming to communicate authentically and vulnerably. We have each other's back and support each other in overcoming weaknesses as much as we value each other's special talents and strengths.

2. We aim for beauty, simplicity, and excellence:

We know, through our experience of hosting and growing the community, that small details and personal touches make the difference. As a result, we go the extra mile and try to create experiences and pieces of work that look and feel beautiful, while at the same time create meaning and value for those that are exposed to them. We are all committed to the CXC purpose and this shows in our individual and collective performance. At the same time, we don't want to over-complicate things and we generally prefer to err on the side of simplicity, better to have too few rules than too many.

3. We are transparent and accountable:

We believe in the free flow of information as a pre-requisite of positive change and therefore commit to striving for full transparency in our communication amongst the team and within the community. We share knowledge and prioritise collective impact over individual egos. When in doubt, we communicate it. We also strive to create a strong culture of individual and organisational accountability, where every core team member feels a sense of ownership over the performance of CXC as an organisation.

4. We are community-led:

We are, first and foremost, of service to the ChangemakerXchange community and we take decisions *with*, not *for* the community. For strategic, legal, or practical reasons there will always be situations where the core team may be the final decision-maker. However, we involve the community as much as possible in the deliberation of options and directions we may take.



5. We are in permanent beta-mode:

We believe anyone creating positive systemic change needs to be aware of the complexity and unpredictability of the reality around them and the fact that this reality is in a state of perpetual flux. Hence, we commit to life-long learning, testing, innovating but also diligently evaluating what works and then constantly refining what we do.

6. We are generous:

We always assume the good intention of team members and community members. If in doubt, we rather give people a second chance. We see mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and grow. This commitment to generosity also applies to decision making within the team: if a colleague can live with a decision, they should agree to it.

7. We care for our planet:

We know we are in the midst of an existential environmental crisis and we are acutely aware of our own role to protect our planet. We strive to reduce our carbon emissions and lead by example in sustainable changemaking.

8. We don't take ourselves too seriously:

Our work is important and urgent, but life is both short and a miracle – at the right times, we make sure we play, chill, and have fun!

The above principles are directly linked to (and some derived from) the [ChangemakerXchange Community Values](#) which act as a compass and guide for all members.

This manifesto is an attempt to reconcile and integrate all our different values, principles, and policies and to create a workplace that is agile, empowering, and fulfilling. We agree to follow it and test, adapt, and develop it over time.

Ultimately, we aim to be set up as an organisation for which we truly love to work and equally enables us to have the maximum possible impact in the world and fulfil our theory of change.



1. Leadership and Team Size

There is no formal hierarchy in ChangemakerXchange and we are not led by one person or a group of people. Classic leadership functions are distributed among the whole team based on competency. Fluid hierarchies of recognition and skill may emerge and then dissolve. Leadership rather than supervision is required at all levels. Some colleagues are appointed as “Keepers” to keep the leadership functions and underlying values present and ensure their implementation. Currently, the following “Keepers” exist: These roles are assessed annually in our strategy retreats

1. Community Keeper: Nick
 2. Culture / Principles Keeper: Greta
 3. Feedback Keeper: to be filled
 4. Finance and Ops Keeper: Nick
 5. Fundraising Keeper: Matthias
 6. Partnerships Keeper: Nick
 7. Strategy Keeper: Matthias
 8. People Keeper: Nick
- a) Our work is often organized in projects and activities. They are led by project / activity leaders. All projects & activities and the respective activity leaders are listed in the activity overview.
- b) Out of legal necessity, some colleagues are publicly registered in the Commercial Register as managing directors and/or shareholders of our legal entity, ChangemakerXchange gGmbH.
- c) Every colleague is assigned to an Onboarding buddy who is given a full introduction to this manifesto and the cultural and technical aspects of working at CXC. While the team is a certain size (likely below 6) we do personal development collectively, acting as ‘personal development partners’ for each other and we have regular accountability and performance talks within the team.
- d) To ensure that this trust-based structure functions and that ChangemakerXchange remains an agile organization, we are aiming at a small core team size over the long term (\pm 12 FTEs)
- e) We strive to make sure that at least one third of the core team members are members of the ChangemakerXchange community.
- f) We make a conscious effort when hiring to ensure the core team reflects, as much as possible, the rich diversity of the global community.



2. Decision Making

- a) We aim for decentralized and agile decision making and to avoid decision bottlenecks whenever possible.

In general, each and every colleague can make each and every decision, with a few exceptions. The person driving an issue or who feels the sense of urgency owns the decision process, no other colleague has to be asked for permission before a decision can be made and for small decisions we have a culture of 'asking for forgiveness rather than permission. However, all colleagues that are significantly affected by a decision must be consulted.

It is important for colleagues to clearly define what they are seeking from the team when presenting a decision (is it a vote? Is it consent? Is the decision already taken?). Very important decisions, that affect all team members, should be voted on using the six levels of consensus, below.

1. Agreement without reservation = I/we agree and will support the implementation
2. Slight concerns = I/We agree and will support the implementation and have slight concerns
3. Abstention = I/We leave the decision to you, but we will support the implementation
4. Serious concerns = I/We have serious concerns, but we support the decision and implement.
5. Stepping Aside = I/We will not stand in your way, but we do not support the decision and will not support the implementation
6. Veto = hard no, no support, no implementation

Objections to decisions must come in the form of suggestions on how to alter the proposal to make it acceptable. Thus, making the discussion more solution focused.

All team members have a clear birds eye view on finances and know the flexibility within their own activities

- b) In particular, the following colleagues have to be consulted:

1. the responsible activity manager, for expenses above 5.000€.
2. the Strategy Keeper, for significant changes of direction in an activity.
3. the People Keeper, for (planned) hiring or changes within the team
4. the Finance and Ops Keeper, regarding the design of proposals either connected to business/social topics or with connected proposals or tight restrictions of funds, as well as for the design of partnerships or events that includes for-profit companies.

A "four-eyes principle" applies to the following procedures. They have to be checked and signed by the responsible activity manager and the Finance and Ops Keeper:



1. partnership agreements, cash requests and expense reports (for investing partners as well as pro-bono partners). In the case of summits hosts this applies to the hosts and the activity owner.
2. collaboration funds and other forms of financial support to community members
3. employment contracts
4. payments we receive from summit participants, members or third parties

The following decisions must be made and signed by the managing directors of the gGmbH:

1. expenses above 5.000€
2. investment of the gGmbH's assets
3. annual financial statements and tax returns

Decisions regarding the following topics are prepared and presented by the responsible Keepers and decided by the whole team:

1. team goals and annual strategy and objectives (Strategy Keeper)
 2. hiring and firing (People Keeper in collaboration with shareholders)
 3. culture within the team (Culture Keeper)
 4. modifications of this manifesto
5. In case of deadlock and strong conflicts the Culture Keeper proposes a decision-making process. If this process does not lead to a solution, the decision is made by the managing directors of the gGmbH.

3. Transparency

- a) All team members have access to all the organization's information except some sensitive HR data which are required to be confidential by law.
- b) All salaries are transparent and shared with all team members. Salaries are calculated according to the CXC salary scales depending on the individual's 'changemaking history'. Provided CXC is in strong financial health, salaries incrementally increase year on year without need for negotiation or discussion.
- c) The People Team and the Finance and Ops Keeper have full access to HR data, similarly (for legal reasons) the managing directors of the gGmbH.

4. How we communicate

- a) We endeavor to cultivate a space in which everybody is heard and listened to, in which every delicate topic and every 'elephant in the room' can and must be openly addressed.



We consider strong and trustful relationships and the ability to handle and address conflict to be the foundation of this culture

- b) We strive for feedback processes that are regular, timely, honest, and appreciative. Without them, we cannot grow, learn, develop trust, and reconcile how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us.
- c) We strive to create meetings in which everybody can participate and contribute as a whole person, in which high meta-reflective and conversational ability is normal, and in which we can work together in an efficient and focused manner. We 'self-facilitate', we sense the atmosphere of our own team meetings, speak up, and change things up if we feel they are not going well.
- d) The foundation of our feedback culture is a first and foremost, that it is regular and constant, immediate feedback. Harvesting, project debriefs, and meeting checkouts should also incorporate feedback when necessary. We are curious and not defensive when receiving feedback. When giving it, we focus on the behavior, not the person. We aim to expand this culture of open and constructive feedback to our community members, particularly hosts and facilitators.
- e) We strive to have a 360° feedback review at least once a year for the whole team.
- f) We make sure to update the whole team regularly on what is going on, we always over rather than under-communicate, without burdening team members with unnecessary information.
- g) At ChangemakerXchange, we know more than most the value of face to face gatherings, and whenever possible, the whole team convenes for an in-person gathering. Understanding this may not always be realistic, we try our best to ensure virtual gatherings are modelled on the same principles as our face to face gatherings.

5.Strategy & Impact

- a) The Strategy Keeper is responsible for ensuring that the whole team has a solid understanding of CXC's overall strategy, purpose and key strategic goals.
- b) New activities are discussed and evaluated by assessing how clearly they contribute to our purpose and theory of change.
- c) We have a community strategy group made up of highly engaged community members from around the world who give feedback to our strategy. They meet at least quarterly, either virtually or in person.
- d) At least once per year, we have a community co-creation summit in which we get insights into our strategy and take key decisions. We take these insights into our next strategic planning process.



- e) Upon closure of an activity, the project leader debriefs with whomever they deem necessary to check the attainment of the goals, evaluate it against our theory of change, draw lessons and discuss the quality of the teamwork. Learnings are documented and shared with the whole team. The culture keeper is responsible for raising the flag if that principle isn't upheld.
- f) We run an annual impact study and report with our community members and partners and incorporate the learnings into our strategy.

6. Fundraising and Partner Management

- a) Fundraising (and spending discipline) is a task for everyone in the team. We are, however, aware that different colleagues have different strengths and competencies and that each colleague can take over different tasks along the fundraising process. The Fundraising Keeper provides relevant documents, templates and overviews and supports colleagues with input and knowledge.
- b) The Fundraising Keeper makes sure fundraising and financial health of ChangemakerXchange is always a key priority and that everyone on the team transparently documents their conversations with potential and exiting funders.
- c) The Partnerships Keeper ensures that there is a clear Lead Responsible Person (LRP) for each of ChangemakerXchanges' partners. LRPs are responsible for the partnership, i.e. for maintaining the personal relationship and for reporting on time.
- d) The Partnerships keeper is responsible for ensuring all potential partnerships are evaluated before any contracts are signed as per our due diligence process and tool. Any major changes or incidents involving a partner (e.g. merger, public controversy) would trigger a re-evaluation of the partnership following the same process.
- e) We go the extra mile in partnership management and relationship building, whenever possible, treating partners as true co-creators and contributors and also giving them a sense of ownership of the work and a real lived experience of the ChangemakerXchange values in action.

7. Financial, Capacity and Competency Planning

- a) At least four times a year, the Finance and Ops Keeper provides the team with an overview of the status quo and projection of the organization's revenues and expenditures.
- b) The Finance and Ops Keeper ensures all team members have a strong bird's eye perspective on CXC finances and are empowered to take their own financial decision.
- c) The People Keeper regularly collects information about the colleagues' current tasks, roles and capacities and regularly updates the whole team on the activity overview.



- d) The People Keeper ensures that the whole team has an overview to which grants and funding sources all of our time is charged.

8. HR Processes

- a) Thorough onboarding is absolutely critical for a self-organized team like CXC. The People Keeper is responsible for regular HR processes and to ensure that a structured technical and cultural onboarding process is followed for new core team members.
- b) Hiring of new colleagues: The small team size and the trust-based culture make it essential that each colleague feels comfortable with new colleagues. Hence, we design hiring processes as inclusively as possible. The People keeper develops hiring guidelines that ensure a “fit” with this manifesto and coordinates hiring processes along the following steps:
1. A colleague approaches the People keeper with a need or proposal for a new hire.
 2. The colleague or the People Team consult with the whole team, which appoints a “Hiring Champion” (HC).
 3. Every core team member can interview the candidate if desired. The minimal number of inter-viewers is three: one interview conducted by the HC, one by another colleague (focus on tasks and area of responsibility / focus on team-fit/culture) and one by a community member (the latter two interviews can be combined in one). The candidate can only be hired if nobody expresses reservations. If reservations cannot be overcome, the disagreement will be resolved through the conflict resolution process. If we feel the conflict resolution process doesn't remove the reservations, we do not hire the person. Whenever the team is stuck between two equally desirable candidates and cannot come to a decision a majority vote decides.
 4. If the candidate is approved, we have an open and honest discussion with them about their changemaking history and come to a collective agreement based on our salary scales. contractual arrangement is prepared and co-signed by the Finance and Ops Keeper.
- c) Letting go of colleagues: In general, each colleague is obligated to address important failures and disagreements through our feedback processes. If the situation doesn't improve, we follow the following steps:
1. Conflicts need to be resolved through the conflict resolution process.
 2. If the conflict resolution process is not producing a solution, the People Keeper in consultation with the shareholders decides on further steps: mediator, coach or layoff. If the People Keeper thinks that a layoff is the only option left, they call for a vote amongst the team. The whole team (not including the person in question) then decides on the case based on a majority vote (51%). Team members have the right to delegate their voting right to the People Keeper.



3. If the People Keeper and shareholders decide to lay off the colleague, they have an honest and respectful separation talk with the colleague.
4. The signature for the legal layoff has to be provided by a managing director of the gGmbH.
5. The People Keeper informs the whole team and supports the affected colleague with next steps, including how they would prefer to communicate this with our stakeholders and/or the public.
6. As a general principle, offboarding should be given the same level of thoroughness and care as onboarding and we aim to make the experience empowering for departing employees. The People Keeper is also responsible for offboarding.

9. Conflict Resolution

- a) In case of conflicts we apply a predefined conflict resolution process.
- b) This process can be applied to any kind of conflict: within the whole team or project teams, subject matter or procedural disagreements, objections against new hires, interpersonal conflicts, etc.
- c) The conflict resolution process consists of the following steps:
 1. The parties sit together and try to sort it out privately. The initiator has to make a clear request (not a judgement, not a demand) and the other person has to respond clearly to the request (with a “yes”, a “no” or a counterproposal).
 2. If they cannot find a solution agreeable to both, they nominate a colleague they both trust to act as a mediator (whereas, the colleague can decline to be a mediator). The colleague supports the parties in finding agreement but cannot impose a resolution.
 3. If mediation fails, the whole team is convened. The group’s role, again, is to listen and help shape agreement. It cannot force a decision, but usually carries enough moral weight for matters to come to a conclusion.
 4. In the case of this being an HR related (hiring/firing) conflict in an ultimate step the People Keeper can be called into the group to add to the group’s moral weight or to make a final decision.
 5. As the initiator of a dialog about conflict, using the four steps of nonviolent communication can be helpful, because it allows people to be less defensive and more open to critique.
 6. No conflict resolution may lead to a result which creates unacceptable legal or financial risk for the gGmbH itself and/or the legally liable managing directors of the gGmbH. In this case they can veto the result.



10. Self Development

1. We commit to periodically testing core team's happiness with CXC and to tackling the root of any 'wellbeing at work' issues.
2. As long as CXC is in strong financial health, we have a dedicated budget available for core team self-development.

11. Presentation of This Manifesto to the Public

- a) We are proud of our way of working and take any opportunities and consciously stand for a new way of organizing in this manifesto. Consequently, we do not focus on titles and hierarchical structures. Specific responsibilities and the individual strengths of every colleague are more important.
- b) We communicate this publicly, e.g. by not mentioning titles on business cards, by listing colleagues according to their responsibilities instead of titles on our website and by using public opportunities to present our organizational philosophy.
- c) We refer to CXC staff as "Core team members" and we do not have job titles.