



The
Wellbeing
Project

A JOURNEY TO IMPACT

CO-CREATED WITH ASHOKA, ESALEN, IMPACT HUB,
PORTICUS, SKOLL FOUNDATION AND SYNERGOS

wellbeing-project.org

Our mission is to catalyze a culture of inner wellbeing for all changemakers.



What does our mission really mean?

Catalyzing:

Encouraging and accelerating a profound change in the culture of the social change sector. We do so with a humble attitude, a welcoming approach, and respect for what others are doing. We recognise that our role evolves over time.

Culture:

The constantly evolving shared ideas, attitudes, customs, and practices that bring people together. We hold this spaciouly, inviting and fostering inclusivity.

Inner Wellbeing:

An ongoing personal journey towards wholeness and connection. It is a journey of inner work that entails healing, personal development and ultimately integration of self. We embrace the many and varied pathways to inner wellbeing.

All Changemakers:

All those working to effect social and environmental change, including activists, teachers, non-profit leaders, social workers, social entrepreneurs and healthcare providers. We believe that the inner wellbeing of changemakers enables the flourishing of self and society.

WELLBEING INSPIRES WELLDIVING

Changemakers who are at the forefront of solving some of the most complex issues facing humanity are often simultaneously experiencing deep personal struggles. It is now known that these struggles have far-reaching implications on their lives and relationships, and for the organizations they lead. As well as working in chronically under-resourced environments, the culture of the social change sector also encourages individuals to take care of others before they take care of themselves.



The Wellbeing Project works to strengthen the field of social change by bringing a greater focus on individual and organizational wellbeing. Our research demonstrates that by supporting changemakers' deep inner work, they experience profound shifts in who they are, what they do, and how they run organizations. As a result, changemakers become healthier individuals, they build stronger and more human-centered workplaces, and they catalyze greater innovation and collaboration in the sector.*

*Source: The Wellbeing Project Research Report, released in 2020. Severns Guntzel, J. & Murphy Johnson, N. 2020. Wellbeing Inspires Welldiving: How Changemakers' Inner Wellbeing Influences Their Work [Report]. Retrieved from bit.ly/TWPreport2020

OUR JOURNEY

The Wellbeing Project runs an 18-month Inner Development Program (IDP) to support social entrepreneurs, activists, and nonprofit leaders whose work took a significant toll on their health and relationships. The program was set up for three cohorts of 20 changemakers from 45 different countries.

Following participation in the Inner Development Program (IDP), leaders were eager to apply what they had learned in their own organization. In response, The Wellbeing Project, along with eight other organizations, created a new, three-year Organizational Exploratory Program (OEP) that provides the scaffolding for participants to initiate, and sustain experiments that enhance organizational wellbeing.

Tens of thousands of people are now implementing wellbeing programs and raising awareness of the topic in a number of different ways. The Wellbeing Project releases an inaugural research report on the connection between wellbeing and social change, developed with the TerraLuna Collaborative and the Fetzer Institute.

2012

2015

2016

2017

2018

2020

The Wellbeing Project conducts initial interviews with global changemakers, followed by a study with an international group of 300+ changemakers from 55 countries.

Our Learning Partner Group and Ecosystem Networks form, where changemakers of international and regional organizations around the world come together to learn from each other and to share their experiences from their personal and organizational wellbeing journeys.

We begin to share powerful personal transformations as part of our storytelling efforts to bring our work to life, to normalize conversations around inner work, and to spotlight changemakers who are continuing incredible social change work through a new lens. The Project begins its work with higher education institutions to explore the integration of wellbeing in social change education, launching its WISE (Wellbeing, Innovation and Social Change in Education) program.

THE WELLBEING PROJECT'S JOURNEY CONTRIBUTED AND WAS RESPONSIVE TO BROADER SHIFTS IN SOCIETY

Gradual growth in awareness and understanding, more open conversations about mental health and relationships with work, and a growing recognition of the importance of inner wellbeing to social change by leaders, funders, and policymakers.

2012

2020

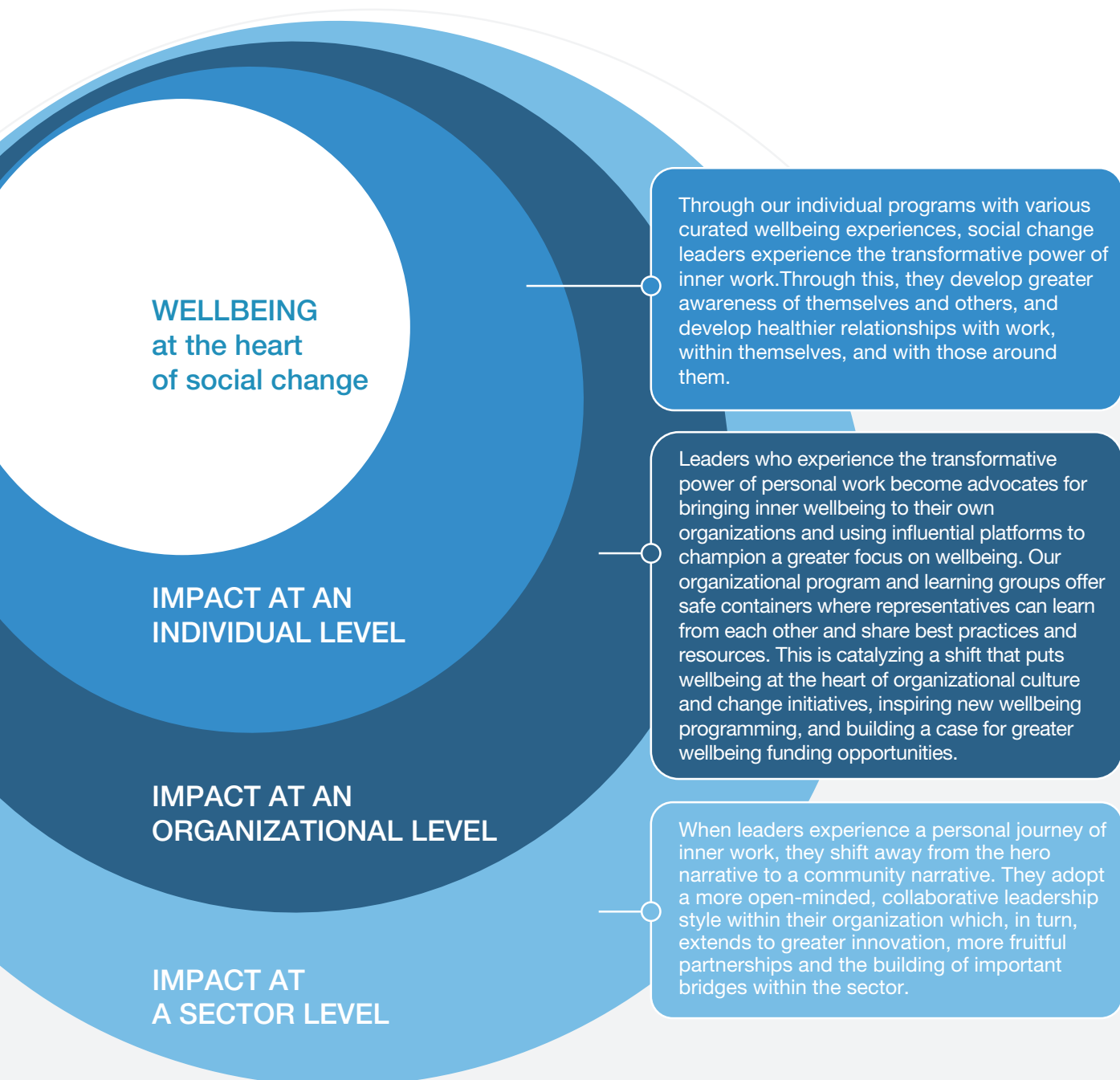
Mental health and wellbeing is a taboo topic which is rarely addressed. Awareness is low and understanding at an individual, organizational and sectoral level is weak.

Wellbeing is emerging as an important topic of discussion among international panels and forums, and is more mainstream in certain countries. The shift in the social change sector still needs to deepen and more research and resources are needed to further catalyze a culture change.

WELLBEING INFORMED SOCIAL CHANGE

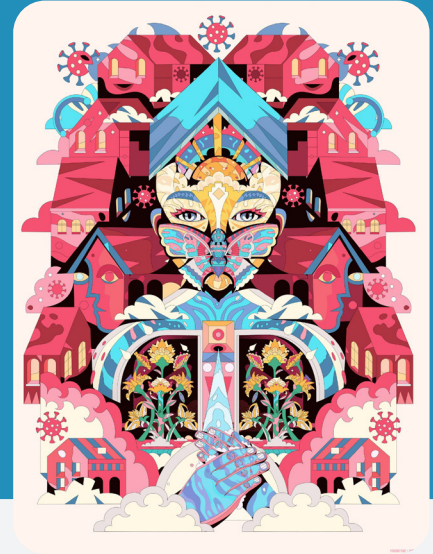
Our initiative is the only global focal point for recognising the importance of inner wellbeing in the field of social change.

We work at the individual, organizational, sector, and national and international levels to catalyze a broader culture shift that puts wellbeing at the heart of social and environmental movements.



A JOURNEY TO IMPACT

When the Project began seven years ago, the topic of wellbeing was taboo in the social change sector. Today wellbeing is entering the mainstream of the field of social change. The Wellbeing Project and its community has played a critical role in this mainstreaming through working to make wellbeing credible through rigorous research, by developing a community of practice made up of leading global and regional organizations, and through building collective awareness of the issue.



MODEL PROGRAMS

We designed our model programs to demonstrate new ways of approaching individual and organizational wellbeing in the social change sector and to break down the cultural stigma and skepticism surrounding the topic by credibly proving the need for wellbeing support at individual and organizational levels.

Through our programs, we experiment with a variety of wellbeing support systems to understand what is needed at the individual and organizational level to sustainably support long-term investments in inner wellbeing and the impact these investments have on the sector more broadly. We ensure diverse representation that reflects the sector at large within each of our programs: participants come from more than 55 countries; there is an equal gender balance; and a broad age range from 28-75 years old. Our focus on participant diversity extends to supporting a wide geographical range of diverse organizations of varying sizes that work on broad issues, ranging from climate change to women's rights.

Changemakers who participate in our programs form an influential leadership community. Having been deeply immersed in personal work and lived wellbeing experiences firsthand, these individuals advocate for a more human-centered cultural shift that catalyzes change within their organizations and in the sector more broadly.

RESEARCH

Our inaugural research report establishes the first credible research base for the connection between wellbeing and the way that social change happens at individual, organizational, and societal levels. The research included a Delphi study done in collaboration with the Ford Foundation and the Impact Hub Network that covered a broad range of roles, contexts, and global perspectives from across the social change sector. Our research base serves as a foundation for new explorations and sub-sector research that allow for a deeper understanding of people's wellbeing across the social change field. New studies are already emerging and our report is being cited as a baseline across multiple follow-on studies and papers on the topic.

Our research has translated the importance of individual and organizational wellbeing initiatives in a way that is accessible to leaders and organizations. The report equips leaders with insights and a deeper understanding of the issue, which has allowed them to be more effective in securing boardroom buy-in for wellbeing investments. As a result, organizations are better equipped with the resources they need to develop and implement new programs for changemakers, with a better idea of which issues to be sensitive to and the various challenges and opportunities to address.

The widespread impact of our research is possible thanks to the rigor of the research around our programs, the calibre of research partners we collaborate with, and the breadth and depth of knowledge and perspectives present within the constellation of organizations co-creating the Project and the broader coalition.

COMMUNITIES AND NETWORKS CREATING RIPPLE EFFECTS



LEARNINGS ARE SHARED MORE BROADLY VIA STORYTELLING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND ADVOCACY

Through our Learning & Convening work, representatives from leading social change organizations come together to explore and share about the mental health and wellbeing of changemakers and how to address their needs related to burnout, depression, and other serious issues. Together, participants experiment, exchange, share openly and honestly, and inspire new programming among peers. Through hosting our Learning Partner Group, Ecosystem Network and wider coalition, we facilitate an environment where participating organizations learn how to embrace wellbeing as a priority. Many of the leading organizations that are part of this work have developed support programs, shifted grant-making programs to include wellbeing support, contributed to new cultural narratives that put wellbeing at the center, and more. These organizations now offer inspiration as focal points for other social impact organizations seeking tangible ways to develop a culturally sound wellbeing orientation within their local contexts.

As a result of our coalition's work, tens of thousands of people around the world are now receiving wellbeing support or benefitting from wellbeing programming. As this community-led work advances, we are now deepening our work within sub-sectors of the social change field by convening groups focused on the wellbeing of teachers and caregivers, grassroots human rights defenders, philanthropists, and more groups to come. These sub-sector needs were identified and given life through the membership of our core Learning and Convening community groups.

To catalyze a new social change narrative with wellbeing at its heart, we curate powerful stories from changemakers around the world who are exploring deep personal work for themselves and for their organizations and communities. We share these stories, along with core research findings and all that is emerging across our coalition around the topic of wellbeing, through a broad range of varying media.

Our focus on leveraging partnerships to amplify the media broadcasted through our global network led to a year long article series curated with multiple leading publications in the field of social change. The article series highlighted wellbeing from an individual, organizational and societal perspective in mainstream social change publications including Stanford Social Innovation Review, Skoll Foundation, India Development Review, Schwab Foundation and The World Economic Forum Cultural Leaders. This is symbolic of our communications ethos in practice, where all that we develop is a reference point to educate, inspire, and enable the coalition to share outwardly.

Collectively we have ignited a cultural movement and critical mass around the shift towards wellbeing by ensuring that leaders' testimonials and other rich, informative content is shared through third-party and partner media, as well as having key advocates from our network speak at leading conferences and gatherings such as Skoll World Forum, World Economic Forum, or in several UN General Assembly contexts.

CATALYZING CHANGE FOR INDIVIDUALS

The Wellbeing Project works with individual leaders from around the world to explore what wellbeing means to them and to provide the resources required for inner work. Having been offered this support, participants experience profound shifts in the way they connect with themselves, with others, and with the work they do.



“My attitude to my work in social change has altered during this process. I really did feel that the responsibility for the success of everything we do [was on me], despite my using the language of empowerment... That’s not a good thing, because it puts too much of a burden on me. It disempowers other people. Now I think about it, it’s not a leadership role, either ... I have realized that my job really is to enable other people to take the responsibility ... I have changed my attitude [and now] I see that approach being much more helpful to society changing.”


IDP Participant

“My relationship [to work] was ... hard work, all the time. The Wellbeing program is a shift, completely, from that attitude of needing to work hard, and this relationship to working hard, and results, and judging people on how much time they put in, to approaching work with ease, with an attitude of play.”

IDP Participant


LEADERS BECOME ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE

Leaders who participate in the Wellbeing Project's programming experience the transformational power of inner wellbeing. They then become advocates for bringing inner wellbeing to their own organizations and use influential platforms to champion for a greater focus on wellbeing.



Katherine Miligan,
Director, Collective Change Lab
and Founder of Genova Innovation
Movement

As a member of The Wellbeing Project's Learning Partner Group, Katherine advocates for wellbeing in social entrepreneurship. She speaks at international forums and publishes articles that highlight the importance of wellbeing to the social change field.



Joana Breidenbach,
Entrepreneur and Founder of The
Future of Work needs Inner Work

As a member of The Wellbeing Project's Ecosystem Network, Joana champions for the inclusion of inner work for individuals as a way to navigate the complexities of an increasingly dynamic, digitised and uncertain world.

CATALYZING CHANGE WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

We work with organizations to put wellbeing at the heart of their cultures through our Organizational Exploratory Program and convening coalitions of more than 200 leading global and regional organizations. As a result, tens of thousands of individuals around the world are now supported in different ways, ranging from healthier organizational structures, wellbeing-focused programming, access to individual and group coaching, and even grant support.

Some examples of The Wellbeing Project's participating organizations deepening their focus on wellbeing at an organizational level

Ashoka, a Co-Creator of The Wellbeing Project, has now made wellbeing one of their institutional top 10 global priorities. Ashoka embeds wellbeing in its programming for fellows by offering retreats and online convenings for changemakers to enhance their ability to lead with self-awareness and empathy and in building strong support systems of trust.

Recognising that spiritual development is critical for social entrepreneurs who solve society's most complex problems, Echoing Green, a partner of The Wellbeing Project, started a chaplaincy program to provide space for social entrepreneurs to discuss and talk about the trauma that is oftentimes connected to the work they do.

The Peery Foundation, a member of the Learning Partner Group, established a set of wellbeing practices to support its grantees and to minimise the power imbalances that often exist between funders and grantees. The practices included simplifying the grant application process and introducing a stipend for mental health, among others.



CATALYZING A **CULTURE SHIFT** WITHIN THE SECTOR

An important outcome of our work is to catalyze a shift away from the hero narrative of social change to a community narrative with collaboration at its core. We are also working to understand the specific needs of certain communities, such as educators, to foster a deeper understanding of the conditions required for greater wellbeing:

Establishing partnerships with governments—including the governments of Canada, Morocco, and France—to create policy frameworks that provide systemic support for the wellbeing of the social sectors in their countries and at international levels.

Deepening our work in the education sector by:

Launching, in partnership with the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) of the Qatar Foundation and Duke University, the Caregiver and Teacher Wellbeing Initiative, which aims to help build a future of education where wellbeing is fundamentally integrated and prioritised for learning environments from pre-K through high school across the globe.

Facilitating a coalition of leading higher education institutions and organizations that are committed to catalysing a culture of inner wellbeing within the social change education field through the Wellbeing, Innovation, and Social Change in Education (WISE) network.

In partnership with Georgetown University, launching the Being & Transforming Think Tank which will explore the relationship between the inner self and the outer world so that an inner wellbeing orientation informs the social change sector's thinking and work, including educating the next generation of changemakers, and enabling greater community resilience.



SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE TO PUT WELLBEING AT THE HEART OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Our storytelling, advocacy, and thought leadership focus on normalizing conversations about mental health and featuring the power of inner wellbeing to drive healthier and more effective social change.

We amplify these messages through partnerships with organizations that share our mission to enable a social change culture that is more human centered and to unlock the extraordinary collaboration and innovation needed to address the great social and environmental challenges of our time:

Launching our research report - the first of its kind - which builds an evidence base that establishes the connection between inner wellbeing and effective social change: "90% of respondents indicated that when they are feeling most well it was 'very true' or 'somewhat true' that they feel better able to support others and be more open to accepting support from others."

To date, there have been more than 3,500+ organic downloads of our research report from around the world, largely via community referrals and without use of an advertising budget.

Launching a global editorial partnership - the Centered Self article series - with Stanford Social Innovation Review, India Development Review, Skoll, The World Economic Forum and Schwab Foundation, to introduce the wellbeing narrative to mainstream conversations.

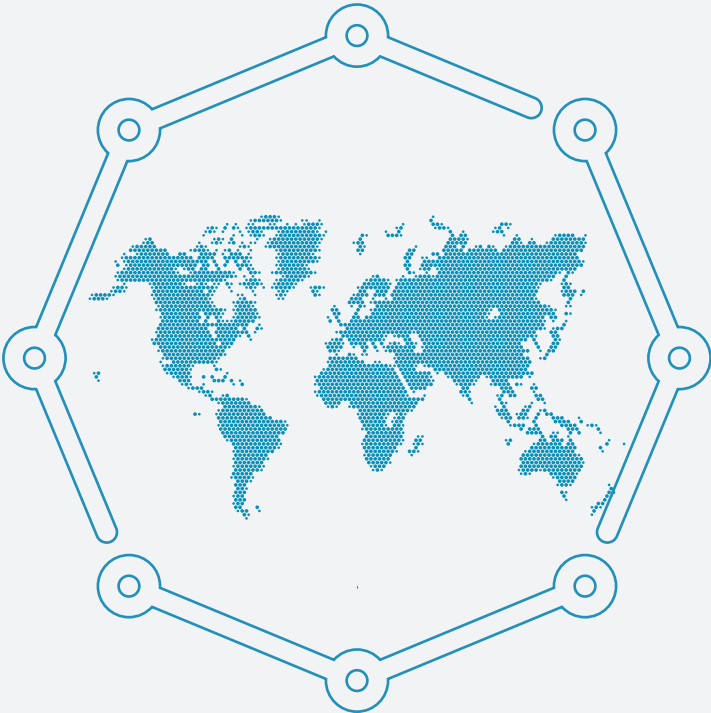
The cross-promotion of articles from the series by the partners reached more than 800,000 followers.

Articles within Stanford Social Innovation Review alone received an average of 39,000 page views, reaching an average of 22,740 new users with an average time of four minutes spent on the page.

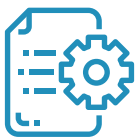
Achieving broader global influence and awareness through social media presence and partnerships with influencers that amplify our message.

Our broader network, including our partners and co-creators' channels, reaches 3,400,000+ followers.





HOW WE WORK TO ACHIEVE OUR IMPACT



PROGRAMS

105 social change leaders from more than 55 countries have sustainably integrated personal wellbeing into their lives as a result of our Inner Development Program.

Over three years, 26 diverse participants representing eight organizations from across the world are working to put wellbeing at the heart of their organizational cultures through participation in our Organizational Exploratory Program.



RESEARCH

We partner with leading research institutions and universities, including Georgetown University, Duke University, the Tavistock Institute, Centre for Healthy Minds, and TerraLuna Collaborative to explore the link between inner wellbeing and social change, with the view to share learnings in the sector and beyond.



NETWORKS

More than 200 global, regional and higher education leaders in the field of social change actively engage in our networks to learn from each other and work together to support those working in the field and to drive a broader culture change.



STORYTELLING

We weave the Project's core research findings and core ethos into various cultural intersections with the aim of fostering a new cultural narrative in the field of social change. By wielding stories from people who are agents of change, we are encouraging support from others, building understanding between people from all walks of life, and enhancing relationships amongst all those building a "wellbeing inspires welldoing" world.

OUR APPROACH

GLOBAL TALENT

We are a diverse, global team each working in different capacities - as full-time, part-time, pro-bono support and volunteers. We are intentional about keeping the structure lean as our idea of scale is to catalyze culture shifts in organizations and communities to take this work forward.

PARTNERSHIPS

We partner with organizations and leaders that share our mission and want to amplify our collective messaging calling for a more human-centered approach to social change.

CO-CREATION

Co-creation, an approach that draws on collaboration, collective sense-making and contributions from diverse perspectives, guides how we work with all of our partners. We believe we can go deeper and have greater impact when we work together to deliver on our mission.

EMERGENT NATURE

To respond to the shifting needs of our ever-changing world, we create space for an emergent culture, which allows us to respond to changes in the field and to adapt our programming to the increasing maturity of the topic.



OUR RESPONSE TO CURRENT TIMES

The outbreak of COVID-19 and its effects, along with even louder calls for racial and social justice and systems change globally, increased the need and urgency for our work.

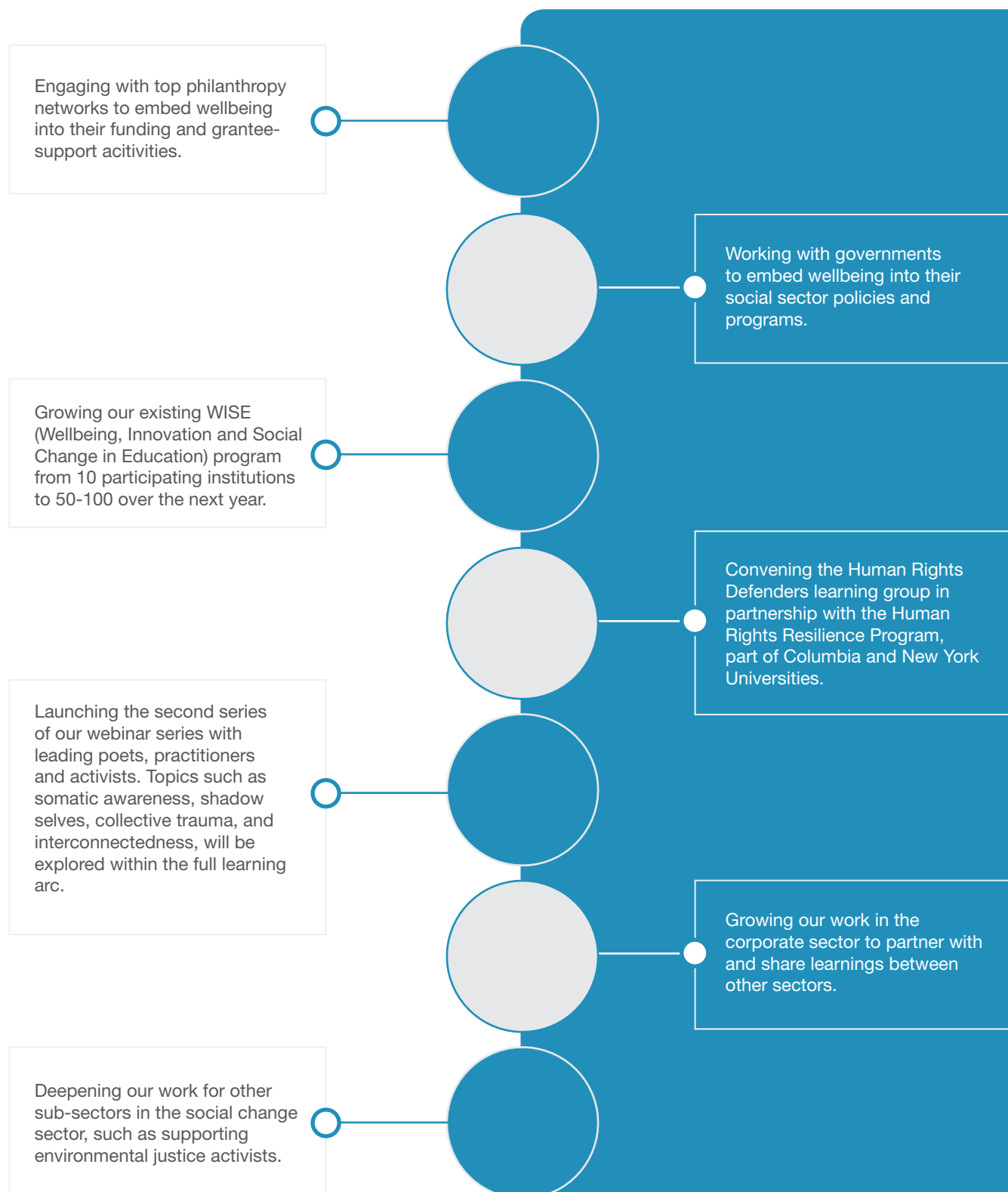
Wellbeing—during and post pandemic—remains as important as ever. To respond to the increased needs of changemakers in these times, we've carried out the following initiatives:

- Launched an open call for art—in partnership with Amplifier—to inspire and uplift the language around mental health and wellbeing. We received more than 10,000 submissions from all over the world.
- Hosted global and regional webinars with leading wisdom teachers for our communities. The 27 sessions from April 2020 to November 2021 featured self-care practices, creative expression, and other inner development topics. We had an average of 90 highly engaged participants from 60+ countries join us throughout the series.
- Developed and launched Wellbeing Connect, an online platform to connect changemakers with wellbeing practitioners, including therapists and coaches, offering pro-bono support.



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Moving forward, we will be deepening our work by creating new communities and expanding existing ones, including:



THE WELLBEING SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Bilbao, Spain | June 1-3, 2022

In 2022, we will be organizing a global three-day event to bring together and strengthen our community of changemakers. We aim to gather the wider community in Bilbao, Spain, for a multi-sensory and experiential journey that will advance wellbeing at the heart of social change.

Art, at the heart of the event, will be used as a universal language and a tool to create the transformative journey.

A ONE-OF-A-KIND LEARNING JOURNEY

- With talks, immersive and interactive workshops, world-class art exhibitions and multi-disciplinary performances, participants will experience a learning journey and feel changed, moved and inspired to work on themselves in order to best help others.
- Some of the world's most influential leaders, social entrepreneurs and prestigious international artists will be present, providing a unique opportunity for inspiration and collaboration.
- The event will provide an exceptional relationship building and networking opportunity between our extensive network of global partners, co-creators and world leading social entrepreneurs.

THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF ALL THAT WE ACCOMPLISH

Below is a glimpse of the community we have the pleasure of working with.



TOGETHER, WE ARE CATALYZING A
CULTURE OF INNER WELLBEING
FOR ALL **CHANGEMAKERS**

