What is Cross-Cultural Engagement?

It is a specific type of community-based engagement where there is active partnering and relationship development with citizens whose knowledge, culture, faith or economic status are very different from our own. The purpose is to address a social need, create opportunities that are more creative or simply build relationships that are satisfying and provide insight and personal growth to all. (Hassel and Holland)

Principles

- Uses participatory strategies
- Seeks two-way partnerships where there is reciprocity, authentic relationship development
- Involves mutual respect for the strengths of each party
- Means giving up control
- Integrates discovery, learning, and engagement in a seamless way
- Brings together multiple worldviews around an issue or problem
- Involves a role shift from expert to co-learner
- Trust and relationships between individuals and organizations are built on sincere commitment

To do this effectively we must:

1) Recognize our own belief systems and ideology without becoming defensive

2) Demonstrate humility in not trying to control agendas and decisions but be assertive

3) Step into listening, learning and reasoning within an entirely different worldview

At Gitana we believe that authentic cross-cultural engagement can transform America!

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