

## FundWell

### *A Swift Summary of Wellbeing Stuff for Funders*

March's edition of FundWell is curated by [Dana Preston](#), Development and Partnerships Lead and The Wellbeing Project

#### Slowing Down to Show Up Better

A Wellbeing Project colleague reminded us of these words from Bayo Akomolafe during our recent all-team retreat in the Slovenian Alps: “*The times are urgent, let’s slow down.*” And so, we did. We danced to 90s hits. We hiked snowy paths. We shared stories—of time in nature, and of wisdom passed down from elders. We rested, even when the work felt urgent.

But we also leaned into purpose. We spent time learning about each other’s work, exploring cross-team connections, and doing some powerful collective strategy building—balancing care with clarity.

Now, before you think “*the Alps? Must be nice,*”—you’re not wrong. It *did* feel luxurious. And we wrestled with that. As nonprofit workers, we’re rarely encouraged to spend time or money on our own wellbeing. But that’s exactly the point. What if rest, beauty, and spaciousness weren’t reserved only for executives or donors? What if nonprofit teams had access to the conditions that make healing and connection possible? Our time in Slovenia, split between two days in Ljubljana (host city of our upcoming [Global Hearth Summit](#)) and two days in the mountains, was a deliberate choice to challenge that narrative. Because this work is hard. And we deserve spaces that nourish us.

In this edition of FundWell, we share our reflections to offer something tangible: a reminder that retreats—when rooted in care, rest, and joy—aren’t a luxury. They’re a powerful tool for individual and organizational wellbeing, and a bold act of resistance in a culture that rarely gives us permission to pause.

#### What Stuck With Us

Two months later, the ripple effects of our team retreat are still being felt—and not just in warm memories, but in how we work, connect, and contribute. Here’s what stood out most across the reflections:

- ✨ **Deeper connection and belonging** – Many team members described a renewed sense of being part of something bigger. For some, it was the first time meeting colleagues in person.
- ✨ **Stronger cross-team collaboration** – Listening to each team’s goals and sharing ideas in person led to more awareness of who’s doing what—and how we can support each other.
- ✨ **Renewed energy and motivation** – Whether it was laughter, walks in nature, dance breaks, or meaningful conversations, many left the retreat feeling refreshed, inspired, and recommitted to the work.
- ✨ **Clarity of purpose** – Strategic sessions grounded in our mission helped people reconnect to the “why,” sparking more focused contributions and confident decision-making back at their desks.
- ✨ **Improved communication** – The kind of understanding that only comes from in-person time together is now making remote collaboration smoother, more natural, and more effective.
- ✨ **Increased engagement** – Teammates report feeling more engaged on calls, more aligned across teams, and more excited to keep momentum going.

Retreats won’t solve everything. But when they center rest, connection, and purpose, they become a powerful way to show up differently—for our teams, our partners, and ourselves. And for you dear funders, they’re a meaningful tool in the broader toolbox to support grantees in building lasting cultures of wellbeing.

With care,  
Dana + the FWG team



Image Description: Team members of The Wellbeing Project enjoying a peaceful stroll during our retreat  
Photo Credit: The Wellbeing Project

### FundWell Essentials

#### 🍀 Rethinking Retreats

This powerful critique of the wellness industry highlights how healing spaces can sometimes reinforce individualism and commodification. A must-read to help ensure your next retreat avoids these pitfalls and leans into collective care instead.

👉 *Beyond Self-Care and Wellness Retreats: What Healing Justice Requires* [Read the article](#)

#### 🌱 Planning a Retreat with Care

*Need inspiration for your next team gathering? This short piece offers practical ways to strengthen team culture through retreats rooted in intention, wellbeing, and long-term impact.*

👉 *Strengthening Corporate and Nonprofit Team Culture Through Staff Retreats* [Check it out](#)

📄 **Rest as Liberation** Like retreats, sabbaticals are one of many powerful tools to center care and wellbeing in the social sector. This report outlines a visionary sabbatical program designed for Black and brown leaders of small nonprofits—and offers actionable recommendations for making rest and liberation more accessible sector-wide.

👉 *The Rest and Liberation Initiative Report* [Read the full report](#)

### Talking Points: pick one and start a conversation!

- Have you ever taken a team pause that *actually* changed how you work together afterward? What made it stick?
- What would it look like if your next strategy session was also a rest session?
- What might your grantee partners need to feel more connected—not just funded?

### Words on Wellbeing

“Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future. Jobs, family, employers, and friends can exist one day without any one of us, and if our egos permit us to confess, they could exist eternally in our absence. Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us.”

— Maya Angelou, [Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now](#)

Looking to go deeper? Explore our [Philanthropy x Wellbeing Hub](#).

How does your funding organisation define wellbeing? Does it support wellbeing for its stakeholders? [Reflect and share here, in the Funders + Wellbeing Survey.](#)

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