

July's edition of FundWell is curated by The Wellbeing Project



Photo Description: Funders + Wellbeing Learning Group Members strolling together at the Happiness and Hygge Walking Tour in Copenhagen
Photo Credits: Dana Preston

Every year, our Funders + Wellbeing Learning Group gathers in person to learn from one another. This year, in Copenhagen, something felt different.

Rather than centering keynote speakers or polished presentations, members built the agenda themselves, bringing the questions they were actively wrestling with inside their own foundations. They arrived with frameworks in progress, narratives that weren't quite landing, and challenges they wanted peers to help unpack. Together, they questioned assumptions, strengthened one another's thinking, and explored where changemaker wellbeing in philanthropy is headed.

Just as intentional as the agenda was the space around it. Inspired by the Danish idea of *hygge*, we slowed the pace through shared meals, walks through Copenhagen, and time to know one another beyond our professional roles. On the first morning, each person shared a story through a personal item they had brought with them. Those moments weren't separate from the work, they created the trust that makes it possible to share unfinished thinking, offer generous challenge, and build stronger ideas together.

At The Wellbeing Project, we've long believed philanthropy is more than a source of funding; it is a partner in shaping the future of social change. As our community of funders continues to grow, we're increasingly seeing members roll up their sleeves alongside us; refining frameworks, contributing ideas, writing, collaborating, and helping shape the field together. Below are five conversations that emerged from Copenhagen. We hope they spark new thinking and meaningful dialogue within your own organization.



Photo Description: Collage of different moments during our time in Copenhagen
Photo Credits: Photos by Dana Preston, Alejandra Mejia and Laura Bacon

1. **How do we make the case for wellbeing?**

How do we talk about wellbeing in ways that resonate within our own foundations? Members explored different narratives—from organizational effectiveness to DEIJ, and mental health—and debated whether philanthropy needs a shared definition of wellbeing or whether different contexts call for different frames.

2. **Are we addressing symptoms—or changing systems?**

Using a framework shared by one member, we explored the balance between downstream wellbeing supports and upstream efforts that change the conditions creating burnout, fragmentation, and distress. Soon to become a published article by a community member.

3. **Are we living through a crisis of care?**

Participants reflected on care not simply as an individual practice, but as essential movement infrastructure. What role can philanthropy play—not only through what it funds, but through how it partners, leads, and shows up for the people doing the work?

4. **How does strategy shape wellbeing?**

Can strategy itself be a wellbeing intervention? One member shared how reducing their organization's number of programs improved staff wellbeing by reducing stress and silos. The conversation expanded into how strategic choices can either create the conditions for wellbeing or unintentionally undermine it.

5. **How do we influence inward—and upward?**

How do we engage colleagues, executives, and boards in conversations about wellbeing? Members shared practical strategies for moving wellbeing from an "additional priority" to an enabling condition for stronger leadership, healthier organizations, and greater impact.

Interested in joining these conversations? *The Funders + Wellbeing Learning Group is a peer community for foundations exploring how wellbeing can strengthen their people, partnerships, and impact. We'd love to hear from you.*

 From Insight to Action

These are a few of the resources members introduced during our conversations in Copenhagen. We hope they'll spark reflection and dialogue within your own foundation.

 **Reimagining Care: A Message from the Future II – The Years of Repair**
Shared during a discussion on care as movement infrastructure, this short film imagines a future organized around repair rather than extraction. It prompted us to ask: What would change if care became a design principle for philanthropy, rather than simply a response to burnout?
 [Watch the film](#)

 **Putting Ideas into Practice: The Wellbeing Practice Bank**
Humanity United's Practice Bank itself became a workshop during the retreat, with members offering feedback on how it could become even more useful for philanthropy. Whether you're looking for meeting practices, team rituals, or organizational ideas, it's a practical place to start.
 [Explore the Practice Bank](#)

 Talking Points

Continue the discussion with your colleagues:

Is wellbeing something we fund, or is it a condition that enables greater impact across everything we fund?	Where are we investing downstream (responding to symptoms) and where might we help strengthen the conditions that prevent them in the first place?	What's one practice from the Wellbeing Practice Bank you could experiment with this month to strengthen connection, care, or collaboration?
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 Words on Wellbeing

*"...the way sand receives a wave
the way a pond receives the geese
the way streets hold fast for feet
when talk becomes walk"
— John Paul Lederach*

 Notes & What's Ahead

 **August Break**
As in past years, FundWell — and The Wellbeing Project — take part of August off. Call it our "Blue Zone" period: intentional time offline. Consider this your reminder to do the same. Read previous editions on this matter [here](#).

 **Central American Donors Forum**
Will you be there? Reach out to alejandra.mejia@wellbeing-project.org — let's connect in person.

 **Save the Date**
October 14 — 2026 Wellbeing Showcase, a marketplace-style virtual event for funders. More details coming soon.

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

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