

THE TROPMAN REPORT

2022



THE FORBES FUNDS

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Letter from the CEO

Today, the Nonprofit Sector is challenged by a myriad of internal and external locus of controls. Social isolation because of Covid-19 and its various strains has stifled our ability to anticipate what's next. The advent of the virus has further stretched the resiliency of the region's ability to restore hope and provide direction. Families and communities need help to better navigate the unstable systems at play, while we shift to meet the needs of people, institutions, businesses, and the region.

Building new approaches that promote self-sufficiency through self-actualization is paramount. Creating new and vibrant ways to promote more agile and interactive responses to the stressors and shocks affecting our region is a matter of great importance. Community Cohesion will require building new and different relationships that bring diverse and unique experiences to the table for consideration. No one approach can eliminate the challenges we face. Over the next 28 years, the world must confront:

- Rental and Mortgage Moratoriums
- Political Division
- Armed Civil Unrest
- Covid-19 Recovery Plans
- Racial Equity
- Income Inequality
- AI and Machine Learning
- Medicare Potential Collapse
- Climate Change
- US Population Shift
- Dead Oceans
- 70% of the Population Living in the Urban Corridor
- 40% of Work Being Automated

Despite the evidence that we need to evolve as a sector to resolve social phenomena from a more cross-sectoral approach, the ability to strategically collaborate seems stifled by adhering to traditional practices while the existing environment is calling upon us to modify.

Change moves at the speed of trust. Traditional approaches to solving today's issues have provided us with significant evidence of emerging practices that show promise. Shifting our lens to better incorporate transformational leadership is warranted. Shifting from Transactional to Transformational Leadership requires recalibrating how we see problems, solutions, partners, accountability, and systemic solutions.

Nora Bateson's work in Warm Data Labs focuses on "Transcontextualization." She highlights the need to become comfortable with not knowing while embracing social cohesion to problem solve. Dr. Barry Kerzin believes that our ability to promote systemic change involves healing first. A scar heals and protects the body. Over time, the scar disappears; however, the mind requires different supports to heal.

We cannot fully shift to address the magnitude of challenges before us, if we cannot come together fully present, vulnerable, and healed. What is required from us is to promote change that produces rapid prototyping and transforms our ability to thrive as we approach a new human services tsunami.

With gratitude,

Fred Brown



Reinventing the Tropman Report

Hannah Karolak, Ph.D.

The Forbes Funds

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT?

Beginning in 2020, the Forbes Funds' department of Learning & Education began conversations with local sector stakeholders to discuss the possible relaunch of the *Tropman Report*. After many conversations, meetings, formal and informal discussions, the Forbes Funds worked with partners to develop and publish a new approach to the report that was responsive to the current state of the sector. The 2022 *Tropman Report* is the first issue covering what we expect to see based on a long history of sector- and/or place-based nonprofit work.

The *Tropman Report* identifies and catalogues pressing challenges facing the sector and gives space for creative responses to these pressing issues. While a number of organizations have published resources and data that assist nonprofit leaders in navigating the challenges of the sector, including the Pittsburgh Equity Report, the Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania, and the Pittsburgh Foundations Center for Philanthropy, the goal of this report is to uncover opportunities for generating collaborative responses from local institutions and leaders in the Nonprofit Sector. The *Tropman Report* fills this gap in creative, collaborative response by illuminating grounded strategies, thought-pieces, research articles, and case studies to current challenges in collaboration with local research institutions from the Greater Pittsburgh region, including the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University, the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations(PANO), the RAND Corporation, and Community Foundation for the Alleghenies.

The *Tropman Report* provides an introductory overview of the challenges facing the Nonprofit Sector in Western Pennsylvania. The overview provides a snapshot of the sector and highlights emerging challenges which have characterized it in recent years. This newly reinvented periodical builds upon previous writings established in the 2008 *Tropman Report*, particularly those related to the overall positive impact of the nonprofit sector on Pittsburgh's regional economy. Such findings are evident in the increase of nonprofit activity and growth of the sector since 2008.

The research presented in this newly launched *Tropman Report* seeks to address these emerging demands. While the changing dynamics of regional, national, and global markets for public goods and services fluctuate with economic demands, such pressures provide opportunities for collaborative efforts to emerge between nonprofit organizations and entities in other sectors, such as universities, public sector, and private entities. Collaborative efforts cultivate a culture of responsibility which meet the missions of nonprofits while reminding public, private, and educational institutions of their social responsibilities. In this sense, the pressures placed on both nonprofits and their philanthropic supporters might be lessened by making more creative and better use of present resources.

The 2022 *Tropman Report* has three overall goals: 1. Create a yearly snapshot of Western Pennsylvania's Nonprofit Sector and serve as a lens through which professionals can track emerging sector needs/issues; 2. Provide accessible, high-quality capacity building information for nonprofit leaders; and 3. Serve as a vetted resource for local and global partners.

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

The Nonprofit Sector plays a critical role in the social, economic, physical, and mental health of communities across the United States. In Western Pennsylvania, the Nonprofit Sector plays a significant role in organizing publics, advocating for policy change at local, state, and federal levels, and sustains the overall health of our region.

According to the National Council of Nonprofits (2020) and PANO, there were 49,632 Pennsylvania nonprofits registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 2016, with over 800,000 individual employees. Likewise, Pennsylvania nonprofits reported earnings of approximately \$116.69 million with \$109.92 million in collective expenses, while only receiving \$18.698 million in contributions from outside donors. Although these numbers paint a positive picture of the growth and health of the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Sector from 2008 to 2016, it must be acknowledged that the size of the sector combined with the Covid-19 Pandemic and numerous socioeconomic and racial crises impose new dual-demands on nonprofits in terms of expectations from the philanthropic foundations which fund them and the stakeholders whom they serve.

The operations of the Western Pennsylvania Nonprofit sector can be subdivided into 26 discrete areas of focus, according to the National Taxonomy for Exempt Entities, established by the IRS and National Center for Charitable Statistics (The Pittsburgh Foundation, 2020). While these areas of focus include operations and services ranging anywhere from “Arts, Culture, and the Humanities” to “Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition,” “Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy,” and “Science and Technology,” the Pittsburgh Foundation has frequently grouped these areas of focus together under five broader categories, which function at various scales: 1. Grassroots Organizations, which are typically small, staffed by volunteers, and work in a very local context making less than \$250 thousand annually; 2. Anchor Institutions based on the settlement house model of the twentieth century and offer multiple services to residents of a particular community; 3. Safety Net Organizations that are fully staffed and of critical importance to the low-income and uninsured communities they serve; 4. Economic Engine Organizations headquartered near the seats of government that focus primarily on advocacy, policy, and the development of various regulations that impact large segments of the public; and 5. International Aid and Development Organizations that provide disaster relief and developmental aid for cultural exchange at the international level. It must also be acknowledged that each of these categories operate within various contexts and make particular demands on funding organizations depending on their contexts, amount of financial and human resources, and external pressures.

According to the statistics presented by Foundation Center (2015), 6,350 foundations in Western Pennsylvania provided over \$1.6 billion in total contributions to sector nonprofits in 2015. Similarly, Foundation Center (2018) reported 2,288 foundations awarded 23,426 grants to nonprofits in the Western Pennsylvania Nonprofit sector, totaling to \$852.8 million in funds (Table 1). Although this data is still being collected, Foundation Center has organized the giving priorities of these foundations into 17 discrete service categories, with the top categories in descending order being as follows: 1. Education, totaling about \$208 million from 5,823 grants; 2. Nonprofits Specializing in Community and Economic Development, totaling \$148.3 million from 1,703 grants; 3. Health Related Nonprofits, which received \$146.7 million from 3,406 grants; 4. Nonprofits in Human Services, which received \$114 million from across 5,002 grants; and 5. Nonprofits Working with Environment and Animals, receiving \$92.1 million dollars from 1,709 grants.

The support strategy of these contributions, and how they were primarily spent, reflect common concerns of nonprofits since the 2008 financial crisis, including, but not limited to: 1. General support for operations, activities, and events which spread and fulfill the nonprofit’s missions; 2. Development of programming for sustaining the functions of the nonprofit; and 3. Need for capital and organizational infrastructures which help in achieving nonprofit missions.

Table 1
Top Service Categories

Service	Contributions	# of Grants
Education	\$208 million	5,823
Community/Econ. Dev.	\$148.3 million	1,703
Health	\$146.7 million	3,406
Human Services	\$114 million	5,002
Environment/Animals	\$92.1 million	1,709

Likewise, the general populations served by nonprofits receiving these funds can be grouped into 15 categories, with most funding going towards serving populations of: 1. Economically Disadvantaged (\$179.3 million), 2. Children and Youth (\$138.2 million), 3. People with Disabilities (\$48.3 million), 4. Religious Groups (\$44.3 million), and 5. Women and Girls (\$23.9 million). While these categories may have significant overlap in funding received, the ongoing pressure to resource funding and collective responses remain.

MOVING FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

While nonprofits vary dramatically in size and mission, the significance of collaboration between nonprofits of different varieties remains central for the survival of the Western Pennsylvania Nonprofit Sector. As the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance has argued, the challenges of scaling with digital technologies and responding to the pressures of a global marketplace strain the operational capacities of nonprofits (Pittsburgh Foundation, 2020).

Such opportunities to increase the importance of our sector's work require philanthropic foundations and nonprofit organizations to take transformative steps that respond to the current historical moment in a pragmatic way while continuing to honor their mission, vision, and interests of their stakeholders. While collaborative efforts are not uncommon within the sector, the need for generating innovative responses to mounting global, economic, and technological pressures remains and demands strategies for collectively responding to these new conditions (Xu, 2020).

Collaboration and communication occupy a primary place in generating the collective resilience of the sector and, further, the economy of Western Pennsylvania. The following four transformational practices illuminate a pathway for sector leaders and stakeholders alike:

- MANAGING increasingly complex stakeholder relations and the pressures they generate;
- SUPPORTING innovators and early adopters of collaboration;
- NAVIGATING professionalism so that professionals have greater career mobility; and
- EMPOWERING nonprofits in their ability to pivot and innovate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The challenges facing the local and global Nonprofit Sector have clearly demonstrated a need for iterative, agile, and collaborative responses to the mounting socioeconomic pressures of the current historical moment. As a sector, nonprofit leaders demonstrate the capacity to be resilient in the face of crises.

The Forbes Funds has a nearly 40-year history of advancing the well-being of our region by helping human services and community-based nonprofits build their management capacity and increase the impact of their mission work. We support nonprofits both as individual organizations and as a unified coalition of leaders, funders, and advocates working collaboratively across Western Pennsylvania.

By encouraging collaboration within and beyond our work, we aim to touch much of the nonprofit sector over a three-year period, formulating a nonprofit ecosystem that is becoming more aligned with the Social Determinants of Health and aware of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Through this alignment, the Forbes Funds can better assess gaps in the nonprofit ecosystem and target investments strategically within the sector through a regenerative framework.

Beyond grantmaking, the Forbes Funds' resources are intended to be catalytic. Over the past 46 months we have adopted a new partnership framework with grantees and see them as strategic partners; this has allowed us to increase the Forbes Funds' grant-making matrix over the past four years by 400%, on average, year after year.

Our focus today is in cultivating transformational leaders that can rapidly prototype community-based responses at the grassroots level. Our commitment to community engagement, co-creation, and collaboration are the fundamental values of our work, and we hope that the newly re-invented *Tropman Report* will further empower that work.

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Beyond the Status Quo: Encouraging Innovation in Honor of Elmer J. Tropman

Jessica Mann, Ph.D.

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From 2002 to 2008 and again in 2012, the Forbes Funds published a series of articles on the Nonprofit Sector, and referred to the compiled works as the *Tropman Reports*, named in honor of its founder, Elmer J. Tropman. Elmer was a charity executive who was deeply attuned to the stresses and strains of the passion-driven Nonprofit Sector, convening individuals across the region to promote the effective functioning of community-based organizations and nonprofits. He understood the need to examine successes as well as failures to make the best business decisions to ensure organizational sustainability and appropriately serve communities and clients alike. James Denova (2001), second executive director of the Forbes Funds, described this rare ability by stating, “[He] could cut through complicated situations and see a clear, strategic course of action... He was a student of history in order to plan for the future” (p. xiv). This understanding of organizational and governmental relations, combined with his passion for public service and commitment to the people and communities he was a part of, is not only what helped to cultivate his original vision for the Forbes Funds, but it is what continues to be the priority of the organization today.

While we are nearing the 30th anniversary of Elmer’s passing, his legacy is certainly living on through the Forbes Funds and, subsequently, the resurgence of the *Tropman Report*. At a 1959 United Community Council meeting, Elmer argued that we need to push past the “status quo” and “conventional wisdom.” While the stability of conventional wisdom exists, Elmer recognized that as time and contexts change, often the lessons learned from conventional wisdom no longer apply as they once did. In this sense, Elmer (2001) challenged professionals to recognize the “wisdom of the past” while simultaneously asking themselves, “Does the planning pattern of the past fit the problems of the present?” (p. 93). The *Tropman Report* honors Elmer’s positionality as a thought leader, elevating the voices of sector professionals and researchers alike to understand our current regional context and to offer guidance for navigating upcoming challenges and opportunities across the field, while still honoring the conventional wisdom we have collectively gathered. It has been an honor to serve as the inaugural Editor-in-Chief of the report, working with the editorial board, the Forbes Funds, and local scholars and practitioners alike to bring you a collection of articles that grapple with the myriad challenges facing Western Pennsylvania’s Nonprofit Sector. It is my hope that these pieces will help readers to strategize, and turn challenges into opportunities for growth and development throughout the region and beyond.

ISSUE OVERVIEW

This year’s report has been broken into three sections: Insights for Partnerships & Process, Research Spotlight, and Anchoring Our Understanding. Comprehensively, these sections allow readers to understand, from the perspective of diverse stakeholders, the status of the region as it relates to the Nonprofit Sector, community-based issues, and timely research.

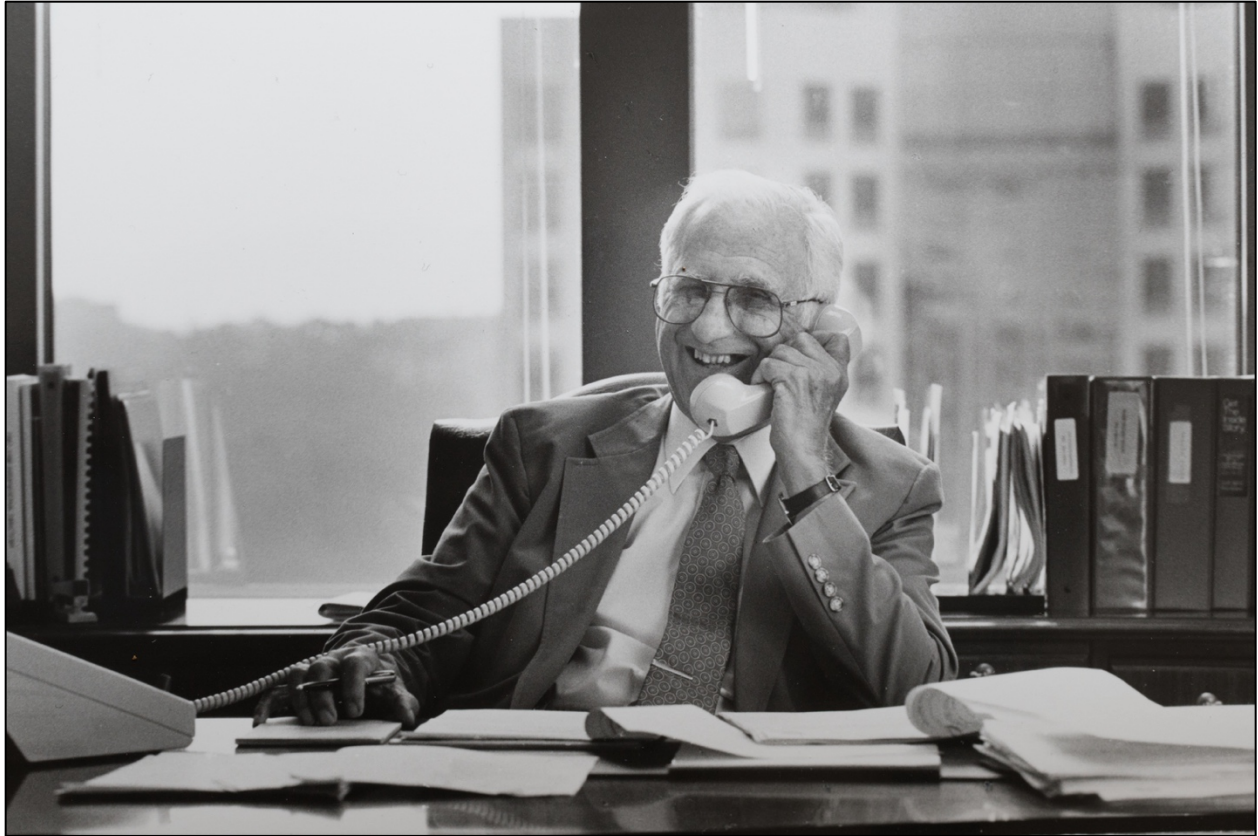


FIGURE 1. *Elmer J. Tropman. Image courtesy of the Forbes Funds.*

Insights for Partnerships & Process

The first section of this year's report offers insight into lessons learned from community-based collaborations. Chad Dorn and Laura Johns share their experiences in Greater Hazelwood. Jeffery Shook, Hollen Tillman, Tiffany Sizemore, Kara Dempsey, and Tammy Hughes discuss strategies for improving the public defense system. Tillman and Shook, this time with Christina Heurta, Daisia Williams, and Rafael Engel, analyze perceptions of human service organization leaders to raising the minimum wage. Craig Maier makes the case for social sector leadership coaching, and Daniel Casebeer, Melissa Tamburrino, and Kayleen Pontoriero discuss research on trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning. Finally, Angie Shirey and Christy Stuber offer suggestions for decreasing burnout among nonprofit leaders post-pandemic.

Research Spotlight

Under the leadership of Joylette L. Portlock, Sustainable Pittsburgh has implemented the DISCOVER initiative to develop an inclusive, data-informed framework for measuring progress towards sustainability in the region. This collaborative research agenda, framed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, formally began in 2019. In this section, Portlock and her team, including Allison Walker, Jason Beery, Robert Gradeck, Alexandra Hiniker, Hannah Karolak, Lydia Morin, Savita Mulapudi Narasimhan, Ricardo Williams, and Scott Wolovich, share their initial findings.

Anchoring Our Understanding

While the pieces in the Insights in Partnerships & Process section grapple with hyperlocal concerns, our issue framing piece by John Tropman and James A. Blackburn, “Accountability for the Nonprofit Sector: It’s Time for a Hard Look,” examines flaws within the sector from a national perspective, scrutinizing the financial models of organizations and charging sector leaders with a more transparent process for raising, distributing, and investing funds.

BEYOND THE STATUS QUO

While no single issue of the *Tropman Report* could cover all of the nuances related to the opportunities and challenges that exist within the Nonprofit Sector in Western Pennsylvania, the work of this issue’s authors offers substantial insight into our current context, and challenges readers to examine their role within sustaining and enhancing the important work of the field. The findings shared, lessons learned, and the charges for change demonstrate the excellent work being done in the region and offer hope for institutions, agencies, and communities alike.

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Strengthening Community Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Greater Hazelwood

Chad Dorn, Ph.D.
Laura Johns, Ph.D.
Leading to Movement

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the Greater Hazelwood community has consistently changed over the years. Hazelnut trees, for which the community is named, forested the river banks until replaced by steel-making equipment. By the nineteenth century, the location was a key site for Pittsburgh's steel-making industry, and when that boom faded in the latter half of the twentieth century, the LTV Steel Company coke plant that had set up shop closed in 1997. In the decades following the shuttering of the industrial plant, local businesses struggled, and many closed. The neighborhood's economic decline resulted in pockets of urban blight and reduced services for residents. The public school district transferred students to schools outside of their community and the buildings where they attended classes were abandoned. Despite these corrosive circumstances, core elements of the community remain resilient.

In 2002, the Almono Limited Partnership, which consists of the Heinz Endowments, R.K. Mellon Foundation, and the Benedum Foundation, purchased the 178-acre former industrial site now known as Hazelwood Green, with the goal of changing the landscape again by revitalizing it and the surrounding community. The riverfront parcel of land is in close proximity to downtown Pittsburgh and the city's world-class universities, presenting an opportunity to "transform the Industrial Age relic into a hub of the region's innovative economy, a center for research, robotics and other advanced technologies built to sustainable design standards on the City of Pittsburgh's last great brownfield" (Frazer, 2017, p. 9). Physical changes to the site are now apparent. The first phases of construction to renovate the Mill 19 building are complete, and the Roundhouse that once serviced rail cars has been transformed into an Innovation Hub. Walls that used to restrict community access no longer cordon off the site from the neighborhood, and roads and bike paths invite people to enter the property. Although the changes to the site are exciting, community residents need affordable housing and access to childcare, healthcare, and employment services. The group of foundation partners are committed to expanding the revitalization occurring on the site to the surrounding Greater Hazelwood community and to ensure residents benefit from the changes.

Community leaders and residents deserve the credit for the changes they have fought for in their community. With the strategic support from philanthropic partners, the community is working to address housing, environmental concerns, the revitalizations of its business district, and resident well-being. Together they have renovated key buildings, kept the local library, established a county-funded family support center and a charter school, and welcomed a vibrant non-profit community. Organizations working in the community have banded together to establish the Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative (GHCC) that works collectively to align resources to improve outcomes identified by community residents. In 2019, the GHCC worked with community residents, organizations, and Pittsburgh City Planning to articulate a vision for their community and insist "for development

to happen through us and with us. Our plan is re-development, putting people first while putting everything else in the right place at the right time” (Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative & Pittsburgh City Planning, 2019).

Change will continue to be a constant in the neighborhood as the Hazelwood Green site is further developed and new investors enter the community. As the neighborhood plan is realized, so will greater community engagement. The following case study describes the strategy that was formed and implemented to support the Learning Team at the Heinz Endowments, a philanthropic organization with an ongoing commitment to strengthen neighborhood structures that support children and families. The intention behind the philanthropic strategy developed here is to support community-driven changes and work to ensure that residents and their identified needs are prioritized. This case study highlights the frameworks used to guide the implementation of this type of philanthropic strategy that involves integrating many different voices and needs, as well as revealing the evolution of the strategy and the lessons learned along the way.

MAKING A GREATER HAZELWOOD

In 2018, the Learning Team of the Heinz Endowments began thinking about how best to harness the positive momentum the community had created. For the past three years, Leading to Movement (LtM), a non-profit that provides thought partnership and capacity building to organizations and leaders that strive to support positive, sustainable, and systemic change in communities, worked closely with the Heinz Learning Team to better understand why and how they wanted to move in this direction, and explored implementation strategies that would support success. Whereas many place-based initiatives focus on improving coordinated services to benefit community residents, a primary goal of the Heinz Learning Team was to support existing neighborhood-based or neighborhood-serving organizations, emerging non-profits, and community leaders in an effort to advance the community’s vision. Together, LtM and the Heinz Learning Team proposed a grantmaking strategy that would:

- Be informed and implemented by the community;
- Support the development of sustainable local and organizational capacity;
- Leverage existing capacity of community members and organizations; and
- Collectively establish standards and processes for engagement and trust building.

The result was Making a Greater Hazelwood (MaGH), a place-based, grant-making strategy with this simple intention: to build, restore, and sustain meaningful relationships among social service organizations in the community.

Initially, 14 organizations received modest grants of around \$25,000 through a request for proposal process to implement programs in the community that were informed by community input. Participating organizations focused on youth development, young children, health, food security, workforce development, and education. In addition to the financial investment, participating organizations received technical assistance and formed a peer mentoring cohort that has become to be known as the MaGH coalition. This coalition was grounded in two sets of organizing frameworks: Implementation Science and Collective Impact.

Implementation Science

The Heinz Learning Team and LtM first looked to a framework called Implementation Science (IS), which studies the “methods or techniques used to enhance the adoption, implementation, and sustainability” of an effective intervention (Powell et al., 2015). Focusing on good implementation

practices increases the success and sustainability of an intervention by making sure that the necessary supports are in place and that it can respond and adapt to the context. Fixsen et al. (2005) liken using IS to putting on an “implementation headset” that broadens focus to include the processes and outcomes of implementation itself, and not just the outcomes of the effective intervention.

The IS framework identifies four stages of implementation that progress through exploring the feasibility of an intervention, installing the necessary competencies and infrastructure needed to implement the intervention, the initial implementation of the intervention to fine tune the delivery, and finally the full implementation and assessment of the outcomes. Woven into these stages are three sets of factors that drive successful implementation: competency drivers that support individuals’ ability to implement, improve, and sustain a strategy; organizational drivers that ensure individuals carrying out the strategy are supported and informed by data; and leadership drivers that ensure leaders are using strategies appropriate to context.

To operationalize the IS framework, LtM began by ensuring that the strategy was suitable. Easterling and Metz (2016) identify three requirements for an effective philanthropic strategy, namely the strategy must: match a demonstrated need in the community, be feasible to implement within the given context, and take into account available research and evidence.

LtM spoke with more than 100 community residents and organization leaders through a series of community meetings to get their input on the proposed philanthropic strategy. These conversations informed the MaGH request for proposal process and established a standard of community engagement and relationship building. LtM also understood that context would consistently change. To be responsive to those changes, the cohort of grantees met regularly to engage in critical reflection and use data and feedback to support implementation of their programs and the overall strategy.

The second area was to define LtM’s role in the implementation of MaGH. Based on the Core Competencies of Implementation Science Practitioners (Metz et al., 2021), we identified that LtM should perform three key functions:

- Co-create a philanthropic strategy by involving all stakeholders in the production and implementation process. First and foremost, this means aligning the philanthropic strategy, MaGH, with community needs and goals, while also establishing an environment where the power differential between organizations is neutralized.
- Provide feedback to stakeholders and practitioners on the process. For example, compiling progress for all organizations into a collective report and helping to disseminate that information to broader audiences. In addition to providing technical assistance, LtM partnered with the Forbes Funds to use their program assessment tool to provide feedback on each partner’s areas of strengths and opportunities.
- Build and cultivate emerging leaders and provide opportunities for practitioners to problem solve within implementation teams.

Collective Impact

The second organizing framework LtM used to support the creation of our strategy was Collective Impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011). This framework identifies five guiding tenets when multiple groups are working together to address a complex issue:

Common Agenda

The initial group identified three goals to focus the work and serve as a common agenda:

- Authentic and responsive community engagement to support the design and implementation of program activities;
- Increased stability for community members; and
- Increased knowledge, education, self-esteem and self-awareness.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

While the common agenda set the collective vision for the group, collaboration was the primary tactic for enacting that vision. Via MaGH, a participant shared: “There is a lot of information sharing. It brings us together and allows us to say, ‘You are doing that and I am doing this, let’s put that together.’ It takes it further than what you could have done by yourself.” For example, a partner organization with expertise in adult literacy developed a collaboration with a workforce training program to deliver both math classes and literacy skills to students in the workforce training program. Organizations also identified that many services that could benefit residents are underutilized. In response, organizations established a trusted referral network. If a resident in one program could benefit from the services of a different program, they were introduced to staff who directly respond to their need or guide them to access the benefits of that program.

Continuous Communication

Organizations participating in MaGH include universities and established non-profit organizations with high levels of technical capacity and community-based non-profits with a single staff member. The smaller non-profits “tend to have a better pulse of what is happening,” noted a representative of a larger non-profit, “and you wouldn’t typically have the opportunity to work with them.” Through MaGH these groups developed mutually beneficial relationships. Smaller organizations benefitted from mentoring and access to new ideas, techniques, and resources, while larger organizations benefitted from the intimate knowledge of the community garnered from the resident-led non-profits. One participant noted, “We were able to get to a point probably two years faster than we were able to do in other neighborhoods that don’t have that same infrastructure and same collaborative approach.”

Backbone Support

In some cases, the role of backbone support in Collective Impact strategies is assumed by a local organization that has the ability to be a hub and bring organizations together, including having the sufficient space and staffing to manage the day-to-day operations associated with providing this service. In this case, LtM assumed that role for the MaGH group by arranging meetings, documenting decision-making, and simply maintaining forward progress. In the role, LtM also provided technical assistance to organizations on strategic planning, budgeting, grant writing, and data collection and analysis. When needed, LtM also facilitated the connection to additional resources and relationships like the Forbes Funds.

Shared Measurement

The IS framework guided the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy by setting implementation milestones and providing data for informed decision-making. In addition to the goal of connecting organizations together to create a supportive network, the three goals identified in the common agenda were used to measure results. Each organization was responsible for reporting their progress and demonstrating their contribution to the collective achievement of the overall goals. To establish

collective accountability, individual program goals were aligned to the overarching goals of the common agenda. This was done during the grant application and renewal phases. When needed, LtM helped organizations develop their capacity to document who participates in their programs, what services they receive, and the outcomes of participating. However, organizations said that they “want to share more than participation counts.” Documenting the quantity of their work doesn’t always demonstrate the quality of their work. With support, organizations highlighted personal stories to show how residents experienced their programs and the impact. Through quantitative and qualitative data, they demonstrated improvements in food security, workforce training, health indicators, access to education, and learning. They also reported increased resident income through paid internships, paid positions, and stipends for participation.

EVOLUTION OF THE GROUP

Over the past three years, the MaGH strategy and the organizations involved have evolved and they will undoubtedly continue to evolve as the neighborhood changes and programs further develop. A couple of key areas are worth mentioning:

Coalition Building

“In some ways it is an artificial means to get us all together,” commented a MaGH participant. “It’s like, now we have a reason to put you all in room together. What is going to happen?” The group evolved from the gathering of separate organizations into a coalition that agrees to work together to achieve a common goal. In that process the group progressed through the three stages of collation development identified by Butterfoss & Kegler (2002).

During the initial stage of formation, organizations came together because they received the modest investment from the Heinz Endowments to implement their program and LtM coordinated the group meetings. Originally the group met in person but switched to virtual meetings because of Covid-19. The simple act of putting like-minded organizations in a room together resulted in them sharing information and collaborating.

During the second stage, the maintenance stage, the organizations demonstrated their success and voiced the impact of the group on that success. The success of the original grantees acted as a catalyst for broader collaboration in the community. As a result, the MaGH coalition grew through the addition of organizations not funded directly through MaGH but who share the group’s common vision. In some cases, these organization would receive funding in later funding cycles. By their request, the group also increased the frequency of meetings to maintain their momentum.

Although the MaGH coalition has been meeting for three years, it is just beginning to enter the final stage, which is institutionalization. There are signs that elements of the work will be sustained moving forward; a key example is the emergence of community leaders from within the MaGH coalition who are taking ownership of the purpose and frequency of meetings.

Community Engagement

The bulk of community engagement is carried out through the relationships of organizations with residents participating in their programs. During the initial years of the strategy, MaGH benefited from the Greater Hazelwood Community Census Team. The Census Team was originally established out of a collaboration between the GHCC and Jackson/Clark Partners who conducted a community-wide census that surveyed more than 800 households in the community. After gathering initial data, the Census Team served as a trusted conduit using the data collected on resident needs and wishes to

connect them to beneficial services. They also shared information with residents on the programs and services offered by MaGH organizations. When funding for the Census Team ended, an opportunity emerged: specifically, a set of organizations focused on improving health outcomes capitalized on the Census Team's expertise and trained interested team members to become community health workers and the opportunity to transition into a career path.

Common Agenda

Since the common agenda was initially created, the Greater Hazelwood community completed its community plan and set the vision for the community. As a first step towards continued alignment with the community's stated needs, MaGH cross-walked their work with the goals and strategies outlined in the community plan. Each participating organization was able to clearly identify how they contribute to the plan. As the next step, participating organizations are identifying the progress indicators and data points they will use to demonstrate their contribution to the community plan. An additional benefit of the community plan is that it creates a collective accountability mechanism for all organizations working in the community to align with the plan.

Communication

The organizations comprising the MaGH coalition expressed the desire for a better way to communicate with community residents, funders, and potential partners about their program and its impact. As a result, the group engaged in a strategic planning process with the help of LtM and the Forbes Funds to develop a collective communication plan for the group, as well as a process they could follow in their own organizations. For the plan to be successful, it had to be informed by direct community input. They convened a listening session with residents and program participants that was attended by diverse voices, including teens and seniors, who shared where and how they access information, what information is the most important to them, and suggestions for the best routes to connect with both them and their neighbors. Residents said they prefer to hear about opportunities from a trusted source like a neighbor or friend. In response, the MaGH coalition decided to use a simple online platform to share program fliers amongst each other. This way each organization could harness their role as a trusted source with the residents in their programs and share updates about opportunities that could benefit a resident. The simple tool is now used by organizations throughout the community to receive updates and also includes a list of job opportunities for residents.

Expanding the Network

A strong network has developed between the organizations participating in MaGH. However, the MaGH network is just one of multiple networks in the community and region. To maximize the impact of their collective and individual work, group members needed to develop mutually reinforcing activities with other networks, systems, and organizations. Participating organizations were encouraged to join the GHCC as a first step towards integrating with larger collective efforts to revitalize the community. Through participation in these larger networks, organizations influence broader systems and encourage reform. Expanding of the network also creates access to additional support and resources for organizations. For example, through a strategic partnership with the Forbes Funds, organizations assessed their program capacity and identified opportunities to strengthen areas where additional capacity was needed. Through coaching, participating in the training opportunities, and attending professional development offerings, some participating organizations have broadened their reach, strengthened their organizations, and used the new network to strengthen their board.

LESSONS LEARNED

When LtM and the Heinz Learning Team initially met to discuss the potential of a neighborhood-based funding strategy, many questions had not been answered. Could modest investments have a large impact? Would creating space for connections, simple acts of collegiality and collaboration be a valid investment opportunity? Is change in how residents and organizations worked together enough change? After three years, some questions can be answered. We can clearly track that the investments helped organizations expand and improve services to community residents. We can also see that the MaGH coalition collaborated by sharing information and resources, making resident referrals, and developing shared programming. In the words of an organization leader, “It is not what it did for us, or other groups. It is that it put together collectively all of these agencies that could work together, coordinate, and amplify the work.” All of this was done in direct response to neighborhood input. In addition to promising results, we learned multiple lessons along the way.

Simplicity

Keep it simple. Although there was a lot of planning involved, the original strategy had three very basic components: modest grants, technical assistance and support, and participation in a collective group. There is no need for overly complicated plans or metrics.

Intangibles

Programs clearly shared that much of their impact is lost if only the numbers are reported. Although it is hard to measure the intangibles, it is the intangibles that support sustainable change.

Leadership

Strong and competent leadership is necessary to address the complexity of implementing a community building initiative. While some issues faced by the community are technical and solutions can be engineered, many are not. In the case of MaGH, a technical leadership style was best replaced by an adaptive leadership style that allowed for multiple interpretations of issues and multiple solutions.

Equity

Although the organizations work to address issues of equity and inclusion, it is an area that must be strengthened. There is a need for more explicit conversations about equity and inclusion that include conversation about race, disability, and gender.

Anchor Institutions

In the context of MaGH, we found that larger organizations firmly rooted in the community and operating with a high level of capacity are essential for anchoring the strategy. However, they also present a risk to smaller or lesser established organizations. Often larger organizations take up more space in conversations, guide community direction, and have more access to funding. A healthy community system requires a variety of organizations of different sizes and capacities. Larger organizations are often an ideal partner for investment because of their relationships and resources they can commit to a program. However, smaller organizations also benefit from investments and may receive inadequate support to prosper, reducing the potential impact and sustainability of the system. MaGH

worked to balance access to funding between anchor organizations and smaller, less-established organizations, and the result has been mutually reinforcing partnerships.

Sustainable Funding

Initial MaGH grants were for one year. However, many were extended to multiple year grants as the MaGH strategy evolved. To be effective, organizations need certainty that they will be able to sustain their work long-enough to build the necessary organizational capacity and community relationships. None of the issues that need to be addressed in a community building initiative have short-term solutions. They all require time and sustained investment. Consequently, one-year grant cycles do not provide sufficient resources to plan for the long-term impact of a program or the maturation of a program. An effective funding strategy must provide stability to grantees by committing to multiple-year grants that allow for program development and maturation.

Ownership

The ultimate goal of a community building initiative is for a community to take ownership of the work by driving it and carrying it forward after the initial investment. That ownership is developed through direct community participation. Mechanisms like the GHCC should be established to ensure that community engagement is more robust than asking for input for needs assessments. Instead, it should be opportunities for residents and organizations to strengthen their ability to meaningfully influence the decisions that impact the community.

System Change and Policy Reform

Many of the issues that impact a community are the results of systemic issues and policies. Consequently, much of the change sought in a community will not be possible without support from broader public systems. Community building strategies must connect to those systems and share the unique experiences of residents and organizations to influence and improve the policies and procedures that govern those systems.

Optimism

Perhaps the greatest benefit of working with like-minded organizations to achieve the common goal of a stronger Greater Hazelwood is the renewed optimism it created. Organizations highlight the hope they feel by having partners they can count on for support. There is optimism that their commitment to working together is spreading. “It is coming back again, where we can all work together and collaborate,” shared a participant. “Once we come to that, I think we will be okay. I really do.”

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The Role of Holistic Representation in Improving the Public Defense System

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INTRODUCTION

The United States criminal and juvenile legal systems continue to impact the lives of millions of people. Whether through a prison sentence, time spent in jail, probation, fines and fees, or other potential sanctions, many individuals, often poor and people of color, experience the authority of the state in harmful and unproductive ways. Similarly, young people continue to be pushed out of schools and the community into the juvenile system, often for unmet health and mental health needs or minor offenses (Elliot et al., 2020). Although these experiences are often harmful to young people and their families, scholars and advocates have long pushed for a different approach (Shook & Goodkind, 2022).

Efforts to reform the legal systems have focused on reducing prison and jail populations, ending cash bail, reforming fines and fees, implementing diversion programs, and changing school discipline policies, among other reforms. Little attention, however, has been placed on improving the indigent defense system. Yet, the indigent defense system is an essential component of the legal process in the United States. Effective legal representation can limit the power of the state in a variety of consequential ways. Further, the provision of high-quality legal defense not only serves to ensure individuals are treated fairly and equitably within the legal system, but can also help connect them with the support and resources they might need.

The indigent defense system, largely consisting of public defender and legal aid offices, law school clinics, and private attorneys operating at a fee for service rates, is drastically underfunded, and there remains considerable concern about its effectiveness (Bright & Sanneh, 2013; Giovanni & Patel, 2013). This lack of funding means high caseloads and turnover are common, and many individuals do not receive the zealous advocacy they need both in and outside the courtroom. This can lead to unnecessary time spent in jail or detention, a prison instead of a community-based sanction, and high fines and fees, among other adverse outcomes.

Consequently, there remains a need to advocate for increased funding for the indigent defense system and the implementation of policies and practices that can improve the delivery of legal defense. One such approach involves what is referred to as holistic representation. In this sense, holistic representation involves teams of interdisciplinary professionals representing individuals in legal proceedings seeking to meet clients' comprehensive needs. Instead of solely focusing on the legal case, holistic representation can help clients address the issues that brought them into contact with the system and avoid future contact.

The Youth Advocacy Clinic (YAC) at Duquesne University utilizes holistic representation in its representation of youth in schools and the juvenile court through what we refer to as the Holistic Representation Model (HRM). HRM involves utilizing interdisciplinary teams consisting of law students, social workers, and school psychologists to represent young people in schools and the juvenile court. By employing these teams of advocates, HRM, as practiced by YAC, focuses on keeping kids in schools and limiting their contact with the system while also connecting youth with supports and resources they might need.

This article presents HRM as an effective mechanism for providing indigent defense. We begin by providing conceptual and empirical evidence regarding HRM, including results of a survey of legal providers. We then define the model used by YAC and detail how it benefits young people at risk of being pushed out of schools and into the legal system. The following section demonstrates HRM in action through case studies illustrating the provision and benefits of HRM. Finally, we end with recommendations regarding how HRM can be expanded and how nonprofits and other organizations can help strengthen the public defense system through HRM.

EMPIRICAL AND CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR HRM

Empirical and conceptual support for HRM is limited yet growing. In an important law review article, Robin Steinberg (2005) makes a compelling case for HRM in legal representation, with the example of a client, “Lisa.” Steinberg argues that while she provided standard legal advocacy, the case still haunts her because she looked at one part of the picture, the criminal issue, not the entirety of what brought “Lisa” to her. Steinberg asserts that many of her clients are like “Lisa” in that a range of needs precipitates their criminal matters, and those needs are what cause them to engage with the system. Thus, not attending to these needs increases the likelihood of them remaining and returning to the system. Not validating these issues reduces them to a case to be resolved versus persons in need of dignity, respect, and support.

Based on her experience, Steinberg advocates for holistic representation as opposed to traditional legal advocacy. In her formulation, holistic representation has two components: 1. Interdisciplinary workgroups providing representation, and 2. Attorney presence in the community. Interdisciplinary workgroups lay a foundation that provides the opportunity for professionals to adequately assess and advocate for the myriad of overlapping needs of the clients. Building from this foundation, attorneys work with other professionals to better understand their client’s community and the circumstances affecting clients to improve their advocacy in the case and for meeting their clients’ needs.

Steinberg’s call for the increased use of HRM is supported by other scholars and attorneys. For example, in a 2021 survey of public defense attorneys who represent kids ($n = 68$), we found strong support for HRM. As Figure 1 shows, 100% of attorneys we surveyed believed that HRM was better for youth, and 100% thought it was important to attend to delinquency and education issues simultaneously. In addition, many attorneys believed that inter-professional teams were better for legal defense for kids, and over 90% believed social workers and educational advocates to be necessary.

Despite this support for HRM among these defense attorneys, only 58% reported that their office employed a social worker, and only 13% reported that they employed an educational advocate. However, many of the attorneys who reported that their office employed a social worker reported that the social worker primarily worked adult cases or performed administrative functions. In addition, these same attorneys regularly cited budget constraints as reasons for the limited use of social workers and educational advocates in their office. Thus, it is evident that public defense attorneys support HRM, yet, it has not been fully utilized or implemented in many public defense offices.

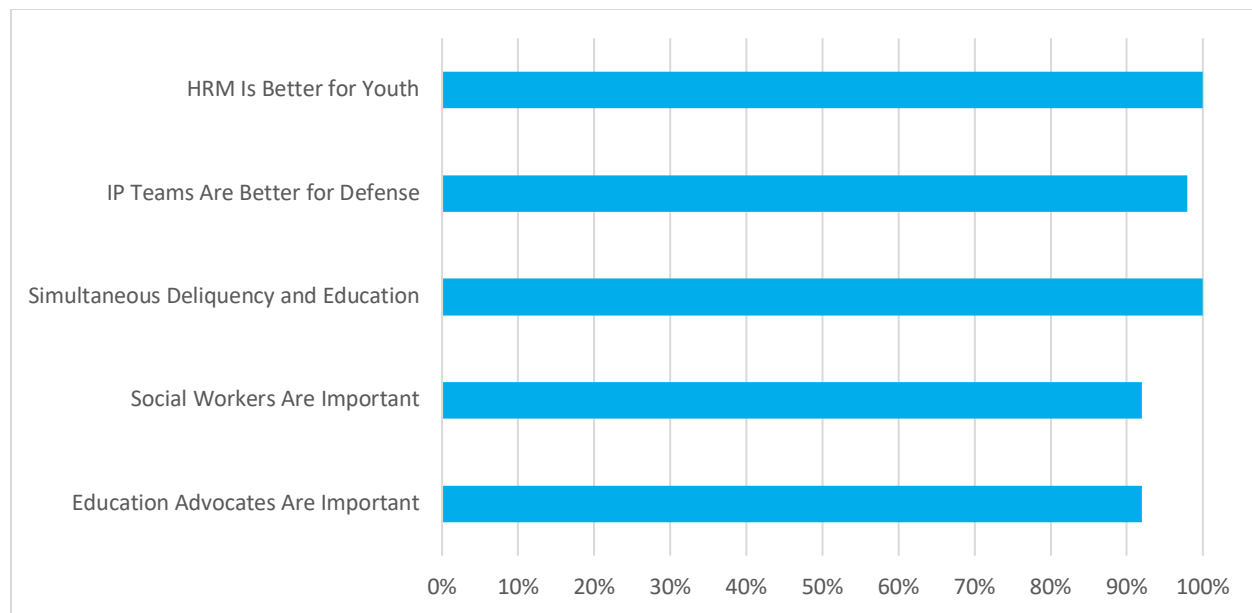


FIGURE 1. *Percentages of Attorneys Who Agree or Strongly Agree.*

The increased use of HRM is also supported by a small but growing body of empirical evidence. Anderson and colleagues (2019) conducted the one major empirical study of holistic representation. Comparing the Bronx Defenders Association, a major indigent defense organization in New York City that uses holistic representation, and another public defense agency in the same court system that uses traditional legal representation, they found several positive outcomes. Using administrative and case data over a ten-year period, they found no significant differences in conviction rates. However, they found that cases using holistic representation were 16% less likely to receive a custodial sentence and that expected sentences were 24% shorter (Anderson et al., 2019). There were no significant reductions in recidivism, however, using holistic representation. Anderson and colleagues (2019) conclude that despite the lack of significant differences in recidivism, holistic representation can help reduce reliance on custodial sentences without harming public safety, thereby preserving resources that can be invested in more community-based programs.

What is evident from this study is that when HRM is used, it reduces the use of custodial sanctions and the length of punishment individuals receive, which speaks to how a HRM can improve legal advocacy. One limitation of a study of this scale is that lumping cases into two groups—Holistic and Traditional Representation—limits an understanding of the full use of HRM. Many individuals who come into contact with the legal systems are there for minor offenses and have contact for limited periods of time. Whether and to what degree the model is employed varies based on the case at hand and the needs of the individual. While the finding that there is no difference in recidivism seemingly goes against proponents' assertions that HRM will reduce recidivism, it is not entirely surprising. Many people who come into contact with the legal system experience significant structures, including economic marginalization, oppression, and racism that contribute to their contact. The ability of a legal model to overcome those disadvantages is limited and speaks to the need for other policy reforms.

Another line of research provides an important conceptual and empirical argument for HRM. Scholars have asserted that when individuals feel they are treated fairly and equitably by the system (procedural justice), they are more likely to view the system as legitimate and comply with its mandates (Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006). Procedural justice is typically comprised of five components: voice,

neutrality, understanding, respect, and trustworthiness. Unfortunately, because of caseload pressures and turnover, defense attorneys often do not have the opportunity to develop relationships with their clients. Consequently, clients may view them as parts of the system and not advocates on their behalf. One argument is that HRM provides an interdisciplinary team that meets with clients to unpack and understand their needs and how they connect with their case. Subsequently, this team provides the client with a voice and treats them with understanding. The relationship that develops between the team and client enhances trustworthiness, neutrality, and respect. The idea is that this team and their relationship with the client helps the client feel that they are being treated fairly and represented zealously.

Although most research on procedural justice in the courts focuses on judges and police, recent studies have shown that other actors are important. For example, Kolivoski and colleagues (2016) found that perceptions of how fairly child welfare caseworkers treated youth impacted their views on the system's legitimacy. Related to defense attorneys, Shook and colleagues (2021) found that perceptions of fairness with how defense attorneys treated youth was a more important predictor of views of the legitimacy of the system than both perceptions of the police and judge. While empirical support is limited, HRM is a potential mechanism to improve procedural justice, thereby making the system more legitimate.

Although empirical support is limited, there is some evidence suggesting that HRM can be a potential mechanism to help improve the indigent defense system. Additional research and conceptualization are necessary, but existing evidence supports the expanded use of HRM in legal defense. In the next section, we further describe the model used by the Youth Advocacy Clinic (YAC) and then present two case studies to further demonstrate the importance of HRM in representing young people.

HRM AT THE YOUTH ADVOCACY CLINIC

At the Youth Advocacy Clinic, we employ the hallmark of HRM: interdisciplinary legal teams of professionals working together to understand what brought youth to their educational and legal cases. Our holistic team is comprised of graduate students and their credentialed faculty, a supervising attorney, a school psychology professor from Duquesne University, and a social work professor from the University of Pittsburgh. All professionals work under the umbrella of the legal team and are protected by client-attorney privilege. Students receive year-long training through an orientation, a two-semester seminar covering all aspects of HRM, and direct supervision of cases. Student attorneys and their teams increasingly receive more independence in the second semester, and students are assigned to multiple cases throughout the school year.

Following a new client intake, those clients who receive holistic representation will be assigned to a social worker, a school psychology student, and a student attorney handling the case. To minimize the potential trauma of clients needing to repeat the legal problem to many different people, the program manager or student attorney debriefs the team on the problem. Following the initial debrief, a member of the group (usually the student attorney) will apprise the client about the members of the team and the different roles they play. Law students provide legal representation to the clients, including handling all litigation and negotiations. Legal representation spans from the earliest stages of a case through the disposition and any necessary appeals.

As the law students are handling litigation, social work and school psychology students are working in tandem, providing emotional and tangible supports to youth and the team. The social worker maintains connections with community agencies and provides advocacy as the clients engage with agencies; they nurture relationships with clients who are placed away from home and help them adjust when they come home, along with court and school meeting advocacy. School psychology students work to review all educational records and provide recommendations to the team. Their curricular or

programmatic recommendations aim to keep the youth in school and academically and socially successful. When the team anticipates that education litigation is likely or necessary, the school psychology students become informal consultants for law students and help them craft examinations of school policies, procedures, and/or opposing experts. Through this collaboration, all members of the team gain hands-on expertise and enhance their disciplines.

Throughout the life of the case, the legal team meets regularly—both formally and informally—to holistically work on issues. All team members have the equal ability to reach out to and communicate with the client as needed, and the client has access to all team members. The purpose of the model is to help serve clients' needs beyond the acute legal problem that brought them to the clinic. However, the model relies on the expressed interest of the client. If a client is not interested in any assistance beyond the clinic's legal services, they are not obliged to receive help from the non-lawyer members of the team. We also recognize, as a clinic, that not all clients come with other problems beyond their legal issues. We have no desire to problematize clients and identify the deep systemic racism that often sweeps children into school discipline and court systems for normative adolescent behavior or, even worse, for no reason at all. We also honor the notion that the youth themselves are the best source of identifying their needs; HRM provides a holistic team to meet their needs. The next section demonstrates the support that our HRM team provides to our clients.

HRM IN ACTION

The following vignettes are illustrative of HRM in action at YAC. Similar to what was discussed earlier concerning Steinberg's client "Lisa" is detailed below. Our clients are more than the initial acute legal concern they reach out for. When the holistic legal team works in lockstep with the client, the clients' needs and their families are better served. Further, the support that is provided is intended to serve the expressed interests of the client. Thus, allowing the legal team to provide an even stronger defense allows the clients to be seen, heard, and supported as they engage with a complex system. The first case study details the story of a young Black girl and her mother who reached out seeking support because the daughter's educational needs were not being addressed.

Case Study #1

For nearly six years, the holistic legal team at the YAC has represented a Black girl who has multiple disabilities. Her parent first came to the clinic because they believed that the school district was not providing appropriate special education supports for their daughter. Following the initial intake, the parent disclosed to the team that both she and the child shared a complex trauma history which caused them to have severe anxiety, among other needs. Shortly after receiving the child's school records, it was clear that the school was providing cookie-cutter-designed instruction and not meeting the client's individual needs. As a result, the entire holistic legal team and the parent attended a series of Individualized Education Plan meetings with the school district. These meetings allowed the team, the parent, and the child to work together and craft a more accurate set of supports. During these meetings, a blatant cause for concern was the school's use of criminalized language to discuss the student's actions. We repeatedly implored the school to describe the actions versus the subjective language they used about the child's behavior. We ultimately compelled the school to provide a uniquely tailored set of academic and social supports for the child. Over the years, however, as the child moved through school (now in 10th grade), her support needs have changed, and the team remains engaged with the family. There have been long periods where there was no acute legal issue, but the team has provided emotional and community resource support to the family. The clinic will continue to fully support this child until their high school graduation.

In this next illustration, the HRM model improved outcomes for a young Black boy who originally entered the clinic regarding a juvenile delinquency matter. However, as the holistic team began engaging with the family, it was determined that more supports were needed.

Case Study #2

When the case first opened, members of our holistic team met with him regularly when he was held in a secure placement facility. During that time, we were able to gain his trust and successfully interact with his family. In doing so, the team recognized that this client had several disabilities, including an Intellectual Disability and Autism, and that his educational needs had not been appropriately addressed. Therefore, the YAC began to represent him educationally, in addition to the delinquency matter. The holistic legal team continues to support this child after successfully resolving the original legal matter. In gaining a comprehensive and holistic view of this young child's delinquency case, the holistic team also understood the more complex web of issues that this family was facing. The holistic legal team has continued to work with the child and his family to untangle that web by addressing their needs and connecting the family to the proper resources and supports. Additionally, through team meetings and working with the family, it was discovered that the other children within this family were also struggling educationally, and the YAC now represents four of the children in this family to ensure they get the educational supports they deserve.

These case studies are just two examples of many that showcase the variety of ways the holistic team supports the clients in our community. The holistic team observed issues that went beyond the legal case, and representation extended beyond the case itself. We are not alone in providing this support, however. Ensuring that we have proper connections to nonprofits and other agencies in the community is key. The following section will highlight how nonprofits and foundations in Western Pennsylvania can support work being done at the YAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the past section, we illustrated how HRM addresses the interlocking needs of the youth and their families while also providing multidisciplinary collaboration and training. Additionally, organizations that employ holistic defense focus on building and sustaining community relations as they are dependent on community organizations to provide vital services to their clients and their families. Nonprofits and agencies that provide food, tutoring, mentoring assist in supporting many of our clients. Additionally, as detailed in the pillars of HRM, legal teams seek to engage with the community, and many nonprofits and foundations serve as gatekeepers in our ability to collaborate with the community. For example, over the past five years, through a partnership with One Pennsylvania, our supervising attorney has attended "Know Your Rights" events where she gives parents the tools to guarantee their child(ren) get the educational support they deserve.

As previously discussed, public defense work is underfunded with high caseloads. Additionally, public defense funding varies from state to state, which puts undue strain on those providing indigent defense and those they represent. However, with allied support from local nonprofits and community foundations, the YAC holistic legal team can continue to contribute to the needs in our community. Understanding that we are all working to ensure better outcomes for members of our community, we recommend the following steps to help nonprofits support public defenders.

Public defenders and other indigent defense providers are often not part of broader conversations involving the Nonprofit Sector, yet their work overlaps in various important ways. Therefore, representations from these offices should be part of efforts to improve.

The public defense system needs additional funding to fully and effectively serve its function. This funding should include mechanisms such as holistic representation that offer an opportunity to improve people's lives. Public defense providers need to be situated in the community and can play an important role beyond the courtroom. For example, "know your rights campaigns," and other types of workshops can better connect these providers to the community and provide an important service to the community. Evidence demonstrates that both young people and adults are better served outside the legal system. Defense providers and nonprofits can partner to design resources and supports that better meet clients' needs as opposed to the traditional programs offered by the system.

CONCLUSION

There is an urgent need to improve the indigent defense system in the United States. Holistic representation offers a potential mechanism to provide more effective legal needs that better meet the needs of both young people and adults. In addition to more funding, legal providers can benefit from partnerships with nonprofits to provide a broader array of services to the community and partner to design programs and supports that can benefit clients.

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Perceptions of Human Service Organization Leaders to Raising the Minimum Wage

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INTRODUCTION

As attention to the struggles of low-wage workers has grown, one option state and local jurisdictions have examined is raising the minimum wage to as high as \$15 an hour. Pennsylvania's minimum wage has remained \$7.25 an hour since 2009. Twice Governor Tom Wolf introduced incremental proposals to raise the state minimum wage to \$15 an hour. A growing body of evidence shows that raising the minimum wage positively affects worker well-being while having a minor impact on employment (Cengiz, Dube, Lindner, & Zipperer, 2019; Godøy & Reich, 2019). Despite these findings, concerns exist about the potential adverse effects of raising the minimum wage on employers such as Human Service Organizations (HSOs). First, many HSOs pay a significant portion of their workforce less than \$15 an hour. A \$15 minimum wage would require HSOs to increase wages for those below \$15 while considering adjusting wages of employees earning at and above \$15. Second, funding streams are often insufficient to increase wages and maintain employee benefits. Even with government contracts, foundation grants, or donor funds, HSOs often do more with less.

Little research exists on HSOs' responses to minimum wage increases, and it is important to understand the potential effects wage increases could have. Using surveys and in-depth interviews, Allard et al. (2020) noted, following the initial phase-in of Seattle's minimum wage increase, that non-profits did not cut programs but sought alternative forms of revenue to offset higher labor costs. Building on this work, we completed 25 in-depth interviews with HSO leaders with varying budget sizes in Southwestern Pennsylvania before the Covid-19 Pandemic to assess their perceptions of Governor Wolf's proposed minimum wage increase. Three themes emerged from these interviews: 1. HSO leaders want to raise wages and are generally supportive of these efforts; 2. HSO leaders face barriers to raising wages; and 3. HSO leaders utilize a range of strategies to raise employee wages, but broader reforms will be necessary.

SAMPLE AND METHOD

This article explores data from a descriptive qualitative study from in-depth interviews with 25 HSO leaders in the Southwestern Pittsburgh area. Organizations ranged from five to 124 years in operation, with annual budgets ranging from \$165,000 to \$55 million. We sought to sample HSOs at different budget levels and found few differences across the findings.

Notably, most HSOs in the sample will need to significantly increase wages to reach \$15. Out of the 25 organizations, 12 paid at least \$12 an hour, and seven paid workers at least \$15. In addition, the vast majority of HSOs offered a mix of health, vacation, retirement, and education benefits. As will be discussed, HSO leaders discussed the trade-offs between offering higher wages and better benefits packages, especially health insurance.

After the interviews were completed, four team members read through the transcripts to determine broad categories. Once these categories were defined, the team worked in tandem with one another to clarify each key theme by organizing and coding quotes. Once the report was finalized, we invited the interviewed leaders to join a Zoom meeting where we walked through the findings and discussed recommendations with them, thus ensuring the recommendations were authentic and reflective of what had been covered.

MOTIVATIONS

HSO leaders expressed varying reasons for supporting a minimum wage increase. Leaders noted that paying competitive wages would aid in recruiting and retaining workers. The following quotes demonstrate their perceptions that current wages limit recruiting staff, especially with employer competition. It is important to consider that these interviews occurred before the Covid-19 Pandemic and current labor market shortage and that we are currently meeting with HSO leaders to discuss the effects of the pandemic on their workers and operations:

I think that aside from that, as other agencies are preparing for the wage increase, and we see that they're raising their rates, that affects our recruiting if we don't keep up.

A kid that we might hire to do direct supports, attendant supports, they could go to Target and make \$2 an hour more.

While HSOs struggle to hire staff, they also work through challenges to retain workers. HSO leaders discuss turnover as a concern in the following quotes and connect wages directly to turnover. They concede that workers value the work, but the wage structures influence decisions to leave:

My general sense is that people enjoy working for [the organization]; it's just that we don't pay enough. So, they leave after a short time, and when they leave, they say, "I hate to leave but..."

And the answer is that they generally like the work they're doing, but the wages get in the way of them being able to make a long-term commitment to the organization.

They want to have rewarding work with people they respect and trust. Particularly, they want to trust leadership. And they want to be...compensated, rewarded, and appreciated.

HSO leaders saw recruitment and retention issues as directly related to service delivery and quality. As reflected below, they connected turnover to gaps in services and outcomes:

And turnover diminishes outcomes, and there are studies that prove that too. You have to hire a new staff member to serve these folks, and they have to get acclimated, and there's a gap of service, and what that happens to the people being served? They're not getting as much service, and, therefore, the outcomes slump.

As is evident, HSO leaders connected higher wages to attracting quality staff. Thus, motivations to pay higher wages are clearly related to organizational stability and the understanding that their staff

is the reason for successful program outcomes. A statewide minimum wage increase may lead to wage increases across employers, which could price HSOs out of attracting and retaining workers. However, HSO leaders' comments reflected that a desire to do this work combined with higher wages could attract and retain workers despite competition from other employers.

While it was clear that HSO leaders were motivated to pay competitive wages for recruitment and retention, they also discussed the desire to improve worker well-being by providing wages that reflect the difficulty and significance of the work:

Here, we are helping others who are in the same financial condition as some of our own employees from what their wages are.

Things like that and plus, then people wouldn't have to work two and three jobs. They wouldn't have these problems with childcare. They wouldn't be so tired.

So, our stance on that though is kind of what I was saying before, which is, we support the higher wages because we know what a struggle it is for folks to live on lower wages.

And I don't believe we can scream about the injustice of corporate America when we're doing the same thing when we're not paying people what they're worth or what they. How do you pay somebody for what they're worth but give them a reasonable pay for what they're doing?

These quotes reflect the commitment to worker well-being, fairness, recruitment, and retention as motivation to raise wages. They focused on both organizational motivations and the moral imperative of their workers being able to make ends meet. Embedded in these motivations is the job's difficulty and importance in providing necessary services to the community. Given the difficulties of recruiting and retaining workers at the current moment, currently being referred to as the "Great Resignation," these motivations are likely more acute for HSO leaders, and increasing wages is necessary. Yet, motivation to raise wages is in tension with the organizational and financial realities these HSO leaders face. We explore these barriers in the next section.

BARRIERS

As HSOs look to raise wages and attract new workers and support those currently employed, barriers surface as the pieces come together. The main barriers HSO leaders discussed were budget constraints, limited government funding, donor fund restrictions, service delivery reductions, and the reality of layoffs and/or benefits cuts.

HSO leaders consistently raised budget concerns ranging from government funding limits to donor fund restrictions as a barrier to raising wages. For example, HSO leaders mentioned that their current operating budgets could not support raising wages to meet a \$15 an hour minimum wage and providing the same services and outcomes:

I'm barely breaking even every year. And we have debts. I have to balance paying the debt. If I could get rid of the debt, it would certainly give me a big bump in extra revenue that I could then play with.

Another concern that HSO leaders stated is that government funding is too low, as reimbursement rates do not meet the demand. As a result, HSOs could not support a higher wage without increasing reimbursement rates:

If the government is making this mandate that you need to pay a minimum wage, then the government should adjust their reimbursements...so that the organizations can...pay that minimum wage.

In addition to low reimbursement rates, HSO leaders also discussed the necessity for foundations and other sources to consider the need for higher wages:

It's challenging, there are some revenue streams we just can't get more revenue from.

Additionally, HSO leaders are naturally worried about how an increased wage could impact services for the community. One HSO leader stated:

And finding a way to comply might end up with substandard services or services that are not as viable, maybe more institutional in nature rather than individualized.

Culminating with budget restrictions, low reimbursement rates, possible losses of benefits or services for the community, and without additional revenue could lead to layoffs leaving HSO leaders grappling with the following question:

Would I rather be fully staffed but have that staff be paid at the lowest level of the range? Or would I rather have fewer people than we really need to get our job done but have everybody making it a more appropriate range?

While HSOs are motivated to increase wages and support staff, they face clear barriers, including budget concerns, especially government reimbursements and restricted donor funding. Without an increase in reimbursements, a minimum wage increase would increase workers' costs, reducing services and/or leading to worse outcomes. Similarly, HSO leaders asserted the need for donors, such as foundations, to meet increased employee costs. Otherwise, HSO leaders reported finding other avenues to balance their budgets, such as eliminating programs, laying off employees, and cutting employee benefits. As mentioned above, HSO leaders reported offering a range of benefits and consistently talked about the "total compensation package" employees receive. Being required to raise wages without additional financial support could decrease worker benefits or require workers to pay a greater share of their benefits to keep the "total compensation package" stable.

There is plenty for HSO leaders to consider regarding raising the minimum wage. Research showing positive effects on well-being from minimum and other wage increases should focus on paying people fairly instead of financing their employees through subsidies. The next section will explore possible strategies HSOs can take to raise wages and serve their mission.

STRATEGIES

Our respondents identified several strategies to manage an increase in the minimum wage, including a range of things they were already doing to support higher wages and things they would need to do if the minimum wage was increased. These strategies include the importance of diversifying funding, budget planning and changes to priorities, programs and services, employees, and advocacy.

Many of our respondents depend on government funding and government contracts with specific funding limits, potentially impacting the organizational ability to pay higher wages. Therefore, a common response was the need to diversify funding sources. As noted by several HSO executives, they seek funding from different funding sources, including foundations and individual donations:

We're increasing the foundation-funded portion we have. We're trying to transition some events out replace them with new ones.

More broadly, it was commonly reported that a diversified funding stream benefits the overall stability of the organization. As noted by one agency executive:

I think one of the things that make us, I think, strong as an organization is that our funding is diversified, so we're not really dependent on any single-payer to bring in revenue.

To keep the financial stability previously highlighted, some organizations have begun planning for the future and reprioritizing in the present; two strategies are detailed below:

All I've done is reprioritize. And guess what, we made it work. So we cut and trimmed in other places and moved other things, not at the expense of people.

We got a motion at the executive committee meeting yesterday that we need a long-term plan that's going to have to include salaries.

Additionally, some executives identified methods to save money in some areas and use savings in other areas. A common approach from organizations with budgets between \$8 to \$20 million was to seek cost efficiencies: outsourcing, bulk purchases, and remote work:

We've become more efficient with facilities. We use less space. We get people to work remotely. We constantly rework everything.

We outsource IT initially, not to save money, but to get a higher level of service, and we end up saving a lot of money.

While HSO leaders examined long-term financial plans and their current budget, respondents kept the core activities, programs, and services front and center. Some agency executives noted that they might have to cut their programs if they face rising wages. As indicated by one agency executive:

If the pie isn't getting as big as we need it to be, we will live within our means. And that may mean understanding the connectedness of decisions on, "Well, it could be this program or that program."

To support their programs without making cuts, agency executives noted needing to edit their grant applications to cover wage increases. But, as one agency executive averred:

But because we're constantly going after new grants, now when we put in a new grant application, we put in what our expenses are going to be for the proposal. And now they're a little bit higher than they were before.

The programs administrative and line staff are fulfilling are essential for these organizations to function. Recruiting and retaining quality staff requires adequate pay and benefits. The agency executives acknowledge that their employees should receive a sufficient wage. Yet, they recognize that complying with an increase in the minimum wage without concomitant increased revenue may result in changes that impact their workforce.

One strategy is to limit benefits or increase the cost of specific benefits to employees. For example, one executive mentioned, "We could just have in-place employees pay more for benefits." Another executive took the approach of trying to convince employees to consider their benefits as they exist today and not their future impact:

We're just sort of reinforcing this idea of just think about what's right in front of you at the moment and don't worry about the future. And 20,30 years down the road, they may feel like, "Wow, I wish my employer had given me other benefits and not just the salary."

Some executives have noted that they prioritize service delivery over expanding their executive or management teams:

So, the other think that we're trying to do is figure out, if we didn't have to expand our executive team, which is where the big salaries are, if we could expand the number of units of service provided but didn't have to expand the management team, would that help us pay better for the rank and file?

The agency executives were also mindful that they must educate and advocate for additional resources regardless of whether the minimum wage increases. Several agency executives communicate the need to raise wages to their boards and people on their mailing lists:

I wrote articles, little essays for the newsletter I send out. I brought it up at every...meeting.

I have put out stuff in the newsletter, my section's a newsletter that says, "There a reason for this. This is how people live. \$7.25 an hour. This is how it changes when you bring it up to \$8.50. And how it changes if you bring it up to \$10."

Finally, at least one agency executive is pushing local government to raise their reimbursement rates to afford higher wages:

I guess the other thing we've been doing internally is really working on getting rates, being much more aggressive with counties about, "No. We're not going to provide services if you don't give us a 12% increase."

As this discussion shows, HSO leaders are implementing or considering a range of strategies to raise wages. Many of these strategies are related to the barriers they face, whereas others are related more broadly to how they can more efficiently and effectively meet their missions. The next section discusses several recommendations for HSOs, the human service sector, and public policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To further enhance the credibility of these findings, these themes were presented to willing study participants to elicit feedback and brainstorm recommendations. The feedback corroborated what we found through the interviews and enhanced our understanding of the issues. Participants assisted greatly in developing an initial set of recommendations at the organizational, sector, and public policy levels. These strategies are not exhaustive and are not relevant for every HSO but can improve the toolkits available to HSO leaders if the minimum wage increases in Pennsylvania. They can also help inform efforts of HSO leaders to attract and retain workers in the current economic environment of a labor shortage and rising wages and inflation throughout the economy. The recommendations are categorized into organizational level strategies, organizational and sector education and advocacy, and public policy advocacy.

The first recommendations are for organizational-level strategies. Throughout interviews and during our meeting with leaders, they pointed to the need to diversify the funding stream. HSO leaders mentioned that some funding streams constrain their ability to pay higher wages, impacting their

financial stability if wages increase. HSOs should address this constraint by diversifying funding streams and employing diverse fundraising strategies that provide more flexibility to increase wages.

To help diversify funds leader suggested engaging with funders. First, HSO leaders should be prepared to discuss employee compensation with funders as they develop budget proposals. For example, one theme was being asked to do more with less by funders, and HSO leaders discussed the need to push back on these requests and are clear about the need to compensate workers fairly. Next, assess organizational capacity to deliver services while engaging with funders. HSO boards should have honest discussions regarding their ability to continue providing services to the community, providing a livable wage for employees, and assessing whether trying to do more with less is beneficial to the community organization and workers.

In addition to engaging with funders and assessing capacity, leaders suggested engaging workers in decisions about their compensation packages. HSO leaders noted the tension between their mission when they are not paying many workers a living wage. Concurrently, the realities of budget constraints and the significant amount spent on benefits were raised. Therefore, one suggestion offered by HSO leaders was to allow workers to participate in the wages, benefits packages, and budget decision-making processes.

After assessing capacity and engaging all key players, the next step is to participate in long-term budget planning. Long-term budget planning should elevate the importance of raising workers' wages. For example, decisions about organizational functions that can be eliminated or handled externally, supplies that could be bought in bulk, hiring more executive staff, and a range of other budget decisions need to be examined through raising wages. Lastly, create organizational wellness practices, policies, and procedures. Providing a living wage is just one aspect of employee well-being. HSO leaders acknowledged that their employees work in difficult and emotionally draining occupations and are typically not validated enough to be paid a living wage or supported with daily challenges.

The next set of recommendations, organizational and sector education, and advocacy build off the foundational and organizational work previously explored. Leaders suggested beginning with internal organizational education and advocacy. HSO leaders discussed their work to educate their boards and others within their organizations about the need to pay workers higher wages. Internal education and advocacy are essential to ensuring that the organization is on the same page regarding the steps they need to take. These efforts are important with the potential of policy that will require the organization to raise wages.

After internal education advocacy, they suggest focusing on sector-level organization and advocacy. HSO leaders expressed the need to work together as a sector to educate policymakers, funders, donors, and others about the need to increase funding so they can pay living wages. Individual efforts are helpful, but having broader conversations as a sector can provide leverage to make advocacy more successful.

The final recommendations focus on larger public policy advocacy, again building off the previous. The first is to push for increased reimbursements for services. Raising the minimum wage without a parallel or even significant increase in reimbursements provided to HSOs through federal, state, or local contracts will substantially constrain HSO budgets. Even without a federal or state minimum wage increase, reimbursements should increase so HSOs can pay their employees a fair living wage.

Concurrently while increasing reimbursements, push for an increase in public benefits eligibility. HSO leaders expressed concern that a minimum wage increase would make their workers ineligible for public benefits. While this is complex, research shows that wage increases improve worker well-being and do not cause a benefits cliff. However, advocating for policy changes that expand eligibility for public benefits such as SNAP, childcare assistance, energy programs, and tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) can alleviate broader concerns about the benefits cliff while improving the well-being of workers.

CONCLUSION

While HSO leaders expressed numerous motivations for a minimum wage increase, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour will present challenges to HSOs. Although many were already attempting to increase wages while maintaining benefits, most of the HSO leaders we interviewed indicated they would need to raise wages to meet a \$15 minimum wage. In addition, there are strategies organizations can adopt to raise wages. Still, there is also a need for organizing among HSOs and public policy changes that are necessary for these vital organizations to continue to provide necessary services.

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Meeting Dissonant Times: The Case for Social Sector Leadership Coaching

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INTRODUCTION

We are living in a VUCA world: volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous. Racism, sexism, poverty, political polarization, climate change, and countless other issues complicate our lives together. And that was before Covid-19 shook the foundations. Organizational scholars Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Annie McKee (2013) describe these challenges as forms of *dissonance*. For social sector leaders, the challenge is extraordinary. They must respond to dissonance around them while keeping it from creeping into their organizations. Or themselves.

When dissonance creeps in, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee argue, it delivers toxicity: bullying and deceitfulness, hypocrisy and resentment, apathy and distraction, insensitivity and ineffectiveness, failure and crisis. The only response to dissonance, they contend, is *resonance*: the ability to invite harmony and hope within uncertainty and adversity. Beginning with leaders and their teams, they believe, resonance ripples outward to bring systemic change.

How can social sector leaders build their capacity for resonance? One answer is *coaching*, which is increasingly recognized as a high-impact leadership development practice. The Forbes Funds' Executive-In-Residence (EIR) program has been coaching social sector leaders for years. This article explores coaching and why it matters for leaders, boards, organizations, and communities.

I am a community coach fostering collaborative leadership and social transformation. My background—I have a doctorate in rhetoric—means my approach foregrounds ethical communication and action learning. I am also certified through the International Coaching Federation (ICF). But many helpful coaching models and approaches exist. The Forbes Funds' EIR coaches reflect this diversity, each bringing unique experiences and talents. In this essay, I hope to capture this richness.

DEFINING COACHING

Leading well in VUCA times means working in two directions. Resonant leaders, Goleman and his co-authors argue, articulate compelling visions, foster growth in others, negotiate conflict, and encourage participation. Doing these things, they observe, requires a hefty amount of emotional intelligence: the self-awareness and self-management to channel our emotions in constructive directions, as well as the social and relational awareness to create compassionate cultures. We cannot develop these capacities without constant, intentional reflection and effort. Parker Palmer (2000), a writer influential in coaching circles, calls this task *inner work*.

For resonance to have power, though, leaders must grow in other areas. Every leader enters their role with a unique set of leadership gifts. But they soon encounter problems that stretch those strengths to the limit: economic downturns, public relations crises, fundraising shortfalls, team conflicts, cultural changes, and so on. Covid-19 and the current conversation around diversity and

inclusion represent two particularly urgent challenges. Leaders need to learn how to stand in these gaps to help others through them. We can call this learning *practice growth*.

Coaching creates a space where inner work and practice growth can occur. Yet, it does so differently than other common leadership development approaches like mentoring and consulting. Mentoring and consulting are *answer-rich* endeavors, in which leaders learn from others' experiences and expertise. Certainly, these answers can be important to hear and profoundly useful. But as leadership scholar Keith Grint (2010) writes, answer-rich practices work best in stable environments. As environments become more complex and problems more wicked, yesterday's answers fall flat. Instead of facilitating inner work, they elicit cynicism. And instead of promoting practice growth, they bring confusion and frustration.

For example, consider a human services organization that hires a Black woman as executive director. The board spent over a year—and tens of thousands of dollars—to find her. And the organization is proud its leader finally looks like its service population. But the transition proves difficult. Within weeks, the executive director reports feeling stressed and frustrated with her all-white leadership team. And then Covid-19 happens, sending everything into chaos.

In response, the board convenes to figure out what to do. They might ask the former executive director to mentor her. But the new executive director chafes at the older white woman's advice. The former executive director, after all, never experienced being the only Black woman in senior leadership. And the new executive director has no interest in becoming a younger version of her predecessor.

They might also hire a consultant to take the senior management team on a retreat. But no amount of trust falls or best practices can resolve a once-in-a-lifetime crisis. Nor can a series of PowerPoint slides make systemic racism magically disappear. Some of the consultant's advice may have made sense five years ago. But it sounds hollow now.

The issue with mentoring and consulting is not with the skill or intent of the helper. Mentors and consultants are highly skilled and want to help. The problem in both cases lies in the center of the conversation. When a well-intentioned helper is focused on giving answers, the helper's usefulness begins and ends with *them: their* strengths, *their* capabilities, *their* wisdom, *their* experiences, the problems *the helper* feels most competent addressing. When their answers come up short, their mentoring or consulting stops being useful. And as coaching writers Henry Kimsey-House and Karen Kimsey-House (2011) argue, being preoccupied with answer-giving brings another problem: the helper is tempted to stop listening to what people are saying, and solve problems they do not have.

But most important of all, answer-giving does nothing to help the other person grow. In fact, it is a form of theft. The helper feels good while unwittingly denying others the chance to lead on their own terms. And the helper affirms their power as an expert while unintentionally diminishing the power of others.

For this reason, coaching reverses the relationship to focus on *the other person's* strengths, capabilities, wisdom, experiences, and ingenuity. For Kimsey-House and Kimsey-House, placing others at the center of their own development truly sets coaching apart. Mentors and consultants help leaders get to places the mentor or consultant has already been. Coaching helps them get to where *no one* has ever been. The next section describes how coaching helps leaders chart their own course.

COACHING IN PRACTICE

Leaders and teams typically enter coaching with a particular problem: public speaking, difficulties with superiors, conflicts with teammates, career transitions, and so on. For these reasons, coaching sessions are intentional conversations that follow a specific structure. At the start, clients establish a topic and set goals. At the end, clients reflect and commit to taking action to further their growth. Bookending the conversation this way helps the coach create a “container” where clients can reflect and grow.

But for that reflection and growth to happen, coaches need to maintain clients' trust. One way coaches create trust is through confidentiality. Although coaching conversations are not protected like conversations with lawyers or psychotherapists, they are confidential. Even when sponsoring organizations or foundations want to monitor clients' progress, coaches never report specifics. What is said in coaching stays there, as long as clients are not doing anything illegal or dangerous.

Another big way coaches foster trust is through constantly deepening their capacity to listen interculturally. This is important everywhere but especially in the social sector. After all, many organizations work with minoritized populations, and many leaders themselves come from marginalized places. To keep their confidence, coaching has to take their experiences seriously.

Most important of all, coaches maintain trust by allowing clients to drive the conversation. Coaching meets clients where they are and goes wherever they want to go. It does not force them into a singular mold of best practices or advance an agenda. Every challenge is different, even if a client or coach has experienced something similar before. And clients always have a right to change the subject midstream. Coaching creates spaces for them to do as they wish.

Fostering trust is essential because the problems that worry us most reflect our greatest vulnerabilities. They push us into what the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1971) calls *boundary situations*: between what we know and what we do not, between where we feel safe and where we feel threatened. These moments are uncomfortable, even painful. But Jaspers observes that they are also *everywhere*. We leave childhood for adulthood, change careers, or clash with people from different cultures. We get fired from jobs we love. Market changes threaten programs that are our life's work. And all too soon, we have to let the next generation take the reins. Such moments speak to the deepest part of our leadership. *What* we need to do is less important than *who* we need to be.

The executive director and organization described above are facing many boundaries simultaneously. She is, after all, starting a new position with new colleagues and challenges. Beyond that, she and her organization are facing more fundamental boundaries: systemic racism, cultural change, and Covid-19. While boundaries can easily become causes for anxiety, coaching also sees them as opportunities. In fact, coaching is grateful for them, because they are calls to grow.

Where mentoring and consulting think through boundary situations with premade answers, coaching starts with questions, and for good reason. The questions people ask shape the way they see the world. Good questions open new possibilities and ways of seeing, prompt constructive ways of thinking, learning, and acting together, and remind leaders of how much they do not know. MIT professor Edgar Schein (2009) calls this approach *humble inquiry*, and it is core to how coaching works.

Questioning invites leaders to get curious about their organizations, their work, and themselves. It helps them move past reflexive responses to develop better approaches to problem-solving. Questioning well can also prompt the executive director and her leadership team to reframe their conflict: What kind of organization do we really want? What are we assuming about each other, our work, and our world? What possibilities do these assumptions open, and close down? How do we need to think and lead differently to make our vision a reality? Asking keeps leaders and teams from talking and justifying. When people question, they open spaces for listening to others and also to themselves.

Often, people think of listening and talking as happening one right after the other: a person says something, they receive a response, and they say something back. But Denison University professor Lisbeth Lipari (2014) says this just is not true. People are always listening and adapting to cues from others and their environment, often without knowing it. Becoming more conscious of that hidden process, Lipari argues, helps leaders see others anew.

Understandably, then, coaches prioritize listening. Kimsey-House and Kimsey-House (2011) describe it as having three levels. *Focused listening* refers to what people normally think of when it comes to listening: paying attention to words and gestures, the speed and tone of voice, and so on. Alongside that visible level are two others that are harder to spot. *Internal listening* helps people understand their

own feelings and responses to what they encounter. In contrast, *global listening* looks outward to understand what is never said at all: the emotions and assumptions lying behind what people say, the systems of relationships tying them together, and the shared histories driving them apart.

The leaders of the nonprofit we have been discussing urgently need to build this capacity. They absolutely need to communicate in ways that allow everyone to feel heard and seen. But they also need to learn to see what is going unheard and unseen. That includes the organization's culture, which the executive director may not have fully understood when she entered. It includes the legacy of systemic racism, which the organization may never have fully appreciated. And it includes the complex demands of Covid-19 that have thrown the organization into crisis.

Growing through these difficulties puts leaders in a vulnerable place. If we are doing our jobs right, we are always doing something new or even unprecedented. And we are always facing criticism of some sort. These reasons make it easy to focus on our weaknesses. Yet, David Cooperrider (2001), the organizational psychologist behind appreciative inquiry, argues that emphasizing deficits inhibits learning. Doing so makes us feel vulnerable, decreases our creativity, and limits our problem-solving ability. Leaning into what we do well, in contrast, increases our confidence and energy. We can address our weaknesses from a place of strength.

In our example, the organization's cultural deficiencies and the threats from Covid-19 are clear. But Cooperrider argues that emphasizing the organization's weaknesses and threats can drown out its strengths and opportunities. Writing with Jaqueline M. Stavros and D. Lynn Kelley, he (2008) encourages seeing Strengths and Opportunities as the foundation for defining Aspirations and Results. Where are we strong, and what are we getting right? What possibilities are open to us? How can we find our feet? What do we want to achieve? Where can we find hope? And how will we know when we get there? Instead of yet another SWOT, which encourages us to circle the wagons, coaching asks leaders to SOAR.

But it is one thing to say that we want to SOAR. It is another to put our money where our mouth is. As a result, coaching sessions end with clients planning to put their learning into practice. That sounds intimidating, but it does not have to be. We are not trying to change the world in one fell swoop. In fact, it is best if they are what Duquesne University professor Janie Harden Fritz (2013) describes as *micropractices*.

Micropractices are small, intentional moves that, over time, have big effects. Something as simple as learning not to talk over others can benefit our leadership tremendously. Just because they are small does not make them less challenging, though. At first, for instance, a leader might commit to noticing when they become defensive. But noticing they are becoming defensive is one thing. It is quite another to commit to stopping themselves before cutting someone off at the knees. And it is even bolder to go the extra step of saying, "You know, you might be right about that," especially when being right is what the leader loves the most! Each step develops the leader's capacity to lead themselves and others in progressively richer ways.

Of course, we often fail to keep our commitments. But failing at a practice can be even more helpful than succeeding because it helps us learn. This is true of the organization we have been discussing. Inclusion and resilience are extraordinarily important but also profoundly difficult goals. We should not be surprised if the organization's progress is uneven. But to succeed, the organization's leadership, board, and staff must commit to practicing their values, and remaining compassionate with themselves when they fail.

Working together, they might find that coaching leads them to see their boundaries differently. They become what the civil rights leader Howard Thurman (1974) calls *growing edges*. For Thurman, growing edges divide where we are from where we need to be. Maturing as leaders and organizations means learning to set up camp on those edges. Practices call leaders to pitch their tent, stake their claim, and challenge themselves to grow.

Table 1
Coaching Levels

Levels	Benefits	Drawbacks
Individual	The most established form of coaching. Facilitates a strong, flexible relationship for long- and short-term impact.	May not be enough to create large-scale change. May be cost-prohibitive for some.
Peer Group	Adapts an individual approach to a small group where everyone shares a similar experience or trait. Allows for mutual learning and support. Can be more affordable than individual coaching.	Requires people to be comfortable sharing in group settings. Requires commitment to attend meetings.
Team	Coaches a team, which is how most work is done. Appreciates the system emerging among the individual players.	Often demands individual work alongside the team.
Community	Draws together the three previous levels to foster macro-level change.	Can be complex. Requires extensive work and time to succeed.

LEVELS OF COACHING

Coaching is not a one-size-fits-all practice. Depending on the situation, coaches can work with individuals, groups, or even entire communities (Table 1).

Individual Coaching

Individual coaching works one-on-one with individual leaders and is the form coaching often takes. Leaders may be executives, emerging stars, or key players experiencing a challenge. Over time, individual coaching fosters intensive growth. But the impact of this growth can be limited. Individual coaching can improve individual leadership but may not be able to effect systemic change.

Peer Group Coaching

The leadership coaching group Reboot (2020) puts peer group coaching one step up from individual coaching. It brings together small groups of leaders facing similar challenges who want to grow together. The process is similar to individual coaching, with the added benefit of mutual support. Often, people—emerging leaders from marginalized groups, for instance—may feel alone in their struggles. Peer coaching helps them share experiences and learn from each other. It also offers a more cost-effective alternative to individual coaching. Still, participants must be comfortable sharing in groups and willing to commit to group meetings. If they cannot, then individual coaching is a better option.

Team Coaching

While individual coaching is important, most of our work happens on teams. Team coach Peter Hawkins (2017) observes that coaching can help teams answer several crucial questions: How can we meet the conflicting demands of everyone our organization affects? How can we drive organizational and social change while still getting our work done? How do we find our identity as a crew as the system

constantly rocks the boat? How can we negotiate technological change? How can we build the resilience to help our organization thrive in a complex world? Team coaching is like a peer group where the team is the connecting thread. But unlike peer groups, team coaching emphasizes the system emerging among the individual players. Team performance is paramount, with individual growth a close second. For this reason, team coaching is often best paired with individual work.

Community Coaching

Coaching approaches can extend beyond individuals and small groups. Writing in a report for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Mary Emery, Ken Hubbell, and Betsy Miles-Polka (2011) describe how coaching can help communities learn to solve problems together. Community coaches catalyze relationships and foster trust among stakeholder groups and the organizations serving them. They identify strengths, build capacity to overcome obstacles, and transform the community's beliefs about itself. Although new, community coaching offers an alternative to expert-driven interventions that honors local wisdom. But because of its complexity, it also requires more time to achieve results.

COACHING FOR RESONANCE IN VUCA TIMES

The four levels of coaching provide an interlocking model of leadership development. Working with individual leaders is just the start. Joining those leaders, either through peer groups or work teams, helps drive organizational change. And bringing organizations and stakeholders into conversation creates a foundation for community transformation. As Annie McKee, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Frances Johnson (2008) remark, while human systems are too complex to control, we can nevertheless encourage them to resonate to create alignment, purpose, and momentum.

That resonance, they argue, starts with individual leaders and teams. How can they lead themselves with integrity and vision? How can they communicate that vision and invite others to live it? How can they bring this vision to the human, economic, political, and natural environment around them? How can they respond to that complexity to bring healing and hope? In VUCA times, these essential questions point to our boundaries. They do not have easy answers, if they have answers at all. But we cannot retreat from them.

Coaching helps us embrace the growing edges of our leadership, edges that have been all too apparent in Covid-19. In summer 2021, the Forbes Funds, with support from the Jefferson Regional Foundation, sponsored two peer coaching groups with 10 leaders from historically marginalized groups: Black, Latinx, Asian, women, LGBTQ+, and refugees. Over three months, the two cohorts met six times for coaching around their leadership challenges.

Each session lasted approximately 75 minutes. After a brief check-in, cohort members presented topics that were the basis for the discussion. Then, a coach asked questions as the cohort members listened and responded to each other. Before finishing, the members reflected on their experiences and set goals to continue the learning. Alongside the conversations, members were also invited to read Stacy Abrams's *Lead From the Outside* and complete reflection exercises in an online course module.

Throughout the meetings, the groups covered a variety of topics emerging from their work. Unlike traditional learning circles following set curricula, participants themselves decided what to do. Although the meetings were self-directed, the groups challenged each other around leadership issues:

- How can I advocate for myself and my organization?
- How can I develop a more flexible leadership style? What is my leadership vision?
- What do I want in a team? What kind of leader do I need to be to have the team I want?
- How have we grown as an organization during Covid-19? How do we need to grow?

As they answered these questions, participants created knowledge they could apply directly in their work. But even more important, they created connections and supported each other. As members of one group said, they not only increased their knowledge, they discovered they were not alone.

Having someone with whom we can breathe, think, and grow is vital in VUCA times. And this is especially true for leaders, whose roles are often deeply isolating. When the world is in crisis, leaders have no one who can share their burdens. Coaches create spaces where leaders can share their burdens, explore their questions, and feel heard.

Today, leading is like being lost in a VUCA wilderness. But leaders are working in different wildernesses, and they need to find different pathways out. For some, the wilderness seems like a desert, with resources drying up and blowing away. For others, it feels like a jungle, where they are surrounded by snakes and quicksand. And for others, it is like a mountainside, where the only routes they know lie buried in snow.

Coaches meet leaders wherever they are. They walk beside leaders, helping them find their bearings, chart a course, and make their way out. And as they do, leaders transform their practice, their organizations, their communities, and their world.

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Toward a Post-Pandemic Pedagogy of Hope and Transformation

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article, which serves as an invitation to collaboration and future research, is to share the results of a phenomenographic exploration of how public school teachers in Western Pennsylvania kept their students engaged during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Rather than framing this experience as a hurdle to academic success—which, of course, it was—we highlight the benefits of instructional evolution: that is, we focus on those practices that would have otherwise never materialized if teachers were not forced to adapt from in-person to online learning.

This work should appeal to the Nonprofit Sector because it situates public education at the locus of post-pandemic recovery efforts. By examining how teachers engaged their students, we can begin to identify, rather than to simply speculate, on their needs. In addition to synthesizing the results of our research and presenting some preliminary insights, we offer some recommendations for connecting teachers and students with community resources.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from public school teachers ($n = 243$) and analyzed using constructivist grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 1994, 2000). In brief, we identified categories of description, or common themes, from survey responses, reviewed the categories in the context of similar scholarship, and drew conclusions about student engagement by examining the categories both individually and in relation to each other (Baker, 2021; Dick, Akbulut, & Matta, 2020).

We repeated this process twice: once to establish the umbrella themes of trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning, which are unpacked below, and once to establish the secondary categories that support and inform them. Our work became iterative as it became apparent that the umbrella themes alone were not sufficient for representing the complex work that teachers did to support their students both in and out of the classroom.

Mapping the Results

Rather than using tables or graphs, we present our data using “maps,” following the principles of a post-representational social cartography (Casebeer, 2018). This allows us to visualize rather than simply contextualize our findings, and we hope that readers will benefit from this additional discourse. In any case, it is important to view our maps as personal, or reflective, rather than scientific, conceptualizations of the data (Paulston & Liebman, 1994).

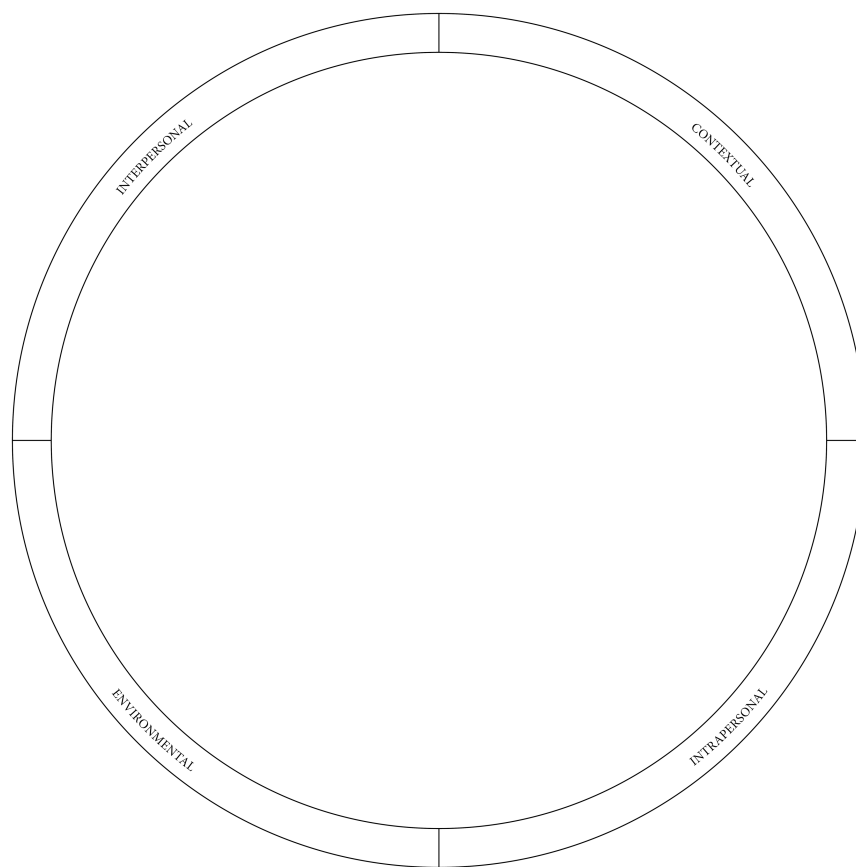


FIGURE 1. *Latent landscape, or “chora,” for cross-conceptual boundary-work.*

The landscape of our study is represented as an intertextual field composed of two dimensions (Figure 1). The first dimension, which examines external student engagement, runs from the Environmental, or Classroom Level, in the lower left to the Contextual, or Subject Level, in the upper right. The second dimension, which examines internal student engagement, runs from the Interpersonal, or Community Level, in the upper left to the Intrapersonal, or Individual Level, in the lower right.

As the maps are populated in the following sections, the secondary categories are presented as “orbs” whose size correspond to the number of data points. In order to determine the position of each these orbs, we used paper models to negotiate their relationships relative not only to the landscape, but also to each other. In a sense, each orb has its own “gravity” or “magnetic field,” and shifting the position of one of them shifts the positions of all of them.

RESULTS

Our research revealed dozens of qualitatively different ways that teachers engaged students during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, including trends in trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning. These trends are important not only because they provide insight into what is or is not working in the classroom, but also because they provide entry points and invite external stakeholders into the conversation.

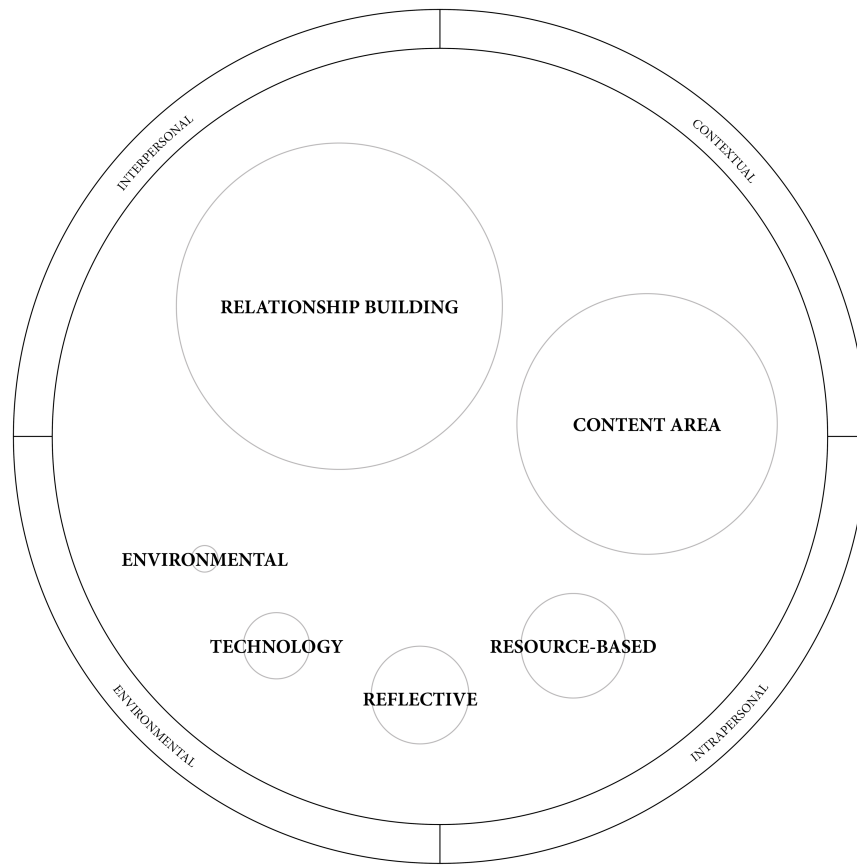


FIGURE 2. *Map of trauma-informed pedagogy during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic.*

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Trauma-informed pedagogy is about cultivating learning environments that acknowledge the role that trauma has played in students' lives: that is, acknowledging that students are the constant embodiment of their experiences. This is not about counseling or trauma disclosure—that is for specifically trained professionals—rather, it focuses on how teachers can become more effective and empathetic educators (Crosby, 2015).

Our data identified six kinds of instructional strategies that teachers employed for trauma-informed pedagogy. The strategies that were employed the most focused on 1. Relationship Building, such as individual check-ins; 2. Content Area Relevancy, such as assigning representative, or inclusive, texts in English Language Arts; and 3. External Resources, such as making sure that students were aware of places where they could obtain support for trauma outside of the classroom.

The strategies that were less popular but no less important focused on 4. Reflection, such as giving students space to examine their feelings in relation to course competencies; 5. Technology, such as using synchronous rather than asynchronous methods of engagement through online platforms including Zoom or Google Classroom; and 6. The Environment, such as cultivating peer-to-peer relationships of respect and rapport through open dialogue and discussion.

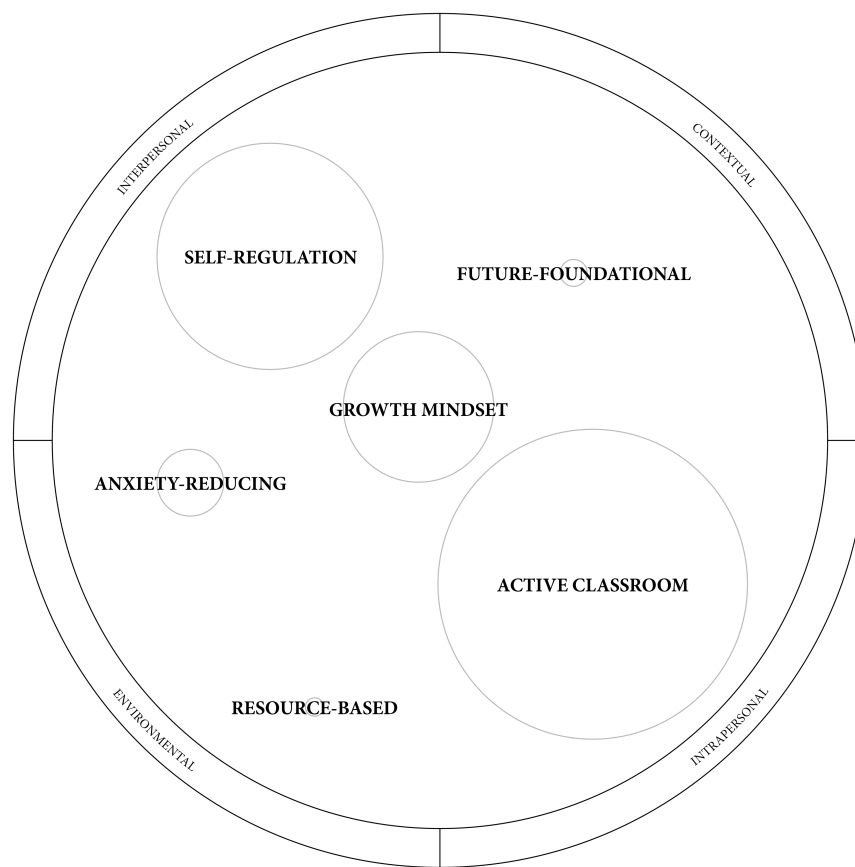


FIGURE 3. *Map of mindfulness education during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic.*

Mindfulness Education

Mindfulness education is the purposeful inclusion of mindfulness practices, such as meditation, across the curriculum. Unlike trauma-informed pedagogy, which is more of a mindset than a collection of specific strategies, this approach advances non-curricular activities that emphasize mental health and well-being. Even though these activities are not necessarily assessed, they are essential for adolescent growth and development (Leland, 2015).

Our data identified six kinds of instructional strategies that teachers employed for mindfulness education. The strategies that were employed the most focused on 1. Active Classroom Engagement, such as setting aside class time to meditate; 2. Self-Regulation, such as teaching students how to do breathing exercises on their own time; and 3. Cultivating a Growth Mindset, such as helping students realize that their talents can be developed, rather than accepting that “they are just bad at math.”

The strategies that were less popular but no less important focused on 4. Reducing Anxiety, such as teaching students how to use calendars and make lists for time management; 5. The Future, such as teaching students how to manage their expectations; and 6. External Resources, such as making sure that students were aware of places where they could learn more about strategies for mindfulness that were not actively used or presented in the classroom.

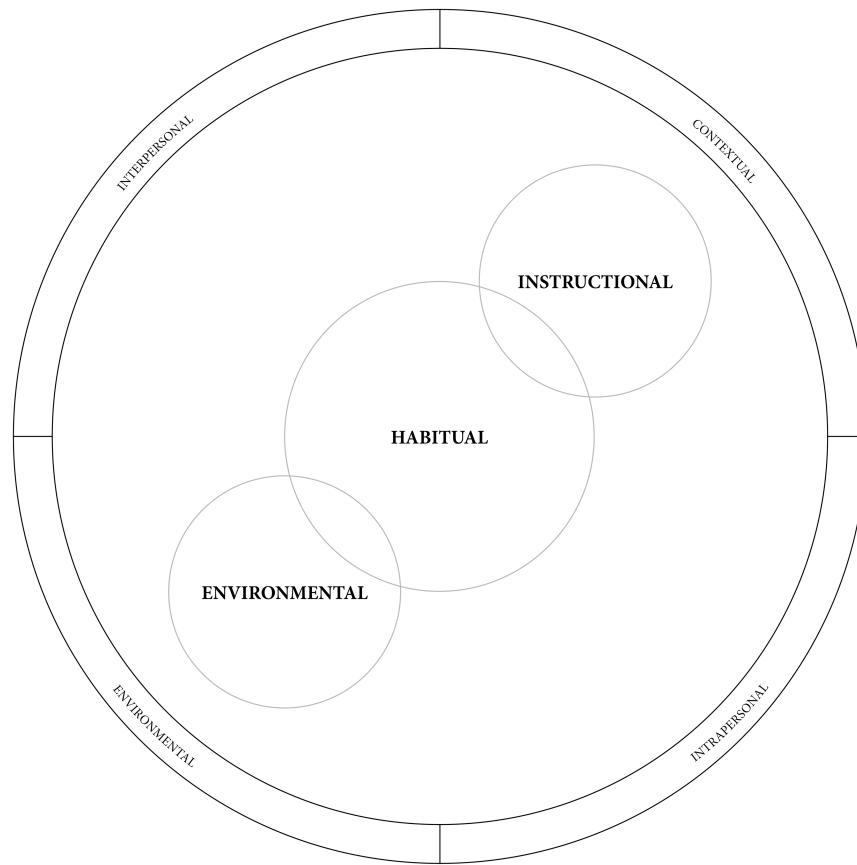


FIGURE 4. *Map of social-emotional learning during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic.*

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning refers to the process through which students acquire noncognitive skills, such as empathy, self-efficacy, and social awareness. It is a philosophy, like trauma-informed pedagogy, because it holds cognitive skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and noncognitive skills in the same esteem, and a set of specific practices, like mindfulness education, including role-playing and reflective writing (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Our data identified three kinds of instructional strategies that teachers employed for social-emotional learning: 1. Habitual, 2. Environmental, and 3. Instructional. Habitual strategies, which teachers used the most, include modeling positive behaviors. Environmental strategies include making sure that students saw not just themselves but people who identify in different ways represented in course materials. And instructional strategies include deliberately helping students build non-cognitive skills alongside course competencies, such as story exchanges.

Unlike the strategies for trauma-informed pedagogy and mindfulness education, we identified significant overlap in those for social-emotional learning. This is not to suggest that the secondary categories under the former themes are not closely related; rather, it suggests a sort of “continuum” of evolutionary practice related to the latter. In other words, the strategies identified build on each other and could have appeared in any of the categories rather than being restricted to one.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most exciting takeaway from our research is not what kinds of strategies that teachers are using for trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning, but that teachers are using those strategies to begin with. One of the benefits of the pandemic has been the deliberate uncoupling of high-stakes test scores from college admissions, and we contend that this has provided teachers with more time to focus on their students' well-being (Strauss, 2020).

With respect to trauma-informed pedagogy, teachers are more mindful than ever of the role that adverse childhood experiences, which range from parental depression to domestic violence, homelessness to incarceration, play in their students' lives. They understand that learning is an intentional and complex process, and that they need to nurture their own capacities for empathy in order to provide their students with emotional, as well as academic, support.

When it comes to mindfulness education, the deliberate attempt to help students self-regulate and develop a growth mindset, teachers are more willing than ever to make time for breathing exercises and meditation. Whereas the previous emphasis on standardized testing did not (generally) allow for the inclusion of such practices, there is evidence that teachers across grade levels and content areas are carving out opportunities for students to center themselves in the moment.

Finally, as far as social-emotional learning is concerned, teachers are cultivating students' non-cognitive skills in the context of course competencies more than ever before. In addition to making sure that their students feel safe and respected, there is a renewed emphasis on dialogic rather than didactic methods of engagement: that is, the shift in the cliched-but-still-relevant metaphors from "the sage on the stage" to "the guide on the side" (Morrison, 2014; King, 1993).

During the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as schools transitioned from in-person to online learning, educators were forced to reconsider what it means to teach. Rather than shying away from the challenge, many of them sought out new (at least to them) ways to engage their students, and, in doing so, adopted strategies for trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning that they will continue to employ when the pandemic is over.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited by anonymity. One of the strengths typically associated with grounded theory is the ability of researchers to enter a dialogue with participants to refine the categories of description and make sure that their responses are being accurately portrayed. We decided to sacrifice this step in order to gather as much data as possible. Now that we have a basic understanding of the strategies that teachers used, future research in this area will be conducted with interviews instead of surveys.

CONCLUSION

As nonprofits consider their priorities for the coming year(s), there is evidence to suggest that new partnerships should be explored across the Education Sector. The purpose of education, especially in public schools, will continue to be preparing students for democratic citizenship, but the decline of standardized testing has created spaces for alternative ways of helping them meet grade-level standards and course competencies.

While many teachers have taken it upon themselves to learn more about trauma-informed pedagogy, mindfulness education, and social-emotional learning, they can only do so much without additional resources. Nonprofits, especially those with connections to health and wellness, are in a position to make a difference. If possible, they should consider how they can support the renewed enthusiasm for noncognitive development in local schools.

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Developing Self-Awareness in Nonprofit Leaders to Decrease Burnout Post-Pandemic

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Jay read the email from his boss: “We need to meet up...” The email contained other information, but Jay could only focus on that last statement. Instantly he felt the drop in his stomach and thought “What did I do wrong? I hate this place.” Historically, his first inclination would be to start looking for a new job and to get angry at his boss. But this time was different. He took a breath, recognized that feeling in his stomach as a familiar body sensation that often represented feelings of shame that would spiral into negative thoughts about himself, the people he works with, and life in general.

It just so happened that when Jay got this particular email he was in the middle of real@work’s Leadership Development Series that focused on developing self-awareness and promoting relational health at work. He indicated that the skills he learned in the program disrupted a long standing cycle of starting off strong in a job but eventually becoming upset and disenfranchised with the work and hopping from employer to employer. This time, he was able to stop that destructive and familiar shame spiral, name what he was feeling, self-regulate, and have a productive conversation with his boss that led to an understanding that his talents and skills were a better fit for a new project and not a reflection of his inadequacy.

This change in tactic not only allowed him to continue to grow in his position, but also to give his supervisor some honest feedback. Ultimately, the organization was able to keep a good employee that felt heard and was committed to his work. Jay’s scenario is not uncommon. We bring our own narratives into everything we do and this ultimately shapes our performance as well as our work relationships. What Jay learned through some basic skill building and coaching gave him the emotional intelligence and self-awareness to mitigate potential burnout and engage in this situation differently.

Situations like Jay’s are an important part of the discussion on self-awareness and burnout in the workplace. In the recent literature on leadership and workplace performance, terms like self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and burnout have become highly discussed and debated topics of professional development, organizational health, and employee retention. This has become even more prominent amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic. The International Committee of the Red Cross (2020) found in a global survey that 51% of adults perceive that Covid-19 negatively affected their mental health. Similarly, the Stress in America (2021) study by the American Psychological Association states that 84% of American adults report emotions associated with prolonged stress. This issue of stress and burnout has become so widespread that a 2021 Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey reported that an overwhelming majority of CEOs agreed that employee mental health and well-being will continue to be a priority even after the pandemic is resolved (McBride & Finzi, 2021).

Burnout is complicated, insidious and distinctly personal. Renowned burnout researcher and University of California, Berkeley, Professor Christina Maslach and coauthor Michael P. Leiter from

Deakin University have identified three components of burnout; exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of inefficacy (Jimenez, 2021). Burnout has become enough of an issue that it is now included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases as an occupational phenomenon (World Health Organization, 2019). While burnout has a complex and personal presentation, the themes that emerge are connected and should be examined in detail.

A large part of the game plan to combat burnout is rooted in employee emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence is described as having five components: self-regulation, social skills, empathy, motivation, and self-awareness. Self-regulation is one's ability to calm yourself and to work through your own emotions. Social skills are one's ability to read and navigate social situations. Empathy is the ability to share and understand another person's feelings and motivation is simply understanding why we do what we do. The final part of emotional intelligence is having enough personal awareness to ask the questions that often come up when developing the other skills, such as "Why am I so angry right now? What must this be like for them? What is the appropriate thing to say?"

While self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation are important, without having an awareness of ourselves it is hard to know how and which of these skills to develop. Self-awareness can be broken down into internal and external components. According to *Harvard Business Review*, internal self-awareness "represents how clearly we see our own values, passions, aspirations, fit with our environment, reactions (including thoughts, feelings, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses), and impact on others," and external self-awareness is defined as "understanding how other people view us" in relation to the same factors. Those with a healthy level of internal self-awareness were better able to manage depression, anxiety and stress and were associated with "higher job and relationship satisfaction, personal and social control, and happiness." While those with a healthy level of external self-awareness rated well, "showing empathy and taking others' perspectives." This led to leaders that had more satisfied employees. Moreover, those same employees viewed their managers as more effective in their roles. Interestingly, that same study found that while most people believe they were self-aware, only 10-15% of the people actually fit the criteria (Eurich, 2018).

For nonprofits, this discussion should be expanded to burnout's cousin term, compassion fatigue. While burnout develops over time and is related to a person's occupation and can be relieved with a job change, compassion fatigue is related to the energetic cost and personal impact of providing care and service to others. GoodTherapy.org (2021) defines compassion fatigue as "a type of stress that results from helping or wanting to help those who are traumatized or under significant emotional duress." Understanding the nuance of these terms expands our insight to burnout's origin and provides us with an idea of how to combat burnout before it gets to its end stage. Compassion fatigue and its signs and symptoms can be seen as a precursor to burnout.

The goal of nonprofits at heart is to help, whether it be providing services to vulnerable populations, preserving the arts, fighting for climate change, or advocating for animals. The goal is to help that person, organization, cause, or community. The demands of their work make the employees of nonprofits more susceptible to a constant output of energy that contributes to compassion fatigue and ultimately burnout. Self-awareness of how a person's temperament and personal history may impact their boundaries and judgment is imperative when navigating complex relationships. In nonprofits, these relationships range through all levels of the organization; from the front line worker directly providing services to an executive director interfacing with both board members and employees to board members communicating with donors and community stakeholders.

Nonprofits are unique not only in the sense that their missions vary widely but that often their work reads and reflects what is happening in the culture at large. Most recently, 80% of nonprofits in Pennsylvania reported having experienced a revenue decrease while also seeing a 23% increase in

Table 1
Signs and Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue (Mathieu, 2012)

Components	Description
Physical	Physical exhaustion, insomnia or hypersomnia, headaches and migraines, increased susceptibility to illness and somatization and hypochondria)
Behavioral	Increased use of drugs and alcohol, other addictions, absenteeism, anger and irritability, exaggerated sense of responsibility, avoidance of clients, impaired ability to make decisions, forgetfulness, problems in personal relationships, attrition, and compromised care for clients
Psychological	Emotional exhaustion, distancing, negative self-image, depression, reduced ability to feel empathy and sympathy, cynicism and embitterment, resentment, dread of working with certain clients, feeling professional helplessness, diminished sense of enjoyment/career, and disruption of world view/heightened anxiety or irrational fears, increased personal sense of responsibility, inability to tolerate strong feelings, problems with intimacy, hypervigilance, intrusive imagery, hypersensitivity to emotionally charged stimuli, insensitivity to emotional material, loss of hope, difficulty separating personal and professional lives, and failure to nurture and develop non-work related aspects of life.

services (The Fourth Economy, 2020). Retaining employees, maintaining job engagement and productivity and increasing employee confidence have become even more important. This necessitates the need for nonprofits to be fluid in the way they interface on all levels of the organization.

If we look at burnout as the occupational end stage of untreated compassion fatigue we can start to develop an approach to combat the impact of burnout before it is too late. In the Francoise Mathieu *Compassion Fatigue Workbook*, it breaks down the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue into physical, behavioral and psychological components (Mathieu, 2012). When we go into detail on what some of the signs are, it is easy to make the connection with the exhaustion, cynicism and feelings of inefficacy that are the hallmarks of burnout and to create some awareness of its presentation.

The question becomes how can organizations effectively develop self-awareness in their leaders so that they are able to notice these signs in themselves and others and more importantly be able to talk about them openly creating an environment of psychological safety? From September 2019 to June 2021 real@work, a division of Spero Group aimed at providing coaching services with a mental health twist to businesses, provided a coaching/training hybrid model to 46 directors, managers, and supervisors at two human service nonprofit organizations providing services to 18 counties.

The program was designed to address and improve emotional and relational intelligence. Self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence. Organizations that spend time developing it in their employees often create a culture of psychological safety. In addition to this, Bracht et al found a connection between a leader's self-awareness and their subordinates' leadership emergence and promotion. (Bracht, 2012). It is a practice that everyone can develop and maintain. The program utilized teaching through educational training and reinforced it through a coaching approach. This combination of education and coaching resulted in an increase in the confidence in the leaders worked with and improved communication skills and relationships. The Institute of Coaching described the unique attributes of a coaching approach "Unlike a training program or other educational modality, the

coaching process occurs in real-time, is confidential and customized, and can therefore increase the speed of learning and adoption of new skills, thinking and behaviors. In the alchemy of human change *and growth*, the coach acts as a catalyst, enabling and accelerating individual change, growth, and transformation” (Institute of Coaching, 2021).

The emotional intelligence and self-awareness cultivated through this coaching approach created a culture of psychological safety. Psychological safety, defined as “an environment or relationship in which members aren’t afraid to speak up, be themselves, admit to their mistakes, or offer honest feedback” is created through self-aware leadership (Lindzon, 2021).

In turn, self-aware leadership has a negative relationship with burnout and a positive relationship with job satisfaction and performance, as well as an employee’s general well-being. With emotional and relational intelligence at the core of what the program was designed to do, the coaching approach provided a way for each person to engage and work on areas of development at a personal level in a safe but challenging format. When a person is working one on one with a coach it is difficult to sit in the back of the room and think about everything you have to do when you get back to the office.

Those factors were instrumental in the program’s design; a cohort of 10-12 people that spanned a period of approximately four months with the first and last meetings of the series being group sessions and the eight sessions in between conducted on an individual basis. Some were face to face while others were virtual or telephonic. The series is designed to build on itself and employs a coaching approach which reinforces the skills and gives participants interactive feedback and time to employ and utilize what is talked about in session.

Like Jay, other participants in this program were able to uniquely incorporate their learning in real time. A group of three managers that were moving through the program together, collaborated to put up posters to remind their staff to breathe and made social media posts supporting this change. One of these managers reported that when supervising a staff person, who would often use supervision time to vent about what was going wrong and how difficult other staff people were being as well as an unending list of frustrations with clients, he would quietly tap a poster with “Breathe.” He used it as a way to model the new skills of mindfulness to shift the supervision time to a more productive use of time, one that went beyond the surface complaints to a more complex and normalizing understanding of that staff person’s emotional output. The result was a shift from overt complaining in the office to the start of a more meaningful understanding of the frustrations that most of us experience and that we can actively manage those feelings. The trio reported that the office had started to become healthier and more open.

In another scenario, a hard charging new manager learned the value of developing empathy and boundary setting. This leader was particularly adept at getting things done with little instruction and would often take the initiative to solve problems and develop creative solutions. This was a win for his boss who was ecstatic to have such a go-getter and they continued to give him new work that he eagerly accepted. The increased responsibility and reinforcement from his boss made him eager to continue to perform at a level that would continue to earn him kudos. This began to pull at the edges of his personal and family time as well as instill a sense of grandiosity, or feeling superior, that radiated outward to his co-workers and subordinates. He was still able to get things done but he often would step on other people’s toes and move forward with the increased workload with little thought about the impact it had on his staff. Through the program, he developed some external self-awareness, and gained insight into how his co-workers were beginning to not be honest with him about what they were experiencing or with ideas that they had about how to do their jobs because they didn’t feel as though he would listen. They had started to develop an attitude of “why bother?” This person was very likable and he could have continued on in a fairly effective manner. However, he recognized that he did not want to be that kind of leader. He began to actively ask himself how his words and actions

would impact those around him. He also began to recognize that his current pace may not be tenable in the long run and had started to make some changes that allowed space for both his professional ambitions and his personal life.

These examples demonstrate how greater emotional intelligence promotes a more developed and evolving self-awareness that can decrease burnout. The correlation to developing this in leaders will have a trickledown effect on an entire organization, thereby making it healthier. Amy Edmundson, the Harvard Business School professor of leadership and management who is widely credited for bringing psychological safety to the culture has said, “In particular, people in positions of power or supervision can and do create more psychological safety when they ask more questions, listen to the answer, and when they acknowledge their own shortcomings... These often-subtle invitations for candor and honesty breed a culture where employees feel comfortable bringing forward ideas, admitting to their mistakes and providing honest feedback without fear of repercussion” (Lindzon, 2021).

Brené Brown is one of the most influential thought leaders in the area of vulnerability and humanity at work. She eloquently calls for change “We desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts, rather than unevolved leaders who lead from hurt and fear. Without self-awareness and the ability to manage our emotions we often lead from hurt, not heart” (Brown, 2018).

In this time of massive change and uncertainty in our world, self-aware leaders are going to be a key part of the future workplace. Through the pandemic many of us shed the skin of who we thought we had to be when we walked into work. It has been a gift for most, but it has also highlighted a deficit in skills. To be an effective leader, one who is able to have an awareness of their own narrative and how that interweaves with others, will be necessary to create a psychologically safe workplace. It is our hope and belief that this safety will allow their employees to be comfortable sharing experiences and mitigate the impact of burnout.

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APPENDIX

Table A1
Leadership Development Series Curriculum

Values	Group session to explore individual values and discuss how they interact as a group and establish a cohort feel to the series. This session lays the groundwork for self-awareness development.
Strengths, Individual Goal Setting, and Introduction to Relational Health	First individual session, we use the VIA Strengths Finder, introduce the concept of relational health and develop individual goals for the program. Identifying individual strengths, values and goals helps to establish motivation for participating in the program.
Intro to Brain Function	Basic principles of how our brains work, particularly when under stress, through an accessible understanding of neuroscience and how this is connected to how we function as it relates to self-regulation.
Reactivity and Responsiveness	Explore our first level reactivity in situations and ways to use mindfulness skills to move into a second level conscious responsiveness, another self-regulation tool.
Connection Between our Thoughts, Emotions, Body Sensations, and Actions	Introduction of the basic concepts of Cognitive Behavioral and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies to explore the connection between our thoughts, emotions, body sensations and actions, identifying and challenging unhelpful thinking styles and dialectical thinking or the concept of accepting that two opposing ideas can exist at the same time. Learning to identify our emotions is a key step in developing empathy for other people.
Boundaries and Personal Meaning Making	Building on the self-awareness gained from previous sessions, we introduce boundary work that starts by using the work of Brene Brown and practical exercises around psychological boundary creation.
Communication	We move into communication skills by using the passive/aggressive continuum and a modified version of Terry Real’s Feedback Wheel, which combines meaning making with speaking from a place of “I.” Clear communication helps to build social skills that allow us to interact well with other people.

(continued)

Table A1 (continued)
Leadership Development Series Curriculum

Operating from the Wisest Part of Ourselves	The use of Dr. Dan Siegel's Window of Tolerance as a tool to recognize and label personal behavior and thoughts and build skill around working from the most functional part of yourself. This area of self-regulation helps us learn how to be flexible, adaptable and able to diffuse tense situations.
Relational Positioning	Return to relational skills for our last individual session with the introduction of Terry Real's innovative self-awareness tool the Relationship Grid. The ability to know how you are showing up helps employees develop leadership skills, including the ability to sense power dynamics at play.
Wrap-up and Integration	The last session is back as a group with an integration of personal and professional skills and the development of plans for future personal growth.



DISCOVERing Southwestern Pennsylvania

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OVERVIEW

Community-scale change requires broad stakeholder engagement and a shared narrative that reaches and moves decision makers. DISCOVER (Defining Intersectional Sustainability to Collaboratively Optimize for a Vibrant and Equitable Region) builds beyond data and measurement, creating a shared, inclusive framework for measuring progress, coordinating communications, and driving interventions toward regional sustainability outcomes and policies. As a measurement project and as a network of organizations, DISCOVER's goal is to supply the engagement and structure to define regional success and make sure that what gets measured, actually gets managed.

Given the complexity of stakeholder relationships and the obstacles to achieving accessibility, equity and inclusion, comprehensive conversations and connections between existing networks are needed to support transformative change. Fragmentation in many sectors, including in local government and the Nonprofit Sector, is a significant challenge. Allegheny County alone is home to 130

different municipalities, including 30 which share a direct border with the City of Pittsburgh. Many organizations in different sectors have tracked measures of sustainability progress in the region, and have, in aggregate, produced dozens of reports in recent years. However, alignment, community engagement, and shared storytelling about these measurements have generally been poor. Further, these efforts are not often built upon a sustainable data infrastructure and the data does not appropriately guide decision making. In this fragmented and siloed context, the need for greater alignment has become clear.

Additionally, for generations, racial and economic inequities have been reinforced. Racial disparities between the white and African-American populations across a wide range of indicators, including employment, education, health outcomes, and exposure to pollution, are large compared to other places in the country, as explored in the City of Pittsburgh's 2019 report, "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race" (Howell et al., 2019).

At the same time, this is a region in transition. Important gains have been made in diversifying the local economy. A rich landscape of organizations is working to improve quality of life. Many local governments and community groups are looking to sustainability as a solution to their community development priorities. Conversations about the interplay between racial disparities, climate and environment, resilience, health, and economic development are becoming common. In many ways, the stage is set for rapid changes that include sustainable development and the promise of opportunity.

PROJECT APPROACH

We know from the literature that indicators can have tremendous value in shaping and providing feedback on policy, but most measurement indicators projects do not have the impacts that proponents hope. Research shows that for indicators to be institutionalized by a community, they must be developed through a deliberate public process, and grounded in a realistic model of how information can influence policies, strategies, and actions. Patience is required; the learning and discourse needed to identify indicators and produce data, and to influence policy, can take many years (Innes & Booher, 2000). Our work also leans on the experience and example of reporting on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) happening in Pittsburgh as well as other cities (City of Los Angeles, 2021; Opdyke, 2020).

Embedding Equity

Equity issues have an impact on all areas of work, and it is the goal of the DISCOVER Project to ensure that equity is at the forefront of our work. Regardless of working group, prioritizing equity is the only way to truly reach regional sustainability.

Cross-Sector Conversations

The DISCOVER project is as much about process as it is product. The act of bringing organizations together from many different sectors and disciplines to discuss sustainability helps to encourage collaboration and understanding, and creates outcomes that are not possible in any other way.

Data Collection

Using a methodology that uses the framework of the 17 UN SDGs and their targets, indicators will be identified for measurement. Using mostly existing datasets that can be accessed through the larger DISCOVER network, key data will be collected and available for regional level analysis.

Regional Story-Telling

Using shared data will allow us to draw conclusions about sustainability initiatives in the region, help identify gaps, and create a shared regional narrative. There have been many initiatives that have focused on tracking sustainability in the region; it is the goal of DISCOVER to find the alignment between these efforts, reflect the topics they emphasize, and ensure that as a region we begin talking about sustainability using the same language. Bi-directional learning between the network and the organizations of which it is composed will also help support the work of partner networks and organizations.

Informed Interventions

A shared narrative with many supporting organizations and leaders engaged from the beginning can help to inform policymaking and other outcomes. Through the collection of data in support of a shared regional narrative, we can inform positive policy change and other interventions leading to a more sustainable, vibrant, and equitable region.

Model Process

Many cities around the world have completed a UN SDG localization process; however, to our knowledge, there has not yet been a regional effort to do so in the United States. Our goal is to create a process model for regionalizing the UN SDGs that other regions might use. This project may thus encourage more regions to build cross-sector networks, share data, create regional narratives, and institute informed interventions.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

As the early conversations that would later develop into the more formal structures of this project took place in late 2019, several needs emerged in service to the project goals. The group asked itself philosophical questions about geographic scope and the best way to approach the task of describing success for a set of topics as broad as “sustainability.” A geographic region larger than Allegheny County was decided upon as ideal, because choices made throughout the region of southwestern PA deeply affect the overall ability for progress, especially environmental progress.

The 17 UN SDGs were chosen as a framework for DISCOVER for multiple reasons, including their broad appeal and applicability to institutions across sectors, as demonstrated by existing regional adoption, from the City of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, to other nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Evoqua Water Technologies, 2021).

In addition, the UN SDG framework can help translate the work that the region is doing into a national and global context (Altman, 2021). Lastly, the framework is inherently cross-disciplinary, recognizing that to have an appropriate conversation about climate change, for instance, you must have voices in the room who can speak knowledgeably about education, economic development, and environmental justice.

The 17 goals were divided, in a process analogous to that completed by the City of Pittsburgh for its Voluntary Local Review, into four categories: equity, environment, infrastructure, and health. A diversity of relevant organizations were invited to send a representative to participate in a working group to do concept mapping and visioning for each topic, and define a set of indicators, with the work organized by a steering committee. Since March of 2020, because of the pandemic, all monthly working group and steering committee meetings have been held virtually over Zoom.

Each organization involved in the steering committee is a well-established leader and convener in the region and together, we have been actively engaged in work on this initiative for two years. Organizations that have participated on the steering committee include Sustainable Pittsburgh, CONNECT (CONgress of NEighboring CommuniTies), the Western PA Regional Data Center, UrbanKind Institute, the City of Pittsburgh, New Sun Rising, and The Forbes Funds; and individuals bringing specific expertise on the UN SDGs, like Alex Hiniker, who led Carnegie Mellon University's Voluntary University Review, and Savita Mullapudi Narasimhan, who has worked with the Asian Development Bank and World Bank group on SDG alignment as a senior consultant.

As the project progresses, the steering committee will also be responsible for formulating the data analysis and tracking methodology and communications strategy of the overall work. To date, Sustainable Pittsburgh, UrbanKind Institute, and CONNECT have regularly participated in each working group as well.

The first working group to be assembled, in fall 2020, was the Equity Working Group, because of the important and timely opportunity to engage deeply on these topics, and the central nature of regional equity issues to the success of the whole effort. Groups participating in the Equity Working Group have deep community ties and strong expertise with many different populations in the region. From the YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh to Age Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, Casa San Jose, the Allegheny County Health Department and the Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation, each of the 16 organizations engaged in conversation has added important perspective to the creation of a regional vision and relevant measures.

The Environment Working Group was convened in early 2021, again with representation from groups that can have meaningful and well-rounded conversations. The Pittsburgh Water Collaborative, the Allegheny Land Trust, Women for a Healthy Environment, and the steering committee members mentioned above, are some of the 11 organizations that have participated in the environment conversations so far.

Capacity, in terms of the need for overall coordination and convening, as well as data collection and analysis are key needs, in addition to a requirement to plan for the longevity of a project designed to track and measure progress over time. Because we understand the immense resource needs associated with collecting new data in an ongoing way, DISCOVER will leverage existing data sources wherever possible and relies on partner organizations to suggest appropriate sources of relevant information.

Through the many organizations partnering, DISCOVER has a wide reach and ability to learn from and align to several other key regional efforts. CONNECT's multi-municipal Climate Action Plan (CAP) process and Equitable and Just Greater Pittsburgh (EJGP) are just two good examples of where DISCOVER's data collection and narrative development can help serve a reinforcing purpose, bolstering existing efforts and spreading awareness between organizations about sustainability work happening in the region (CONNECT Infrastructure & Utilities Coordination Working Group, 2021).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Progress to date for DISCOVER includes the convening of two of four planned working groups since fall of 2020. Through facilitated conversation with over 30 governmental, non-profit, and private sector organizations, these working groups have begun the creation of a set of comprehensive sustainability indicators, using the UN SDGs as a discussion framework. The process starts with invitations to critical partners to join the conversation and a broad concept mapping exercise. This concept mapping is accomplished with participants asked the question "What does it look like if we achieve X?" where X is one of the UN SDG umbrella goals, like "No Poverty" or "Climate Action." Following this discussion, the thoughts are organized into targets that can describe that ideal state, and data

sources. To date, two of the 17 UN SDGs have been covered by the description of 15 targets and indicators that can help track each. One essential piece of the DISCOVER work is the regional perspective. The UN SDG framework was originally developed to describe the behavior of nation-states, and there are many places where the needs and specific challenges of our region must be highlighted. The process, as well as the targets and indicators so far created are further described in this section, and enable us to shape our regional story on these important topics.

Working Group Process, Results, and Key Insights

The Equity Working Group, as one of its first actions, originated an equity vision statement intended to be used by the rest of the group to center equity throughout the DISCOVER conversations. This vision statement is as follows: “We will be a region where all people, across race, age, sex, SOGIE [sexual orientation, gender expression or identity], disability, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, are enabled and empowered to have basic needs met, exercise self-determination, and realize their full potential.” While not an ordered list, race was placed first in the list purposefully, acknowledging the significant regional challenges we face regarding race and racial disparities. This placement and elevation of the importance of racial equity is also an example of how our regional approach places specific emphasis where it is needed; the original UN SDG framework has few specific mentions of race as a key component of the targets and indicators ascribed to equity goals.

By starting with UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, the Equity Working Group has already had the opportunity to discuss many important themes. While “Reduced Inequalities” sounds quite broad, in the interest of keeping a manageable scope for the conversations and consistency with the UN SDG framework, the discussion focused specifically on inclusion, in the political process, as well as economic and social inclusion. We held two visioning sessions to discuss the equity needs of the Southwest PA region following these prompts: What do the issues of social inclusion, economic inclusion, political inclusion, and migration policies ideally look like for Southwest PA in the future? And what do each of the targets under UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities ideally look like for Southwest PA in the future? We then created eight regionalized targets from the defined equity needs of the region, and collaboratively compiled a list of relevant existing indicators to track and measure the regionalized targets. The regionalized targets and the UN SDG targets to which they track are listed in Table 1. Participants in the Equity Working Group report benefits from the discussions, including learnings from other partners about concepts, language, best practices, and awareness about useful data sources.

The Environment Working Group decided to first address Life on Land, which is UN SDG 15. This group followed the same path from visioning to target creation, with the results shown in Table 2. Of note, the Working Group decided to create a target specifically to address air quality, a known regional challenge and for which copious data exist, but a target not emphasized specifically by the original UN SDG framework. Other, less relevant targets were dropped from consideration, such as elements having to do with poaching, or desertification. The Environment Working Group focused its discussion on ecosystem preservation and biodiversity around the forest ecosystems that define our region, and clearly included connections to known regional concerns about landslides and climate change impacts in the target creation.

Following the definition of targets by the working groups, each group also listed potential data sources, both publicly available and organization-based, associated with each target (not shown). From this exercise, a finding has been the degree to which associated data was not available. This was found especially for the equity group’s defined targets. For example, true economic inclusion means everyone in the region, but we have little to no data on undocumented persons. As another example, little granular information has existed about inclusion of our immigrant population, or our older population, in the social fabric. Though an obstacle in some sense, it is helpful to understand these gaps and

what they tell us about future directions and the region's data needs. By contrast, at both the local and state level, from impaired or disrupted ecosystems to invasive species, we found that data sources were relatively easy to identify for most of the environmental targets. This supports the idea that there is a need for more and better understanding of some specific facets of sustainability in the region and perhaps suggests that inequities persist in what data is available.

Network Leadership Training

One important feature of the DISCOVER project is that it serves not only as a network of organizations and individuals, but also provides an opportunity for linkages between many other networks. This is possible through the forums that DISCOVER creates for interaction between players, and the explicit goal of supporting other regional efforts. In fall of 2021, CONNECT, in partnership with New Sun Rising and Sustainable Pittsburgh, convened a four-session network leadership training for 39 intersecting network leaders, in DISCOVER and in adjacent and connected networks. The training was designed and facilitated by the Institute for Conservation Leadership and was supported by The Forbes Funds. The learnings about network flexibility and mindset are specifically valuable to ensuring that the work of DISCOVER and other regional networks can continue to adapt, grow, and remain effective for the needed duration of the work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Leaders in the non-profit and philanthropy sectors as well as those in business and government will benefit from the work of the DISCOVER project through the direct use of the data the project produces and a stronger case for targeted action. DISCOVER is a project with the power to strengthen leadership, reinforce and amplify collaborative effort, and support informed decision-making in our region. By participating in DISCOVER, organizations have the opportunity to increase their impact and promote the needs of the populations they serve. While this first report focuses heavily on our process and early emerging narratives, we look forward to future opportunities to report on additional findings, including data analysis and conclusions. The work of DISCOVER is ambitious, but, we believe, necessary for achieving a shared vision of regional sustainability.

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APPENDIX

Table A1
Regional Targets and UN SDG Analogs for Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Regional Target	UN SDG Analog
By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of over-burdened and under-resourced populations at a rate higher than the national average, paying special attention to the varying needs across these populations.	10.1: By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.
Achieve proportional representation in each economic sector, and at each level of seniority within.	10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
Improve turnout rates of elections through the increase of access to polls and the protection of voter rights, and candidate diversity, paying special attention to the needs of under-represented populations.	
Ensure all populations have a connection to social fabric in a way that enables success and eliminates social isolation.	10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
Increase access to care across generations, healthcare, and paid sick leave.	
Eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices within the policing and justice systems to ensure equitable treatment of all.	
Ensure enhanced representation and voice for marginalized populations in decision-making in regional economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.	10.6: Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.

(continued)

Table A1 (continued)
Regional Targets and UN SDG Analogs for Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Regional Target	UN SDG Analog
Establish a welcoming and accessible environment to all immigrants through increased connectivity to basic services, education, and employment, and ensure language accessibility for necessary documents and services. Paying special attention to the needs of undocumented persons.	10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Table A2
Regional Targets and UN SDG Analogs for Goal 15: Life on Land

Regional Target	UN SDG Analog
Ensure the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and their services, with particular attention to forests and the remediation of brownfields. Preserve and expand contiguous green space and empower citizens with resources for better stewardship.	15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.
Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and provide permanent protection for the largest blocks of SWPA forests.	15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.
Combat degradation of soil and landslides as a result of increased precipitation and extreme weather events brought on by global climate change. Restore degraded land and soil including land affected by drought and floods and strive to achieve a land degradation- neutral region.	15.3: By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.
Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.	15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

(continued)

Table A2 (continued)
Regional Targets and UN SDG Analogs for Goal 15: Life on Land

Regional Target	UN SDG Analog
Introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.	15.8: By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.
Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into financial planning, local planning, development processes, procurement strategies, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.	15.9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts
	15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.
Improve air quality in the region through strategies such as investing in clean energy, reuse or remediation of historically polluting sources, mitigation of climate change, increase of urban greenspace, implementation of a building stock to improve indoor air quality, and implementation of clean transportation. Taking special care to provide quality jobs for union workers who are transitioning from extractive industry.	N/A



Accountability for the Nonprofit Sector: It's Time for a Hard Look

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INTRODUCTION

We propose an accountability of the Nonprofit Sector. We also suggest limiting the tax expenditures of the wealthiest nonprofits, and then investing the funds recovered for local and national projects. The “charitable exemption” from both federal and local tax is a largely unexamined and unevaluated piece of public policy.

Secondly, the transcendental challenges currently facing American society require an out-of-the-box, critical rethinking of a vast array of accepted policies and practices with which we have become comfortable. We propose what we call “reflective research,” which is a kind of qualitative research based on common issues with which you have deep experience, rather than a series of interviews with a designated sample.

As of 2019, the United States has over two million federally funded 501(c) tax-exempt organizations, including more than one million 501(c)(3) public charities. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of voluntary organizations. Taken together they compromise a vital Nonprofit Sector that provides services to communities across our society. Nonprofits employ about 10% of the workforce. About 50% of all nonprofit employment is in healthcare, 16% is in education, 10% is in religious organizations, 2% is in the arts, and 7% is in social services (Salamon & Newhouse, 2019).

The Nonprofit Sector is one place that could benefit from such critical reevaluation. For example, large nonprofits are experiencing the “Scrooge McDuck Syndrome,” warehousing billions in assets with minimal accountability or oversight. Apparently, these big-money box organizations, like Scrooge, seem to just like having their resources around. Sometimes they even seek additional public funds when they have ample funds of their own. It may be true that “power corrupts” and that “money is the root of all evil,” but we do not have to go that far, since money and power are intertwined, much like a double helix (Tropman & Blackburn, 2020).

OUR MODEST PROPOSAL

In a recent paper in *Nonprofit Quarterly*, we offered a “modest proposal” to: 1. limit warehousing of federal tax-sheltered funds; 2. limit local tax forgiveness on land and real property, which typically are exempt from local property tax; and 3. use the recovered tax dollars to create a venture capital fund for the Nonprofit Sector (Tropman & Blackburn, 2020).

There are some additional issues as well. Tax policies do not affect all nonprofits or all donors equally. Large donors are privileged by the current tax codes. Besides, the gift requirements that donors might attach and exercise through “donor intents” affect what nonprofits do and do not do, so large gifts can set the agendas of recipient organizations.

To be clear, we are not suggesting that the charitable deduction for individuals be changed, but noting the cost to individuals of some of the income from the nonprofit's holdings that would have been paid in taxes. As well, there would be limits on tax forgiveness on local property to prevent elite institutions from "owning large."

In this article, we suggest that Congress set up a national commission to study the Nonprofit Sector broadly, and ultimately to frame legislation that would establish national standards for nonprofits similar to the architecture of the Sarbanes Oxley Act. This new legislation should be tailored to the responsibilities generated by the tax expenditures they receive. It would mandate requirements, including regular audits, regular change of auditors, standards of governance, and suggested compensation standards.

ISSUES AND IMPROVEMENTS FROM THE PAST

The Saint Paul Family Study (1950)

The Saint Paul Family Study was a mid-century study of social services in Saint Paul, Minnesota that revealed a serious overlap of services. The implementation and actualization of this issue suggested that the coordination of services was lackluster, locally and nationally, and called for a "coordination of services" that continues, in one way or another, to this day.

In Search of Excellence (1980)

In Search of Excellence by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman examined many firms that, on a combination of measures, were performing well to excellent. They concluded that excellence encompassed eight themes: 1. having a bias for active decision making; 2. being close to the customer; 3. fostering innovation and nurturing "champions"; 4. treating rank-and-file employees as a "source of quality"; 5. showing management commitment with "hands-on," value-driven commitment; 6. staying with the business you know; 7. keeping staff lean and minimal; and 8. having simultaneously "loose and tight" properties, emphasizing autonomous but centralized values.

A Study in Excellence (1989)

A Study in Excellence was a national study of the Nonprofit Sector, stimulated by the Peters and Waterman volume and conducted by the National Assembly of Voluntary Health and Welfare Organizations. It looked at 270 nonprofit executives that were nominated by 29 national organizations, and focused mainly on the leadership/management cadre, the so-called "Excellent Community Leaders" or "EXLs." This study is descriptive rather than prescriptive, and, unlike the book by Peters and Waterman, comes out with no list of excellent leadership qualities. One of its most defining characteristics is the belief in their agency's mission, which could perhaps limit innovation and in-depth analysis, something that was not mentioned in the study.

Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness (1999)

Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness was a literature review by Monica Huer for the Fannie May Foundation. She noted seven barriers to success: 1. disinterest in funding program development, 2. separation of ideas and implementation, 3. the reluctance of the board to deal with difficulties, 4. time limitations, 5. technological advances that nonprofits haven't adjusted to, 6. unilateral instead of omnilateral strategies, and 7. the constraints of organizational culture.

Good to Great (2001)

Good to Great was a “sequel” to *In Search of Excellence* by Jim Collins. The book articulates numerous principles that define great: 1. ensure you have humble, determined leaders; 2. get the right people on the bus in the right seats; 3. examine emerging market trends and, where you can, create customer value; 4. identify one strength area where you can create value better than anyone else; 5. focus all your resources toward that strength; 6. carefully apply technologies that accelerate your key strength; and 7. make steady, consistent progress in that area, avoiding distractions.

The Nonprofit Sector’s \$100 Billion Opportunity (2003)

This article in the *Harvard Business Review* addressed some of the problems and limitations of the Nonprofit Sector. Authors Bill Bradley, Paul Jansen, and Lee Silverman urged, “In the end, it’s not \$100 billion a year but rather millions of Americans with better health, safer streets, cleaner air, stronger schools, more affordable housing, greater hope, and bigger dreams that represent the real potential—and the truest inspiration to action.”

Good to Great and the Social Sectors (2005)

Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer was a small pamphlet by Collins about the Nonprofit (Social) Sector. There was much conversation that a nonprofit should be “more like a business.” Collins disagreed with the notion that nonprofits should be “more like a business,” saying that since most businesses fall somewhere between mediocre and good, why import the practices of mediocrity into the social sectors? Collins offers alternative measures for the nonprofit, such as superior performance, distinctive impact, and lasting endurance, and used an analysis of the Cleveland Symphony as an example, suggesting that the Nonprofit Sector needs to have different measures of excellence.

Forces for Good (2008)

Forces for Good applied Collins’ aforementioned approach to the Nonprofit Sector. Authors Leslie R. Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant identified 12 exemplary organizations, including: 1. America’s Second Harvest, 2. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 3. City Year, 4. Environmental Defense, 5. Exploritorium, 6. Habitat for Humanity, 7. The Heritage Foundation, 8. National Council of La Raza, 9. Self Help, 10. Share Our Strength, 11. Teach for America, and 12. YouthBuild USA. They tried to consolidate the major features that drove greatness, and came up with six key points: 1. advocate for better policies and provide services, 2. make markets work, 3. turn volunteers into “evangelists” for the organization, 4. nurture nonprofit networks, 5. master the art of adaptation, and 6. share leadership. These ideas have not been widely adopted by the Nonprofit Sector, although one could argue that these were things that most of the agencies in an exceptional category were doing already.

The Independent Sector

The work of the Independent Sector, a national membership organization, focuses on developing “standards of operation” for nonprofit boards of trustees. Under the leadership of Diana Aviv, a national committee produced a draft of key standards, which provided a “standard of care” for nonprofit governance. It has been widely ignored, and only four state-level nonprofit assistance organizations have agreed to co-brand with the Independent Sector.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Thus far, reviewing national efforts and understanding what drives “excellence” or “greatness” in both for-profit and nonprofit organizational systems, we have learned that each has flaws but has much to offer. Those specifically focused on nonprofits appear to have been largely ignored. The two focusing on for-profits have interesting findings, but we now have discovered that many of the “excellent” or “great” organizations have experienced serious setbacks and even dissolution. Greatness must be taken with a grain, or a shaker, of salt. As Chris Bradley (2017) points out, many of the greats turned out to be duds. Collins even wrote a book after *Good to Great* explaining that “luck” was very important—that is, actually exploiting the advantages that luck provides—in *Great by Choice* (2011). And the material is still worth reading and cogitating about, but there is no magic bullet. Furthermore, in our analysis, it is fit to mention some additional problems that beleaguer the sector. We will present these issues in three parts: 1. Organizational Issues, 2. Leadership Issues, and 3. Sector-Wide Issues. They intersect, but this is a way of at least partializing the problematic sector structure issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Passion-Driven Mindset

Many nonprofits are helping organizations that exist to address the plethora of human problems that beset us daily. The supply and press of human problems is essentially endless. In an attempt to meet this need agencies often concentrate their resources on services rather than advocacy and other more general policy solutions. Additionally, they are often driven by “lore” rather than evidence; they do not have time to do an evaluation, no less research. These issues can lead to less-than-best practices, organizational chaos, churning of staff, and need-based rather than evidence-based decision making.

Spotty Reporting

Nonprofits seldom mention the tax expenditure they enjoy, except as “endowment income” rather than “civic contribution,” and do not report on the stewardship of those funds, nor the management policies involving commercial and residential holdings. Their tax-protected status has led, in many cases, to a sense of entitlement.

Shadow Accountability

Spotty reporting is a piece of a larger problem: namely, “shadow accountability.” Nonprofits are essentially accountable to no one. Their accountability ends with the Board of Trustees. There is no public accountability. The Sarbanes Oxley Act, the bill developed to set requirements for public companies, is not a good fit for nonprofits, even though many states have folded them into the Sarbanes Requirement. Furthermore, “enforcement” is lax.

The Evolution of “Nonprofit” into an Operating Coda as Opposed to a Tax Status

Nonprofit is a tax status, and profit is the organizational equivalent of “wealth.” It is income received once expenses, including compensation, have been deducted. In nonprofits, we call that “surplus.” Since nonprofits have no shareholders, surplus cannot be distributed to them; it does not have to be spent either. But because of the passion-driven mindset, the nonprofit culture does not like to have “money in the bank,” although there are some exceptions. A fair number of people in and out of the

sector seem to think that “nonprofit” means you cannot have any surplus. If the organization does not have a surplus, it cannot invent and innovate. The irony is that for-profit companies and individual taxpayers are paying for services for nonprofit organizations and yet argue that they are working toward reducing taxpayer burden along with jobs and opportunities for economic growth at all levels of the economy. Given the recent Covid-19 Pandemic and economic collapse, we need to think more carefully about shared sacrifice and be more reflective about the level of responsibility we are going to ask everyone to take on so that the benefits can be shared equitably.

The Conflation of Outputs and Outcomes

There is a mixing of the difference between activities (outputs) and accomplishments (outcomes) that results in the almost inexorable substitution of the latter for the former. Impact assessment slips away and activity is reported. To be fair, this problem exists in all classes of organizations, but the imperative to assess the impact and evaluate effectiveness is an especial challenge for nonprofits. Peters and Waterman suggest that for organizations to be impactful, to be as good as they can be, they must be efficient (do the things right) and effective (do the right things).

The Prevalence of Wicked Problems

Human problems are complicated and multifaceted. The political scientists Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber developed this concept in 1973, and it has evolved into an extremely broad-based and useful conceptual scheme. A “wicked problem” has several properties that make problems extremely difficult to “solve,” “resolve,” or even have goals signaling resolution. Precipitating and predisposing causality are conflated. Boundaries—Who is the client? How long should help last?—are often a mystery. It is for this reason that the strategic plans of nonprofits are often opaque and hopeful rather than direct and measurable. Thus the need for scrutiny is seriously enhanced.

Lack of a “Standard of Care”

The Nonprofit Sector is a “States’ rights” community with a very thin federal structure. While a social contribution is supposed to be made in consideration of their receipt of tax expenditure, exactly how that contribution is to be measured and what impact it may be having is unclear. Metrics are variable. There is often confusion between outputs and outcomes, a confusion exacerbated by the nature of the “wicked problems” that nonprofits generally address.

Isomorphic Functionality

There are some situations, such as nursing homes, gyms (the YMCA and commercial gyms), daycare, and counseling agencies, where both for-profit and nonprofit entities exist. When that happens, there is a serious question about why nonprofits enjoy tax expenditure while for-profits do not. For-profit organizations often argue that without the profit incentive, workers have lower motivation, and innovation and risk-taking are muted. Profit here is the same as surplus, and does not include salary dueling narratives. The flaw in this argument is that profit rarely goes to the employees unless the firm has a profit sharing plan. Contrarily, the human service organization argues that “the profit motive” skews the caring impulse, and perverts it to the most “profitable” caring treatments. Greater clarity is needed concerning the roles assumed in these dueling narratives, and a more thorough examination of what elements of each type lead to “high performing” systems. A general observation suggests that, in contested terrains, there are excellent and awful organizations in each camp.

Corporatization

Corporatization refers to the process of mission narrowing to a self-protection first instance. Over time, organizations with a social purpose become focused on their purpose. The example of hospitals firing employees who were complaining about poor safety protections during the Covid-19 Pandemic is an example of the impulses to self-protection. Lately, the new hybrid corporate firm and other L3C corporations have become hard to distinguish from taxable businesses.

The Money/Power Nexus

As noted above, money and power are closely connected and serve to mutually reinforce each other. Each seems to have a toxically addictive element in which sufficiency is never actually sufficient or enough. To make matters worse, more seems to beget the need for even more as with drug addicts and alcoholics. Means become ends, and ends become warped. People with lots of money have lots of power. They may use this power well, or they may use it to further their ends. The wealthy person's expectation that "I own the money" rather than "I'm the trustee of these resources" seems to predominate. The powerful person's sense of entitlement and adoption of the fiction that "I did it my way" with a dismissal of all those who helped, and the element of good fortune as well, is frequently stunning. The article by Jerry Useem (2017) in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Power Causes Brain Damage: How Leaders Lose Mental Capacities," notably suggests the dismissal of other people that were essential to their rise. There is an additional civic problem that does not apply as much to the Nonprofit Sector but which, in some instances, is involved. Namely, wealthy individuals can use nonprofit vehicles to hide resources. Donor-advised funds are one way this sequestration can occur.

Social Exploitation

Oddly, many nonprofit agencies, whose mission is to help the socially needy and exploited, wind up exploiting their staff (Tropman & Nicklett, 2012). This business model, driven in part by a misunderstanding of the need for surplus, overbudgets for the program and then balances that budget through lower staff salaries and staff exploitation: for example, by getting staff to do extra work for free or cheap. Such exploitation—"We have this fundraiser coming up this weekend that I am sure you would like to help out"—burns out the staff, who then are replaced in a cycle of expensive staff churning.

Mission Creep

As the volatile climate of human helping changes, funding streams change and agencies find themselves "following the money," sometimes pursuing programs far from their stated purpose. This slow movement toward something else can be successful, but if it is just motivated by money, seeking success is not likely and leads to mission degradation.

Mission Degradation

It is common sense to those of us who work with helping and other nonprofit organizations that not all are efficient nor effective. Probably a few are high in both categories; some are efficient but not effective, while others are effective but not efficient. Still, others are neither efficient nor effective, and some are doing bad while pretending to do good. There are helping organizations that drift from providing substance to those in need to providing substance for their existence. The purpose of the agency has moved, finally to self-subsistence.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP ISSUES

Sloppy Governance

Executive leadership issues begin with the board. In our work with nonprofit boards, we have found them to be on the lackluster side, “clubby,” and often not in line with their bylaws. Nonprofit boards (and other boards) have very little accountability and very little board training. The term “board member” might be changed to “trustee,” which reminds each participant that it is not their money, even if they donated it. Board members rarely evaluate themselves or their function, and seldom review their decisions unless something “hits the fan.” Very few boards have operating principles. Bylaws are not operating principles. The United States Army has an excellent review system, “The After Action Report,” and a “Lessons Learned” document, both which could be adapted to nonprofits (Garvin, 2000).

Many nonprofit boards (and other boards) have newsletter meetings or “report” meetings (Bonini, 2021). One trustee of a major hospital system told us that their board meetings are not dealing with serious contemporary issues, but are rather “dog-and-pony shows” with program descriptions and reviews, usually reporting “great” successes. It is almost a classic case of “defensive routines” in which unpleasanties are not discussed and there is never any discussion about not discussing them. Raising troubling or sequestered issues can make you feel uncomfortable, as was pointed out in a recent *New York Times* article about a sole person of color raising issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a classical music organization (Gay, 2021). We felt the same way when, at a faculty meeting, we voiced discomfort at faculty salaries being paid by high college tuitions and fees. After a complete silence from the attending colleagues...the meeting moved on.

Founder and Legacy Issues

Many nonprofits are “run” by their founders. Organizations continue to resolve the crises that occur when there is a change in leadership and a new executive takes over. Some organizations have the same executive who founded the organization. In some cases, this goes on for 20 or more years! “Not dead yet” is no reason for founders to continue. Many nonprofits (and for-profits) are plagued with either “Founder’s Syndrome,” legacy programming, or both. Founder’s Syndrome occurs when a founder remains in leadership for years and years. This stasis is frequently very problematic, as the external conditions change and the founder sticks to their view of the problems and interventions that led to the founding in the first place. If an executive has been there 10 years or more, they have gone through several board cycles and have, essentially, the status of a founder. Executives are often “imprinted” by the crisis that occurred as they founded or took over an organization, failing to pay attention to changes in the external environment. A closely related impediment is, even after founders go, legacy programs remain, using up resources better applied elsewhere.

Executive Terminology and Nomenclature

The title of the chief executive has changed over the decades from Executive Secretary to Executive Director, in the 1940s, to Chief Professional Officer today. Chief executives felt that they should have a title parallel to those in the business sector, so CEO was used. But then the sector went one better and added the title CEO/President. So Mary Barra is CEO of GM. Neeraj Mehta is Interim President *and* CEO of United Way USA. And Sister Donna Markham is President *and* CEO of Catholic Charities USA! No one has been able to give us a reason for two titles (except overreaching). The issue here is that the conflation of titles represents a movement from the board as principal to the CEO/President as potentially co-principal and more important even than the board.

Executive Collapse Syndrome

Organizational functioning starts at the top. The CEO sets the tone, but C-level executives contribute as well. Starting with the proposition that leadership and management are different but intertwined competencies, where competencies are knowledge plus skills, the exceptional executive would have a high level of proficiency in each. Some may be excellent managers but so-so leaders; others may be excellent leaders but so-so managers. Some may be low in both.

Version 1

Executive collapse proceeds through five stages: 1. Pre-Derailment: the executive is acting out but continues to keep their job despite bad acting for the nonce; 2. Derailment: the executive acting out loses their job and may face personal penalties, including negative publicity in the national press and on social media; 3. Flameout: this involves job loss and serious collateral damage, including family disruption and breakup, as well as harmful results for friends, acquaintances, and other business associates, the loss of honors, such as honorary degrees, named buildings at universities, and may also result in jail time; 4. Calamity: organizations, firms, and agencies actually collapse. There is organizational dismemberment, widespread sequelae throughout the organization, brand destruction, and trust evaporation; and 5. Super-Calamity: the entire industry or field is broadly implicated as having a negative and harmful culture, of which the current problematic issues are viewed as precipitating and symptomatic of deeper streams of trouble and corruption. Legislation may result, as well as serious legal entanglements for many of those involved. New cases of deeply troubling behavior arise. Executive collapse is nothing special to the Nonprofit Sector, but the oversight and accountability associated with it might be looser and more problematic than the For-Profit Sector. Recall that there has been no widespread adoption of ethical standards as outlined by the work of the Independent Sector mentioned previously. Several years ago, Tropman and Shaefer (2004) looked at executive collapse using a purposive sample of articles of calamity and collapse in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and several other sources.

Version 2

There is a second version of the executive collapse package that occurs when the executive remains employed for a long period that can do incredible things to the organization, and often leads to its dissolution: 1. Pre-Derailment: the executive is acting out but continues to keep their job despite bad acting for the nonce; 2. Acting Out: the executive continues and expands their offensive behavior while, or in concert with, doing their regular job; complaints are ignored or shelved; 3. Expansion: the problem expands and includes more episodes, which may involve drugs or alcohol, the firing of talented subordinates, the rearrangement of staff, grooming victims, and securing compliant subordinates; 4. Destruction: lives are destroyed; revenge is undertaken on potential whistleblowers. Oddly, the executive is also held in high esteem by others, both out of respect and fear; and 5. Disaster: at some point the carapace of concealment cracks, usually through some combination of the above, support effacement occurs, and the whole house of cards collapses. CharityWatch (2018) has a Hall of Shame and provides a list of scoundrels with a discussion of their wrongdoings, as well as an additional list of miscreants. The point is that it is socially insufficient to assume that each of the institutions is uniquely delivering executive collapse. They are the precipitating cause of appalling lapses in governance. The predisposing etiology is organizational, as well as individual, inattention to leadership.

General Issues of Ethical Behavior in Nonprofit Organizations

In “Ethics and Nonprofits,” Deborah Rhodes and Amanda Packel (2019) discuss the ethical challenges that nonprofits have and list five areas that occasion and produce ethical lapses: 1. compensation, 2. conflict of interest, 3. publication and solicitation, 4. financial integrity, and 5. investment policies. This list should come as no surprise, as the Nonprofit Sector has largely avoided endorsing and implementing the Independent Sector’s set of nationally developed principles. Rhodes and Packel note that public confidence in nonprofit performance is low; a 2008 survey found a third of Americans have little or no confidence in them, and that only 10% did a “very good job.” Both at the level of executive collapse and the level of organizational complicity and denial, nonprofits cannot be trusted to police themselves. In fairness, we have worked with many exemplary nonprofits, but the overall culture does not recommend confidence in self-regulation. The following discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion will, we think, cement that conclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Nonprofit Sector would include policy statements and attention given not only to standard issues of race and gender, but also to a much broader range of issues, such as program currency and relevance, stakeholder and scientific advisory groups, and attention to client and alumni involvement. Universities pay a great deal of attention to alumni; however, most human service organizations do not. But given their lack of accountability, who is to challenge these trustees? Nonprofits talk a good game, but their practices seem to fall short. Data from a 2019 Nonprofit HR survey of 566 nonprofit give a picture consistent with our observations: 52% said the organization had a formal diversity statement, 31% said it had a diversity strategy, 22% said that it had a staff person solely responsible for diversity efforts, and 57% felt the organization’s staff reflects the community it serves.

SECTOR-WIDE ISSUES

On the sector-wide level—that is, national and state—there is no national sector-wide body that sets standards for all nonprofits. The closest is the National Center for Nonprofits. It has 22 thousand members and has links to all of the similar associations within the states, except for five states that have no state organizations or organizational members. It seeks to advance the vitality and security of all nonprofits. The Independent Sector tries to do this, as well as Board Source and Charity Navigator, among others, and they have had some success. They could continue to do so; however, a national federal body, since federal funds are involved, would be a preferable umbrella and operate with governmental authority. There are national organizations that set some standards for the “affiliates” locally, such as the United Way USA, the Alliance for Strong Families, and other communities, but their focus seems to be on their own organizational set for the most part. With “territoriality” out and about, no national authority wants to cede authority to any other national body, but an organization with federal clout might bring things more together.

CONCLUSION

Given the historical record involving large organizational sets and our current observations, it seems clear that organizations, large and small, cannot be relied upon to regularly police themselves. Too many factors intrinsic to the organization and its leadership, as well as exogenous organizational changes to which the organization fails to adjust, blunt its efficiency and effectiveness.

Our cultural narrative has been captured by the individualistic “Mountain Man Syndrome.” This is important not only because of the solitary hero but also because of the gender that dominated our patriarchal country. There is another narrative, which, while available, has no legs on public consciousness: namely, the “Wagon Train Syndrome.” The “Mountain Man” (and it was usually a man) and the “Wagon Train” metaphors are one way to characterize the dominant and subdominant elements of American culture. The former stresses individuality, masculinity, and personal power. The latter emphasizes collectivity, diversity, and community effort. Each had and has its place in American culture, but the “Mountain Man” seems highly preferred while the “Wagon Train” seems a bit on the down-low (Baker, 2000). For agencies as well, it is pretty much an “each tub on its own bottom” world. Society at large does assist the sector, through supporting tax relief and some tax write-offs for charitable contributions, and additionally, contributes substantially to the working of the Nonprofit Sector. Nonetheless, the sector has a huge job, working as it does in a developed country with an underdeveloped safety net and a drumbeat of negativity about the general clientele of nonprofit helping services, as detailed in Tropman’s (1998) book *Does America Hate the Poor? The Other American Dilemma*.

Our proposal is for Congress to create a Study Commission of the current state of the sector, and develop an “umbrella” of regulations to which all nonprofits must adhere. The Study could be led by the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare in alliance with sister academies. Large national organizations, such as the Independent Sector, Catholic Charities USA, the United Way USA, and the Council on Foundations could then work through their affiliations to support change and compliance. Many states have statewide organizations of nonprofits that could work statewide and locally. The “umbrella concept” is the opposite of the “safety net concept.” It provides national standards which might be supplemented by sub-industry accreditation, such as in Child Welfare.

We have mentioned Congress because of the tax expenditure support, although Congress as a whole seems largely paralyzed and dysfunctional at this point. Nevertheless, perhaps we should continue to hope for the best, as the umbrella needs to have a legal legislative base. In addition to the umbrella, however, there needs to be, and Collins suggested this point, a new set of metrics. He mentioned three. Crutchfield and Grant (2008) mention eight.

To these, we can add eight more suggested by Peter Vail (1982) on the metrics of high-performing systems: 1. Benchmark: they are performing excellently against known external standards; 2. Potential: they are performing excellently against what is assumed to be their potential; 3. Improvement: they are performing excellently against where they were previously in time; 4. Peer Judgement: they have been judged by informed observers to be doing substantially better qualitatively than other comparable systems; 5. Efficiency: they are doing what they do with significantly fewer resources than it is assumed they needed to do what they do; 6. Exemplars: they are perceived as exemplars of the way they do whatever they do and thus become a source of inspiration to others; 7. High Culture: they are perceived to fulfill at a high level the ideals for the culture within which they exist; 8. The Only Ones: they are the only organizations that have been able to do what they do at all, even though it might not seem that what they do is difficult.

To these we have added: 1. Value Add: they provide true values in products and services, and add value to the system; 2. Non-Exploitative: they accomplish tasks without exploiting workers or the environment, providing a meaningful, flexible, and “jerk-free” workplace which is people centered.

Pursuing these suggestions could be an exciting start.

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Anti-Racism Cohort (ARC)

The Forbes Funds, with our partners, the University of Pittsburgh, the Department of the Future, and the Heinz Endowments, launched the inaugural class of the International Anti-Racism Institutional Wireframe Cohort (ARC).

ARC is a year-long learning cohort that builds on the best practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion training and optimizes these core practices into human-centered design exercises that aid in shifting organizational cultures systemically.

ARC was designed to be a guided multisensory experience, where participants learn in both a parallel and collaborative fashion. Together, partners strengthened their individual, organizational, and societal triple bottom lines of connecting people, planet, and profit. Organizations completed biweekly workshops, paired with reading assignments, signature cohort project, and curated multi-sensory experiences.

RACIAL EQUITY BLUEPRINT

You can access the Forbes Fund's *Racial Equity Blueprint* [here](#).

More information: <https://forbesfunds.org/innovate/anti-racism>



Catalytic Communities Cohort (C3)

Allegheny County is home to 4,500 non-profit organizations, many with overlapping missions that place them in competition for the same resources. These intersects, fragmentations, and competition for assets puts additional stressors on already struggling communities. Many of these nonprofits serve the communities where they live and work. Neighborhood-based nonprofits know their communities and residents best and are often the strongest advocates for their community.

Consequently, the Forbes Funds' C3 program is critical. C3 advances the capacity of nonprofit leaders through mentoring, learning cohorts, and coaching sessions. These culturally relevant and transferable skills increase the capacity of community based nonprofit leaders within targeted communities on the margins of the city and surrounding areas.

In August 2019, the Forbes Funds convened a group of stakeholders to kick-off the Catalytic Communities Cohort (C3) initiative. With an ambitious goal of working in 50 communities over a span of five years, the Forbes Funds identified and engaged seven communities to kick off the cohort.

To date, the Forbes Funds has identified and invested over \$1.5 million with more than 80 % of all host organizations lead by people of color and/or women. Over the past two years, nearly 96% of organizations participating in the C3 program have noted an increase in the following objectives: 1. Interest in collaborating with other nonprofit organizations, 2. A better understanding of capacity building supports available, 3. A mentor relationship with a high-functioning organizations, and 4. An increased interest in long-term strategic collaboration within communities.

More information: <https://forbesfunds.org/innovate/c3>



Executive in Residence Coaching Program (EIR)

The Forbes Funds envisions a Nonprofit Sector where professional development is attainable and low-cost. Through providing coaching, learning cohorts, access to higher education, technical assistance, and sector research, the Forbes Funds supports current leaders and prepares future leaders.

The EIR executive coaching program provides high-level coaching to executive directors, board members, and senior staffers in Western Pennsylvania. The EIR program pairs Executive in Residence coaches with nonprofit professionals based around need, experience, and expertise. On average, the program supports 130 individuals per year through coaching and approximately 150 professionals per year through various learning cohorts.

2022 LEARNING COHORTS

The Forbes Funds offers multiple professional development learning cohorts. Annual cohorts, like Leadership Learning Circles, take place every year. All cohorts include technical assistance, coaching, and professional development in the form of digital badges, continuous education credits, or college-credits. 2022 Learning Cohorts include the Resilience & Partnership Cohort, the Emerging Directors of Development Cohort, the From Good To Great: Board Governance, Leadership & Engagement Cohorts, and the Forbes Funds & Slippery Rock University's Institute for Nonprofit Leadership's Leadership Learning Circles.

More information: <https://forbesfunds.org/innovate/eir>



The Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GPNP)

WHO WE ARE

The Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GPNP) is a growing coalition of over 500 members, nonprofit organizations, and partners serving the 10-county Southwestern PA region. GPNP facilitates partnerships, connects members to critical resources, and unifies the voice of nonprofits to leverage new opportunities.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

In response to regional member desire to network within their counties on local and county-level needs, GPNP is developing regional county affiliates, with partnering county-based networks and facilitating organizations.

MISSION & VISION

Our region's nonprofit sector gives citizens a greater voice, inspires public participation, and promotes a vibrant community. GPNP strengthens our region by improving the viability, impact, and effectiveness of nonprofits.

EQUITY FOCUS

More than 50% of GPNP members have a budget of under \$1M. Many are BIPOC-led by or serve black and brown communities that may not have access to equitable power and funding. GPNP is committed to intentionally supporting organizations with close connections to their communities and enhancing their capacity for transformational impact.

KEY SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Convene

The biennial GPNP Summit convenes more than 700 nonprofit and cross-sector leaders to engage with local, national, and international thought leaders to co-create solutions to our region's toughest challenges. Throughout each year, GPNP facilitates strategic educational and networking opportunities that foster collaboration, connect nonprofits with public officials, funders, and community partners; and celebrate and elevate the work of nonprofits across the SWPA region.

Advocate

GPNP unites the nonprofit sector through collective advocacy that addresses critical issues impacting the nonprofit sector and communities across the region.

Current priorities:

- Support nonprofits to be effective advocates
- Build relationships with policymakers at all levels
- Advocate for nonprofit relief from the impact of COVID-19 including addressing work-force needs
- Advocate for equitable and transparent spending of federal stimulus funds
- Civic engagement: encouraging nonprofit organizations to engage communities to vote

Build Capacity

The GPNP membership network encourages peer-to-peer learning, explores strategic collaborations, reduces duplicated efforts, and cultivates universal upskilling practices that will be applicable across the region. GPNP supports capacity-building by leveraging resources and cost saving opportunities through economies of scale.

More information: <https://forbesfunds.org/gnpn>



Management Assistance Grants (MAGs)

The Forbes Funds awards Management Assistance Grants (MAGs) to promote collaboratives of human service and community-based nonprofits building their capacity and increasing the impact of their mission work.

Our catalytic grants fund projects that focus on Strategy, Finance, and Organizational Realignment with two or more organizations partnering together. Management Assistance Grants are used to hire a third-party expert to guide the organization through a capacity building project that would support the collective impact of the collaborative.

More information: <https://forbesfunds.org/innovate/grants>