



EVOLVING TOGETHER FOR PROFOUND RESULTS

A Learning for Adapting Report for
Stanislaus Cradle to Career

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past two years, Stanislaus Cradle to Career (C2C) has begun to cohere a vibrant movement of remarkable breadth and promising depth focused on six results for children, youth, and young people in Stanislaus County.

C2C builds upon years, even decades, of ongoing work within and across the county's twenty-six school districts, across multiple county and local government departments and agencies, and within and among a wide array of communities and community organizations. Some of these previous efforts include Stanislaus READS, Focus on Prevention, and Destination Graduation. These efforts and myriad others have tilled the soil for surprising partnerships and collaborations to sprout in support of profound results, including C2C.

Over the past two years, C2C has made impressive progress, including developing deep agreement among superintendents and community leaders to organize and launch five collective impact efforts focused on six results:

- ▶ StanREADY: Stanislaus County children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- ▶ StanREADS: Stanislaus County children read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- ▶ StanMATH: Stanislaus County students of all ages demonstrate confidence, success, and joy in math.
- ▶ StanFUTURES: Stanislaus County students graduate high school postsecondary-ready. Postsecondary students successfully complete their certificate or degree.
- ▶ StanCAREERS: Stanislaus County job seekers are ready to enter self-sustaining employment.

Additional achievements include:

- ▶ Developing effective leadership and planning structures;
- ▶ Securing sufficient funding, staffing, and in-kind resources to initiate five collective impact efforts;
- ▶ Joining the national StriveTogether network; and
- ▶ Engaging the Center for Collective Wisdom (C4CW) to provide teaching and facilitation support aligned with the developmental framework called Living Collective Wisdom™.

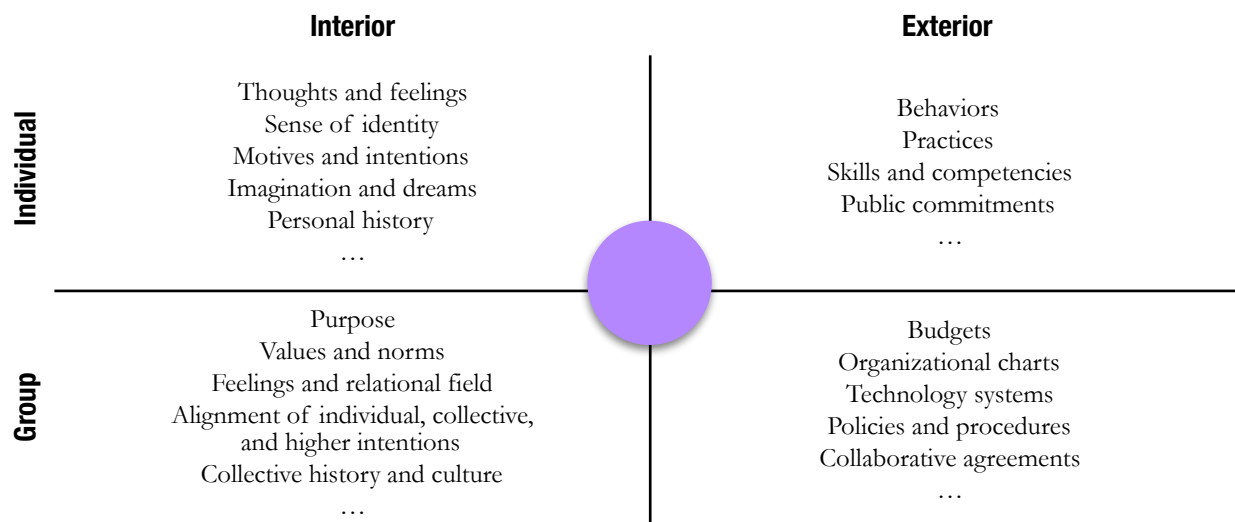
A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

We developed the Living Collective Wisdom framework for systems and communities confronting complex challenges within dynamic contexts. For results at the scale embraced by C2C, the challenges can seem overwhelming, even intractable. They require diverse stakeholders working together for sustained periods of time to discover and effectively address root causes. They often require radically new approaches that no one entity, institution, or sector can develop or implement alone. Living Collective Wisdom, therefore, is intended to guide the development of adaptive responses to effect and sustain substantial progress toward profound results.

The framework builds upon two foundational concepts—collective wisdom and the Four Dimensions of Change™. Collective wisdom reflects our innate capacities as human beings, when we come together, for breakthrough thinking, innovative solutions, and extraordinary acts of generosity and unity. A beginning premise of Living Collective Wisdom is that complex change efforts are far more likely to achieve and sustain profound results when participants are able to reliably access collective wisdom. A related premise is that collective wisdom is a potentiality of all groups, not just so-called ‘healthy’ or ‘enlightened’ ones.

These premises are not declarations of naïve faith or wishful thinking. They have emerged from decades of experience with the phenomenon, through our work with non-profit organizations, communities and community-based change efforts, foundations, small and large public sector systems, and small and large-scale private sector organizations.

A second foundational concept is the Four Dimensions of Change. Any complex human undertaking involves at least four dimensions of change: the individual and group *interior* dimensions of change, and the individual and group *exterior* dimensions of change.¹ The following diagram graphically illustrates these four dimensions:



Why does this concept matter? For two reasons. First, many change efforts fail to achieve or sustain their desired impacts because, over time, participants become so focused on the *group exterior* dimension of change that they stop engaging the other dimensions of change.

Second and more importantly, groups are more likely to experience collective wisdom arising to support their efforts when participants engage all four dimensions of change. That is, when groups engage all four dimensions of change in a disciplined and sustained way, they open a portal for collective wisdom to arise and guide their efforts in the world. And Living Collective Wisdom is designed for just this purpose: to help communities and systems engage the four dimensions of change in a systematic and disciplined way to achieve and sustain profound results.

¹ We developed this framework based on Ken Wilber’s work on the evolution of consciousness. See, e.g., Wilber, Ken. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala, 1996.

Building on these foundational concepts and premises, Living Collective Wisdom posits four developmental aspects of large-scale change in support of profound results: cohering a movement; building the movement; stabilizing a living system; and sustaining the living system. Each developmental aspect is grounded in one of four core competencies: results, community, living systems, and leadership. The diagram on the next page offers a visual illustration of this framework.

Together, these developmental aspects and core competencies help guide groups committed to profound results: they affect every facet of a large-scale change effort.

A THEORY OF CHANGE

Given this brief explanation of the framework, we can now articulate a theory of change that undergirds Living Collective Wisdom:

If systems and communities commit to achieving and sustaining profound results ...
... through embodying the four core competencies ...
... as they evolve interdependent movements and living systems ...
... *then*, over time, they will significantly increase their positive impact
in the world, and their experience of joy, generosity, and wellbeing.

Participants and partners embodying the four core competencies—results, community, living systems, and leadership—as we cohere and build a movement (or movements) and stabilize and sustain a living system—is what we mean by *Living Collective Wisdom*.

The intended long-term impact of this framework is to help large-scale change efforts *both* sustain and increase their positive impact in the world, *and* increase participants and partners' ongoing experience of joy and generosity. For us, these two foci are inextricably intertwined: large-scale change efforts can better sustain and improve their impact in the world when they consciously tend to the wellbeing of participants and partners as an ongoing, integral part of their work together.

A NOTE ABOUT DATA SOURCES

In developing our findings and recommendations, we relied on a number of data sources, including:

- ▶ Progress reports completed by Action Team Leads during late 2018 through mid-2019;
- ▶ Data from anonymous feedback surveys completed in April and June 2019 at the end of two two-day immersions in three of four Living Collective Wisdom core competencies; and
- ▶ Transcripts from five 90-minute dialogues in September 2019 among participating Steering Committee members and Action Team Leads.

Another source of information is our direct observations of various aspects of C2C. C4CW team members have played integral roles over the past year with the Steering Committee, Action Team Leads, Action Teams, and Backbone Team. Moreover, C4CW's co-founders John Ott and Rose Pinard are the creators of Living Collective Wisdom, and designed and facilitated both immersion sessions in April and June 2019.

LIVING COLLECTIVE WISDOM™

Evolving together for profound results



Given these various roles and experiences, we are not external evaluators coming into an unfamiliar context to assess fidelity to a model or progress toward particular results. Rather, we understand our role as allies to C2C, coming alongside participants and leaders to help them deepen their capacity to embody Living Collective Wisdom in support of profound results. This is why we have called this document a *learning for adapting* report rather than an evaluation. Our intention is to provide a distinct perspective through our reflections, analyses, and recommendations to inspire learning dialogues among Backbone Team, Steering Committee, and Action Team members about how to amplify progress in the coming year and beyond.

PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDGES

We have organized our findings about C2C's progress and developmental edges by the four developmental aspects.

COHERING A MOVEMENT

The five practices of Wisdom Dialogue™, a foundational process of the results core competency, define the essence of cohering a movement:

- ▶ Extend the invitation;
- ▶ Define the change;
- ▶ Explore the current reality;
- ▶ Discern right action; and
- ▶ Act • Reflect • Adapt.

All five Action Teams have worked routinely to *extend the invitation* to increasing numbers of current and potential representatives of partner systems, both to participate in the Action Teams and/or serve as Action Team Leads. All five have also made substantial progress to *define the change*, nurturing deep agreement on their result statements, and on beginning lists of measures for their priority indicators and data development agendas.

Most Action Teams have begun one or more processes related to the third and fourth practices, *explore the current reality* and *discern right action*—e.g., baselines, learning dialogues, and asset mapping. And two Action Teams—StanREADS and StanFUTURES—have begun the fifth practice—*act • reflect • adapt*—in relation to small bets initiated prior to the emergence of C2C.

While Action Teams have achieved similar levels of progress in cohering a movement, they have also encountered similar developmental edges. First, Action Team Leads as a whole are already challenged by the growing demands of work associated with cohering a movement, and the work is only going to increase in scale and intensity in 2020 and beyond. With one or two exceptions, all of the Action Team Leads have had the responsibilities of stewarding the work of their Action Teams added to their full-time responsibilities.

A second developmental edge is that Action Team Leads have not been fully trained or supported in mastering all Wisdom Dialogue practices. This developmental edge relates to the first challenge in several ways. Finding time for this training and support has been difficult. And given this dearth of training and mastery, most Leads groups are not planning the work of their Action Teams developmentally, lacking a clear understanding of the arc of the entire process they are stewarding.

BUILDING THE MOVEMENT

Grounded in the community core competency, the work of building the movement involves maturing processes and structures for communication and engagement. Action Teams have developed various ad hoc ways for both communicating with current participants, and engaging needed representatives from systems and institutional partners to join the movement. Participants on each Action Team currently range from about 30 to over 60.

As impressive as Action Team participation has been, however, the numbers are relatively small compared to what will be needed as Teams move to develop and begin overseeing the implementation of countywide strategies. And this reflection points to a developmental edge common to both cohering and building the movement: how to effectively add and orient new members to the process without slowing or stalling progress.

STABILIZING A LIVING SYSTEM

Action Teams and Action Team Leads have played the primary roles in the first two developmental aspects to date. In contrast, the Backbone Team and Steering Committee have played the primary roles in the third and fourth developmental aspects: stabilizing a living system and sustaining the living system. This differentiation in roles and focus is not surprising. While each Action Team has focused on building a movement for their particular result(s), the Backbone Team and Steering Committee are focused on evolving a living system for all of C2C.

Grounded in the living systems core competency, stabilizing a living system focuses on evolving decision-making structures to navigate the growing complexity within the system, and on securing long-term institutional support for funding, staffing, data, and other resources needed by an emerging system. C2C has amassed significant achievements in this developmental aspect, including:

- ▶ Development of initiative-wide leadership and planning structures—e.g., the Steering Committee, Backbone Team, and Data Committee;
- ▶ Hiring of two full-time staff;
- ▶ Commitment of thousands of hours of in-kind support; and
- ▶ Securing of flexible funding to pay for external consultants and other resources.

A more subtle but no less significant marker of progress is that the emergent leadership and planning structures have achieved a threshold level of credibility, both with participants and with current and potential partner systems, including the Stanislaus County Office of Education, the twenty-six school districts, the Stanislaus Community Foundation, Modesto Junior College, California State University, Stanislaus, and others. Such endorsement of, and institutional engagement with, the emerging leadership and planning structures provide a foundation of legitimacy that is essential for the next levels of work needed in stabilizing the living system.

One of the developmental edges we identified for cohering a movement was that Leads groups do not yet have a clear understanding of the arc of the entire process they are stewarding. Similarly, we believe that a principal developmental edge for stabilizing a living system is that the Steering Committee and Backbone Team do not yet have shared understanding of a developmental arc for C2C as a single, integrated initiative. Backbone Team members are anticipating and managing urgent needs within the system, and Steering Committee members are actively engaging in various meetings, but neither group has yet internalized a long-term developmental arc that they regularly reference together to guide their learning and decisions.

SUSTAINING THE LIVING SYSTEM

As the five movements cohere and build, and the living system that is C2C begins to stabilize, the question becomes how to sustain the effort for the long haul. For us, this question is ultimately about *culture*. That is, sustaining a living system is about cultivating a way of being and acting that permeates and helps define the living system, transcending any one individual, system, or community to replicate and deepen an ongoing capacity for learning, reflection, and adaptation.

Sustaining a living system focuses on nurturing a culture grounded in Living Collective Wisdom and core values adopted by the system. While C2C has articulated a draft set of core values, we are not aware of any sustained effort to purposefully socialize these values across the initiative. There have been multiple streams of work to socialize aspects of Living Collective Wisdom, however, most notably two two-day immersions in the leadership, living systems, and community core competencies. Additionally, C4CW has also introduced selected practices and commitments from the framework in Steering Committee, Action Team Leads, and Action Team meetings that we have facilitated, and provided 1:1 and small group coaching and refresher sessions.

The most systematic data available to assess progress of work to sustain a living system is from the online surveys completed by participants immediately following the immersion sessions. These data document participants' commitment to embrace Living Collective Wisdom, and their understanding of the import of this framework for sustaining the effort over time. Further, a number of Action Teams have used aspects of Living Collective Wisdom during meetings and planning sessions.

However incomplete, these data demonstrate a nascent commitment to Living Collective Wisdom among C2C participants. At the same time, the data also document a need for much more support for, and investment in, promoting the capacity for Living Collective Wisdom throughout C2C.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the progress and developmental edges that have emerged over the past two years, we have articulated nine recommendations for strengthening C2C in 2020 and beyond. These include:

1. Support more full-time leadership for Action Teams • Work plans for each Action Team;
2. Offer more training and process supports to Action Team Leads;
3. Expand the focus of engagement and communication strategies;
4. Formalize—and begin managing to—a theory of change;
5. Compose a long-term developmental plan and initiative budget;
6. Develop agreements about Action Team autonomy, alignment, and accountability;
7. Develop an ongoing process for garnering endorsements of C2C and the six results;
8. Formalize and strengthen institutional alignment and support for C2C; and
9. Designate and support a group for intensive engagement with Living Collective Wisdom.

Taken together, these recommendations are designed to help participants, and their communities and systems, continue evolving together to realize the aspirations at the heart of C2C.

APPRECIATIONS

During our more than twelve years of work in Stanislaus County, we have partnered with, and borne witness to, a number of remarkably successful large-scale change efforts. Now, Stanislaus Cradle to Career (C2C) is stewarding a staggeringly ambitious effort to improve the wellbeing of children from birth into their careers. The arising of such aspirations are sacred to us. So too are the passion and grit needed to carry these hopes in our hearts, day by day, until they are realized.

Thank you to all of you who have said *yes* to the call of C2C. We are grateful beyond words for the invitation to join you on part of your journey, for the privilege of being your allies, and for the hope, joy, and generosity of spirit you have shared with us. What C2C has already helped manifest is extraordinary ... and ... we are eager to discover what is wanting to emerge *now*.

—John Ott • Rose Pinard
Center for Collective Wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years, Stanislaus Cradle to Career (C2C) has begun to cohere a vibrant movement of remarkable breadth and promising depth focused on six priority results for children, youth, and young people in Stanislaus County.

This report reflects on the progress C2C has made since early 2018, and some of the challenges it has encountered. Specifically, Section 1 offers a brief summary of some of the efforts that predate and have informed the emergence of C2C, and highlights major accomplishments.

Section 2 summarizes the developmental framework that has informed the work of C2C since September 2018. Called Living Collective Wisdom™, this framework has been embraced by the C2C Steering Committee and is at the heart of the theory of change that organizes our findings and recommendations. Section 3 then details findings about both progress and challenges in embodying the framework, and recommendations for how to strengthen the initiative in 2020 and beyond.

A NOTE ABOUT DATA SOURCES • WHY THIS REPORT

In developing our findings and recommendations, we relied on a number of data sources, including:

- Progress reports completed by Action Team Leads during late 2018 through mid-2019;
- Data from anonymous feedback surveys completed in April and June 2019 at the end of two two-day immersions in Living Collective Wisdom;
- Transcripts from five 90-minute dialogues in September 2019 among participating Steering Committee members and Action Team Leads;
- StriveTogether's Theory of Action and other related documents and reports, including C2C's Civic Infrastructure Assessment Report;² and
- Various archival documents, including emails; newsletters; and slides, handouts, and summaries from a wide array of meetings—e.g., Backbone Team meetings, Leadership Network meetings, Steering Committee meetings, Action Team Leads meetings, Action Team meetings, and Data Committee meetings.

Another source of information is our direct observations of various aspects of C2C. John Ott served as lead facilitator for the Leadership Network and Steering Committee from August 2018 through May 2019, and the Action Team Leads meetings through early 2019. He also participated in multiple Backbone Team meetings through December 2019, and supported Kate Trompetter, a member of the Center for Collective Wisdom (C4CW) team during this time period, in her role of providing process support to Action Teams and coaching for Action Team Leads.

² StriveTogether (<https://www.strivetgether.org>) is a nonprofit network of nearly 70 community partnerships across the country focused on building local cradle to career efforts. One of the requirements to join the network is a Civic Infrastructure Assessment Report.

Moreover, we are the creators of Living Collective Wisdom, and designed and facilitated both immersion sessions in April and June 2019. We developed the process design and questions for the September 2019 learning dialogues in partnership with the Backbone Team. And, we have more than a decade of experience supporting a number of other change efforts across Stanislaus County.

Given these various roles and experiences, we are not external evaluators coming into an unfamiliar context to assess fidelity to a model or progress toward particular results. Rather, we understand our role as allies to C2C, coming alongside participants and leaders to help them deepen their capacity to embody Living Collective Wisdom in support of profound results.

This is why we have called this document a *learning for adapting* report rather than an evaluation. Our intention is to provide a distinct perspective through our reflections, analyses, and recommendations to inspire learning dialogues among Backbone Team, Steering Committee, and Action Team members about how to amplify progress in the coming year and beyond.

1 FIVE COLLECTIVE IMPACT EFFORTS

Stanislaus Cradle to Career builds upon years, even decades, of ongoing work within and across the county's twenty-six school districts, across multiple county and local government departments and agencies, and within and among a wide array of communities and community organizations. A few of the efforts that have predated and informed C2C include:

- ▶ Stanislaus READS, a change effort led by the Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) and the Stanislaus Community Foundation (SCF) that supports 8 pilot schools in exploring promising strategies to improve third grade reading scores.
- ▶ StanFUTURES, a countywide effort to improve the percentage of high school graduates entering college, led by participants from California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS), Modesto Junior College (MJC), multiple school districts, and SCF.
- ▶ Focus on Prevention, a multi-sector initiative focused on building a countywide movement to strengthen families, and the neighborhoods and communities, schools and businesses, and other institutions that help families thrive. One of the major achievements of this effort has been the creation of an integrated system of care for families and individuals in the county struggling with homelessness.
- ▶ Destination Graduation, a multi-year countywide effort led by SCOE to improve high school graduation rates.
- ▶ Wisdom Transformation Initiative, a multi-year effort led by C4CW to help a number of Stanislaus County non-profit behavioral health organizations embody an earlier version of the Living Collective Wisdom framework in support of improving results for the individuals, families, and communities they serve.
- ▶ The New Leadership Network, funded by the James Irvine Foundation, which has nurtured relationships and leadership skills among four cohorts of emerging and current leaders within the county.

These and myriad other efforts have tilled the soil for surprising partnerships and collaborations to sprout in support of profound results, including C2C.

2018-19 ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

A series of dialogues among superintendents and community leaders, convened by SCOE and SCF in 2017, ultimately produced an agreement to organize a Cradle to Career movement in Stanislaus County. And so much has been achieved in two short years! What follows is a brief recounting of progress and major accomplishments to date.

AGREEMENT ON RESULTS

Chief among these accomplishments is developing deep agreement among superintendents and community leaders to organize and launch five large-scale change efforts focused on six results:

- ▶ StanREADY: Stanislaus County children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- ▶ StanREADS: Stanislaus County children read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

- ▶ StanMATH: Stanislaus County students of all ages demonstrate confidence, success, and joy in math.
- ▶ StanFUTURES: Stanislaus County students graduate high school postsecondary-ready. Postsecondary students successfully complete their certificate or degree.
- ▶ StanCAREERS: Stanislaus County job seekers are ready to enter self-sustaining employment.

No other community that we know of has ever *simultaneously* launched five such collective impact efforts. To support each of these efforts, and unite them into a single, integrated initiative, is a prodigious undertaking.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

C2C has evolved several structures to provide leadership and decision-making on behalf of the initiative. The Backbone Team includes senior leaders and staff from SCOE and SCF, the two original conveners. This small team has managed the funding, staffing, and learning for adapting supports for the initiative, and planned and helped facilitate the Leadership Network and Steering Committee meetings.

The Leadership Network was the first collaborative leadership structure to emerge to help build support across the twenty-six school districts and other sectors, including county and local governments, philanthropy, non-profits, the faith sector, and others. The original plan was for this group to meet quarterly, but the complexity and rapidity of the unfolding efforts soon revealed the need for a more nimble and engaged leadership body. Between October 2018 and January 2019, a Steering Committee³ was formed and endorsed by the Leadership Network to assume a more formal leadership role going forward.

The Steering Committee met monthly through the first half of 2019, and several times over the second half of the year. Members have committed to keep Leadership Network members who are not on the Steering Committee updated with progress. They have planned for the upcoming 2020 Summit, and coordinated engagement strategies for school superintendents, faculty at Modesto Junior College, county government, and other sectors. They are also working closely with Action Team Leads to track progress across the five Action Teams and have committed to help align institutional support for priority strategies and high leverage actions as they emerge.

PLANNING STRUCTURES

Five Action Teams have emerged to build the collective impact efforts for the six results. Each team has a collaborative group of leads that includes SCOE staff and staff from other anchor institutions—e.g., CSUS, MJC, various school districts, and others. Leads groups organize the planning processes for their teams and facilitate team meetings. To date, all five teams have developed agreement for their respective result statements, and on at least partial lists of measures for their priority indicators and data development agendas.

Beyond leading their individual teams, Leads groups also meet regularly together to develop skills, coordinate planning as appropriate, and share information and learning. They also meet periodically with the Steering Committee to update members and coordinate engagement and planning efforts.

³ Attachment A includes a structures map and rosters of the Steering Committee and other leadership structures.

Two additional structures are providing support across the five Action Teams: a Data Committee and a Communication Workgroup. The Data Committee is building agreements and protocols to both guide the development and distribution of reports on the priority indicators, and organize the work on the data development agendas. A baseline report on some of the priority indicators is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2020. The Communication Workgroup is developing protocols, plans, and content for ongoing communication strategies. A new logo and website, monthly e-newsletters, and an ongoing series of articles in the Modesto Bee⁴ are products to date.

FUNDING • STAFFING • IN-KIND SUPPORT

External funding for C2C has come directly from SCF and from grants secured by SCF. SCOE, school districts, SCF, and other partner organizations have dedicated thousands of hours of in-kind staff time. And SCOE hired two full-time staff to provide ongoing support across the initiative—Executive Director Megan Lowery and Program Coordinator Mary Pedraza.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND PROCESS SUPPORT

C2C has engaged both StriveTogether and C4CW to support the development of the initiative. In early 2018, StriveTogether worked with a planning group to organize an April 2018 strategic planning retreat and a June 2018 Community Summit. Highlights of these two meetings included: endorsement of a beginning mission, vision, and values for the overall initiative; a first data walk reviewing information relevant to the six results, and initial convenings of several Action Teams.

C2C submitted its Civic Infrastructure Report and application to join the StriveTogether Network in October 2018 after consultation with StriveTogether staff and consultants, and was approved soon thereafter. Since then, C2C has accessed StriveTogether resources to support the work of the Action Teams, and sent a delegation to the September 2019 annual conference.

C4CW began working with Stanislaus READS in mid-2016, and helped design and facilitate the 2017 dialogues among superintendents and community partners that ultimately launched C2C. In 2018, C4CW provided consultation to the Backbone Team throughout the year, and began helping to design and facilitate Leadership Network, Steering Committee, Action Team Leads, and select Action Team meetings during the fall.

This support continued through the first half of 2019, and expanded to include design and facilitation of Living Collective Wisdom immersions. During the second half of 2019, C4CW continued to meet regularly with the Backbone Team and Action Team Leads, providing process supports and coaching in Living Collective Wisdom. We have also taken the lead in the data gathering, analysis, and writing for this first learning for adapting report.

In conversations with Steering Committee members and Action Team Leads, we have compared C2C's developmental path to the growth of a species of bamboo. During the first four years of its life, very little of the plant is observable above ground. And then, during the fifth year, the plant can

⁴ See, e.g., <https://www.modbee.com/living/health-fitness/article237689924.html>;
<https://www.modbee.com/living/health-fitness/article238548918.html>

grow over 80 feet in six weeks. How is this possible? Because during the first four years, the plant is growing a root system that can sustain its growth above ground and its life for many years to come.

We understand C2C's unfolding much like this bamboo plant. For the first two years, and likely for the next one or two, very little has been or will be visible to people who are not actively engaged in the initiative. The focus of these first few years of work is on developing the processes, structures, skills, intentions, and culture needed to sustain this change effort for years to come.

In the next section we explore the framework and theory of change that are guiding this critical work of developing a strong root system for C2C.

2 A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

Living Collective Wisdom is a comprehensive approach to systems and community change embraced by the Steering Committee as a cornerstone of C2C. We created this framework through decades of designing, supporting, and leading large-scale change initiatives. It incorporates original research: by John Ott and other colleagues on collective wisdom; and by Rose Pinard for her doctoral dissertation on quantum physicist David Bohm's concept of dialogue, a cornerstone of theories related to learning organizations and systems thinking.

A BEGINNING ORIENTATION

Patricia Auspos and Mark Cabaj, in a 2014 paper⁵ published by the Aspen Institute, distinguish five different contexts for community change efforts, summarized in the following table.

Context	Description	Examples
Simple	Problems and solutions are well known. There is no debate among stakeholders about whether or how the problem should be addressed.	Vaccination campaign for meningitis
Complicated	Cause-and-effect relationships that contribute to the problem are uncertain but knowable. There are several different ways to solve the problem.	Building a health clinic; testing a new drug; building a clean water system
Social/Political	Cause-and-effect relationships are known, but stakeholders do not agree on whether or how to address the problem.	Sex education in schools; the location of a safe needle exchange
Chaotic	Cause-and-effect relationships are highly uncertain and moving quickly; stakeholders' values, interests, and perspectives are all over the map.	Responses to natural disasters; the financial crisis of 2008
Complex	Cause-and-effect relationships are not always certain. Stakeholders' values, interests, and perspectives are sufficiently different so that alignment is difficult.	Health-care reform; poverty; homelessness; neighborhood renewal

In a subsequent blog,⁶ Cabaj further articulates the nature of complex issues and some of the differences between traditional and adaptive responses:

⁵ Auspos, Patricia, and Mark Cabaj. *Complexity and Community Change: Managing Adaptively to Improve Effectiveness*. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2014.

⁶ Cabaj, Mark. http://www.evaluationcapacitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Formatted_Weaving-together-accountability-and-learning-in-complex-situations_Cabaj_20171215.pdf

Nature of Complex Issues	Traditional Model of Response	Adaptive Model of Response
[Complex issues] involve a wide variety of stakeholders who influence—and are influenced by—the situation.	One or a few organizations—usually supported by experts and usually unsuccessfully—try to impose a solution on their own.	Meaningfully engage key stakeholders in all aspects of exploring, developing, and implementing responses, including people with lived experience.
[R]oot causes are multiple, tangled up, and deeply embedded in broader systems and cultures.	Seek technical “fixes” that focus on only a few elements of the challenge.	Zoom in to obtain insight and empathy into the causes and manifestations of the issue and then zoom out to identify and address systemic factors that produce the complex situations, including structures, values, and behaviors in those systems.
[C]hallenges are context sensitive, defy cookie-cutter responses, vary from place to place, and constantly evolve.	Complete research, seek out best practices, and develop and implement a comprehensive long-term plan.	Continuously scale experimentation, adaptation, and evolution of responses to reflect diverse contexts, new learnings, and shifts in the environment.

We developed the Living Collective Wisdom framework for systems and communities confronting complex challenges within dynamic contexts. For results at the scale embraced by C2C, the challenges can seem overwhelming, even intractable. They require diverse stakeholders working together for sustained periods of time to discover and effectively address root causes. They often require radically new and creative approaches that no one entity, institution, or sector can develop or implement alone. Living Collective Wisdom, therefore, is intended to guide the development of adaptive responses to effect and sustain substantial progress toward profound results.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Living Collective Wisdom framework is at the heart of our theory of change for C2C and other large-scale change efforts committed to profound results, summarized as follows:

If systems and communities commit to achieving and sustaining profound results through Living Collective Wisdom ...

then, over time, they will significantly increase their positive impact in the world, and their experience of joy, generosity, and wellbeing.

An expanded version provides some beginning detail about what *Living Collective Wisdom* means:

If systems and communities commit to achieving and sustaining profound results ...

... through embodying the four core competencies ...

... as they evolve interdependent movements and living systems ...

... *then*, over time, they will significantly increase their positive impact in the world, and their experience of joy, generosity, and wellbeing.

That is, Living Collective Wisdom means embodying four core competencies as we work together to nurture and integrate living systems and related movements to achieve profound results.

Wait, what?!

We know. That's a mouthful! Stay with us. The rest of this section provides detail about the Living Collective Wisdom framework, beginning with two foundational concepts and related premises.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

Living Collective Wisdom builds upon two foundational concepts—collective wisdom and the Four Dimensions of Change™.

COLLECTIVE WISDOM

In our forthcoming book entitled *Living Collective Wisdom*, we write:

When human beings gather in groups, a depth of awareness and insight, a transcendent knowing, becomes available to us that, if accessed, can lead to profound action. We call this transcendent knowing *collective wisdom*.

This knowing is not of the mind alone, nor is it of any individual alone. When this knowing and sense of right action emerges, it does so from deep within the individual participants, from within the collective awareness of the group, and from within the larger field that holds the group.⁷

Collective wisdom reflects our innate capacities as human beings, when we come together, for breakthrough thinking, innovative solutions, and extraordinary acts of generosity and unity.

A beginning premise of Living Collective Wisdom is that complex change efforts are far more likely to achieve and sustain profound results when participants are able to reliably access collective wisdom. A related premise is that collective wisdom is a potentiality of all groups, not just so-called 'healthy' or 'enlightened' ones.

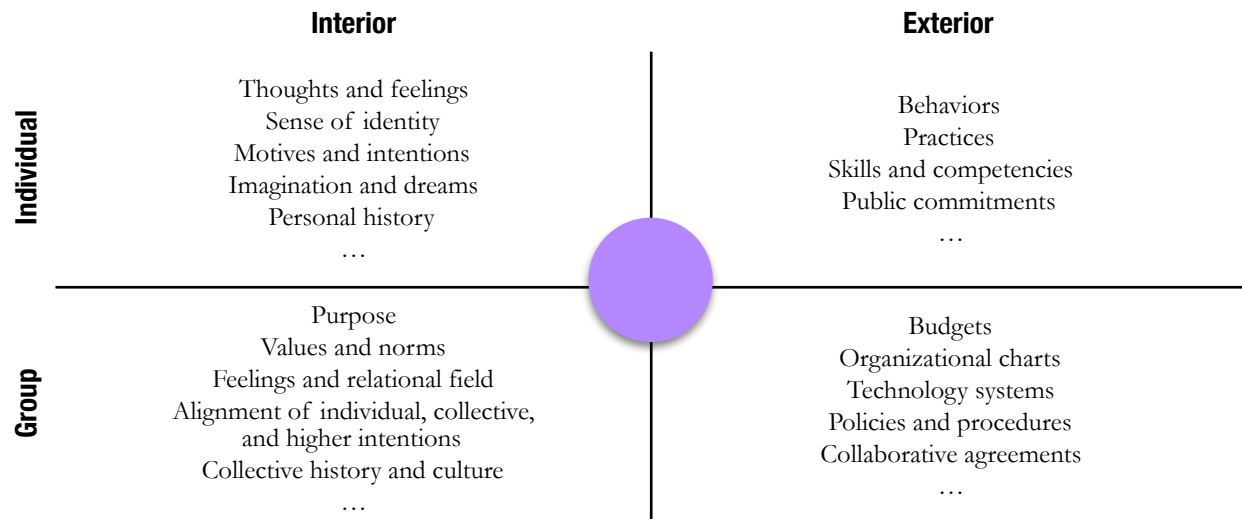
These premises are not declarations of naïve faith or wishful thinking. They have emerged from decades of experience with the phenomenon, through our work with non-profit organizations, communities and community-based change efforts, foundations, small and large public sector systems, and small and large-scale private sector organizations.

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE™

A second foundational concept is the Four Dimensions of Change. Any complex human undertaking unfolds through at least four dimensions of change: the individual and group *interior* dimensions of change, and the individual and group *exterior* dimensions of change.⁸ The following diagram graphically illustrates these four dimensions:

⁷ Ott, John, and Rose Pinard. Manuscript of forthcoming book *Living Collective Wisdom*.

⁸ We developed this framework based on Ken Wilber's work on the evolution of consciousness. See, e.g., Wilber, Ken. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala, 1996.



The upper left quadrant represents the individual interior dimension of change, including thoughts, attitudes, intentions, feelings, implicit biases, dreams, sense of identity, personal history, and other aspects of an individual's inner life that cannot be known by someone else unless the individual chooses to reveal them.

The lower left quadrant is the group interior dimension of change. This quadrant refers to the interior dimensions of a group's experience that are not visible. For example, what feelings or shared history are present within the group? Do people in the group feel safe speaking their truth, or do they feel afraid and anxious? What is the nature of the interactions between members' individual intentions and the group's collective intentions? Are there old wounds or betrayals that continue to undermine trust among members?

The upper right quadrant is the individual exterior dimension of change. This realm involves behaviors, practices, skills, competencies, and other aspects of an individual's life that can be observed by someone else.

The lower right quadrant is the group exterior dimension of change. In addition to group behaviors and skills (paralleling the individual exterior dimension of change), this realm includes the myriad external manifestations of group life: budgets, technology systems, strategic plans, policies and procedures, collaborative agreements, organizational reporting structures, job descriptions, and so forth.

Why does this concept matter? Given our experience and research, for at least two reasons. First, many change efforts fail to achieve or sustain their desired impacts because, over time, participants become so focused on the group exterior dimension of change that they forget to continue engaging the other dimensions of change.

Second and more importantly, groups are more likely to experience collective wisdom arising to support their efforts when participants engage all four dimensions of change. That is, when groups engage all four dimensions of change in a disciplined and sustained way, they open a portal for collective wisdom to arise and guide their efforts in the world. And Living Collective Wisdom is

designed for just this purpose: to help communities and systems engage the four dimensions of change in a systematic and disciplined way to achieve and sustain profound results.

FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS • FOUR CORE COMPETENCIES

Building on these foundational concepts and premises, Living Collective Wisdom posits four developmental aspects of large-scale change in support of profound results: cohering a movement; building the movement; stabilizing a living system; and sustaining the living system. Each developmental aspect is grounded in one of four core competencies: results, community, living systems, and leadership.

The diagram⁹ on the next page offers a visual illustration of this framework. Attachment B includes more detailed summaries of the core competencies.

Together, these developmental aspects and core competencies help guide groups committed to profound results: they affect every facet of a large-scale change effort. While progress can be asynchronous—i.e., groups may make substantial progress within one of the developmental aspects while progress in another aspect is far slower—groups committed to large-scale results need to tend to all four developmental aspects and their associated core competencies systematically and in a disciplined way.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECT: COHERING A MOVEMENT

The first developmental aspect of Living Collective Wisdom is *cohering a movement* for profound results. The work of this aspect is to align intention and action among a critical mass of stakeholders around both a profound result or results, and priority measures to assess progress toward these results over time.

Why this developmental aspect

A central challenge confronting any group wanting to effect large-scale change is fragmentation and misalignment. Regardless of the result we focus on, typically any number of systems, organizations, and communities are already working to effect the change, however disjointed, uncoordinated, or duplicative their efforts might be. What is needed is *cohering* these efforts into a movement aligned through a shared commitment *to hold ourselves accountable* for sustained progress.

The energy of compliance or half-hearted endorsement is not nearly sufficient to sustain the level of acting, learning, and adapting required for effecting and sustaining large-scale change. What is needed is passion and long-term commitment, even *reverence*. Reverence invites us to risk believing, and acting as if, there is a larger intention seeking form through us whenever two or more of us gather. This capacity for awe, humility, and gratitude can help us maintain our equilibrium when our efforts stall or differences threaten to divide us. It can also deepen the passion and patience we need for evolving together.

We use the phrase *profound results* to intimate this orientation to reverence. When we wholeheartedly commit ourselves to effect and sustain a result that is beyond what we can achieve or even imagine alone, we may experience a sudden recognition of the profundity of our undertaking. Whether we

⁹ This diagram is updated from the version C4CW shared during the C2C immersions.

LIVING COLLECTIVE WISDOM™

Evolving together for profound results



seek to ensure that every child enters kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life, end chronic homelessness, help communities heal from historical and collective trauma, or build a sustainable economy that works for all—an orientation to reverence can help us experience ourselves as being of service to, and a part of, a larger unfolding, a larger Whole.

Corresponding core competency: Results

Our work to cohere a movement for profound results is grounded in the concepts, commitments, and practices of the *results* core competency. The essence of this competency is about learning how to invite and inspire commitment to our highest aspirations, and to use data for discerning, undertaking, and evolving right action over time. The foundational process for this core competency is Wisdom Dialogue, comprising five iterative practices that also define the work of cohering a movement as illustrated in the diagram on the previous page:

- ▶ Extend the invitation;
- ▶ Define the change;
- ▶ Explore the current reality;
- ▶ Discern right action; and
- ▶ Act • Reflect • Adapt.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECT: BUILDING THE MOVEMENT

The second developmental aspect of large-scale change is *building the movement*. This work involves maturing processes and structures for ongoing engagement of communities, systems, and other networks, and implementing expansive communication processes and structures.

Why this developmental aspect

For results at the scale of those embraced by C2C, the individuals who join together to begin cohering a movement are essential—but not sufficient—for sustaining the movement over time. To sustain progress toward results of this scale requires that we also continually engage systems, communities, and networks to inspire them to share resources, inform decision-making, and take actions aligned with the growing movement. This work helps strengthen ownership and a sense of legitimacy for the large-scale change which, among other benefits, can help us better navigate controversy when it arises.

A second reason for building the movement becomes clear when we understand two core concepts:

- ▶ *Community*: a group of people who act together and support each other's wellbeing.
- ▶ *Community building*: strengthening the ability of people to act together and support each other's wellbeing.

Results at the scale embraced by C2C cannot be achieved only through the classroom, or through professionally-delivered, publicly-funded services alone. Naturally occurring relationships of support must also become a powerful source for achieving and sustaining any large-scale result of wellbeing. This means we must embrace community building as part of building the movement, and our strategies must become increasingly responsive to the differentiated needs across our region—e.g., by honoring different cultures, ethnicities, economic realities, and local histories. As developmental psychologist Robert Kegan observed:

If we live at a time when there is more fundamental change ..., we may be faced with a task that is ... historically unprecedented. At the growing edge of our culture's

evolution is how to fashion long-term relationships, even ‘long-term communities,’ which are the contexts for fundamental change.¹⁰

Corresponding core competency: Community

The concepts, commitments, and practices of the *community* core competency inform building the movement. This competency begins with a shift in perception from an orientation of *us and them* toward *relationships of mutuality*.¹¹

Mutuality speaks to the capacity of human beings to engage each other—indeed any living being—not as instruments for meeting our own needs, but as sacred beings in a continuous process of mutual sharing and development. In the context of large-scale change efforts, mutuality is fundamentally about our ability to evolve together—both individually and collectively—toward greater maturity and wisdom.

From this perspective, self, other, and the relationships between us are no longer clearly separate entities, but mutually forming processes. We no longer have to try to be generous toward each other, or toward any “other,” because *there is no other*. We simply *are* generous toward each other, because how we treat the other and how we treat ourselves are the same. And regardless of differences in position, authority, experience, or perspective, every interaction is an opportunity for mutuality, for forming community.

This understanding of mutuality leads to a second defining insight of the community core competency: that creation and healing are inextricably intertwined. A group’s commitment to effect change in the world will best be served when it is joined by an equally insistent commitment to heal the collective wounds we have inflicted and suffered. Past wounds, distrust, and divisions, if neglected, can deeply diminish our capacity to effect and sustain large-scale change together.

Finally, as reflected in the definitions of *community* and *community building*, this competency shifts the focus away from abstract definitions of community—e.g., geographic areas, or groups of people who share a common dimension of personal identity, culture, and/or historical experience—to a concrete relational reality. This competency, therefore, promotes a focus on leveraging opportunities to strengthen communities and peer relationships as part of any large-scale change effort.

A BRIEF INTERLUDE

The first two developmental aspects of Living Collective Wisdom focus on cohering and building a *movement* for profound results. The essence of this work is about supporting increasing numbers of people to expand and transcend the boundaries of their current systems and commitments as they align their aspirations, resources, and talents in support of the desired results.

The third and fourth developmental aspects of Living Collective Wisdom focus on stabilizing and sustaining a *living system*, whose boundaries, purpose, and functions are defined by a deepening commitment to the priority result(s). The essence of this work is about creating a long-term culture,

¹⁰ Kegan, Robert. *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process of Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 218.

¹¹ See, e.g., Miller, Jean Baker, and Irene Pierce Stiver. *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997; and Siegel, Daniel J. *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are*. New York: Guilford Publications, 2012, second edition.

supported by emergent structures and processes, that promote conscious and continuous learning and adapting among disparate systems and communities in support of progress toward our results.

There is a creative tension between these two sets of developmental aspects. A *movement* is focused on expanding and transcending boundaries. A *living system* seeks stability in support of emerging boundaries. Achieving and sustaining profound results require tending to the needs of both.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECT: STABILIZING A LIVING SYSTEM

The work of *stabilizing a living system* committed to profound results involves establishing credible decision-making structures and processes, and securing long-term institutional support for funding, staffing, data, and other resources needed by an emerging system.

Why this developmental aspect

Large-scale change is not about short bursts of exceptional effort followed by a return to business as usual. Substantial progress toward profound results takes time—typically years or longer. And sustaining such progress requires ongoing and conscious acting, learning, and adapting. Ultimately such work requires the emergence and long-term viability of a new living system defined by its commitment to these results.

James Miller, one of the original theorists of living systems, defined living systems as:

Self-organizing life forms that interact with their environments by means of information and energy exchanges.¹²

In the context of large-scale change, we strengthen the capacity of an emerging living system to engage with its environment in myriad ways. We create decision-making processes and structures to navigate the myriad interests and constraints of partner systems and institutions, and to make decisions about direction and resources that have legitimacy among participants and partners.

We develop structures to guide increasing numbers of hours of work, including the growing work of cohering and building the movement, and the multiple levels of work needed to develop real-time data to guide learning and adapting across the system. Some of these structures are new; others may be existing structures that are repurposed to support the emerging living system.

We seek out dedicated funding to support the growing work. Early funding may be new and time-limited. Over time we seek to develop stable sources of long-term funding.

And all of this work is grounded in a commitment to build long-term support from partner systems and institutions whose willingness to align their work through the living system is essential for long-term success. Such support may take the form of dedicated staff, restructured programs and initiatives, shared funding streams, and countless forms of in-kind resources.

Corresponding core competency: Living Systems

To stabilize a living system, we need to understand the nature of such systems, and how to support them developmentally over time. This is the focus of the *living systems* core competency.

¹² Miller, J. G. *Living Systems*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

As with the community core competency, this competency begins with a shift in perception: from *fragmentation* to *unfolding wholeness*. An orientation to unfolding wholeness is vital for understanding large-scale change. It encourages us to see interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and ongoing processes of dynamic change rather than single moments of impact or a finite project with a predefined beginning and end.

This way of seeing invites us to nurture conditions for *emergence*, a process of radically new capacities and wholeness arising from the interaction of separate parts or seemingly unrelated processes. For example, in the physical world, the quality of wetness is a demonstration of emergence: it arises from the interaction of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, neither of which independently possesses the quality of wetness.

In group life, collective wisdom is an emergent phenomenon. As Meg Wheatley observes:

[There is a] wisdom we possess [in groups] that is unavailable to us as individuals. The wisdom emerges as we get more and more connected with each other, as we move from conversation to conversation, carrying the ideas from one conversation to another, looking for patterns, suddenly surprised by an insight we all share.

There's a good scientific explanation for this, because this is how all life works. As separate ideas or entities become connected to each other, life surprises us with emergence—the sudden appearance of a new capacity and intelligence. All living systems work in this way.¹³

An understanding of emergence, and the related concepts of interdependence and complexity, can transform our understanding of large-scale change from a long, slow slog to a vital dance with life. We begin to understand our work as stewarding both patterns of relationships across dynamic processes and events, and opportunities for scaling small efforts into outsized impact. Indeed, the essence of this core competency is about mastering high leverage actions to evolve the living system(s) necessary to achieve and sustain profound results.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECT: SUSTAINING THE LIVING SYSTEM

The fourth developmental aspect of Living Collective Wisdom, *sustaining the living system*, shifts our focus to the culture we want to guide and sustain our effort for years to come. Our work here is focused on mastering the concepts, commitments, and practices of Living Collective Wisdom, along with other defining values we have embraced.

Why this developmental aspect

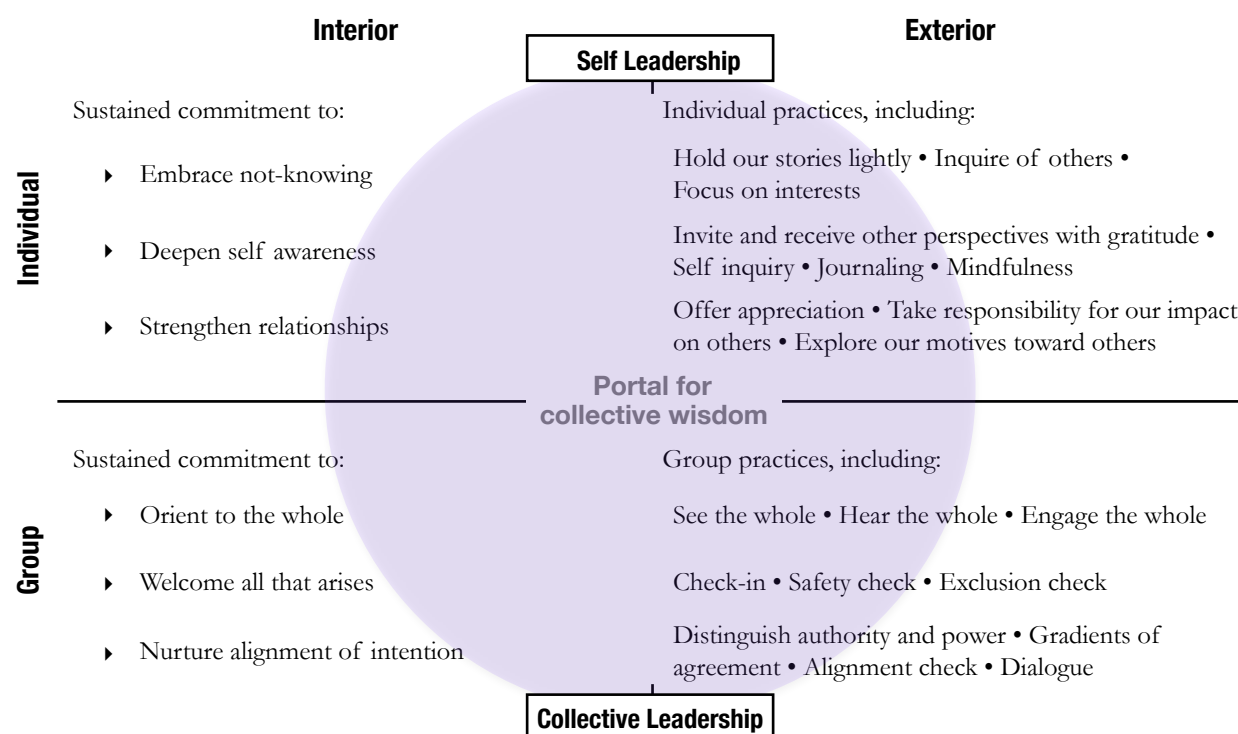
The shifts in perception and action required by the first three developmental aspects and their related core competencies invite a profoundly different orientation to sustainability. To engage all four dimensions of change, we need not only to focus on long-term funding, staffing, and structures, but also on the quality of our ongoing culture and how we engage our work, each other, and ourselves. We must learn to nurture a culture that sustains ongoing creation, adaptation, and healing in support of achieving our result(s). Living Collective Wisdom offers a pathway for this ongoing journey, beginning with a full-hearted commitment to embodying the leadership core competency.

¹³ Brown, Juanita, and David Isaacs. *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures through Conversations that Matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009, p. xii.

Corresponding core competency: Leadership

The seeds of collective wisdom are always present whenever two or more of us gather. To realize this potential, however, we must cultivate the conditions that make it more likely for collective wisdom to arise among us.

This is how we define *leadership*: the actions of *any* individual or group that cultivate the conditions for collective wisdom to arise in support of right action. Individuals and groups exercise self and collective leadership through a series of commitments and related practices as illustrated in the following diagram:



One of the defining characteristics of a culture that sustains a living system committed to profound results is a commitment to becoming *leader-ful*—i.e., consciously inviting and supporting all participants and partners to effectively engage in self and collective leadership. When each of us begins to embrace both our opportunity and responsibility for leadership, the group as a whole becomes more able to embody the other core competencies. Over time, we nurture a culture that enables us to more readily access collective wisdom in response to any challenge we confront.

RETURNING TO OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

With this brief examination of the developmental framework behind us, we can now revisit that mouthful of a theory of change:

If systems and communities commit to achieving and sustaining profound results ...
 ... **through embodying the four core competencies** ...
 ... **as they evolve interdependent movements and living systems** ...

... *then*, over time, they will significantly increase their positive impact in the world, and their experience of joy, generosity, and wellbeing.

Participants and partners embodying the four core competencies—results, community, living systems, and leadership—as we cohere and build a movement (or movements) and stabilize and sustain a living system—is what we mean by *Living Collective Wisdom*.

In Section 3, we explore our findings about the progress C2C has made thus far. We also detail some of the challenges that are arising, and offer recommendations to address these challenges in 2020 and beyond.

Before turning to this section, however, we want to highlight one additional aspect of the theory of change. The intended long-term impact of Living Collective Wisdom is to help large-scale change efforts *both* sustain and increase their positive impact in the world, *and* increase participants and partners' ongoing experience of joy and generosity. For us, these two foci are inextricably intertwined: large-scale change efforts can better sustain and improve their impact in the world when they consciously tend to the wellbeing of participants and partners as an ongoing, integral part of their work together.

3 FINDINGS • RECOMMENDATIONS

As we shared in the Introduction, this report is not a detached evaluation of C2C's fidelity to a model, and it is far too soon to assess countywide movement on priority indicators. Instead, our findings and recommendations—based on the data sources detailed in the Introduction—are intended to support ongoing reflection among Backbone Team, Steering Committee, and Action Team members about how to continue strengthening and evolving C2C.

We outlined major C2C achievements to date in Section 1. In this section we offer a more nuanced assessment of progress and challenges through the lens of each of the four developmental aspects, and then offer additional reflections about the overall initiative. Each subsection follows the same structure: reflections on progress to date and what has supported this progress; reflections on developmental edges; and recommendations for deepening progress in 2020 and beyond.

COHERING A MOVEMENT

Over the past two years, the five Action Teams have focused primarily on the work of cohering movements in support of their priority results. As noted in Section 2, this developmental aspect is grounded in the results core competency and the foundational process called Wisdom Dialogue.¹⁴ We can map the progress and challenges toward cohering a movement to the five Wisdom Dialogue practices as visualized in the diagram on page 12:

- ▶ Extend the invitation;
- ▶ Define the change;
- ▶ Explore the current reality;
- ▶ Discern right action; and
- ▶ Act • Reflect • Adapt.

PROGRESS

All five Action Teams have worked routinely to extend the invitation to increasing numbers of current and potential representatives of partner systems, both to participate in the Action Teams and/or serve as Action Team Leads. As noted in Section 1, all five have also made substantial progress to define the change, nurturing deep agreement on their result statements, and on beginning lists of measures for their priority indicators and data development agendas.

This progress is no small achievement. The heart of the results core competency is developing deep commitment to mutual learning and accountability in support of our highest aspirations. This work cannot be reduced to a shallow task of putting some words down on paper so we can get on with

¹⁴ The April and June 2019 immersions in Living Collective Wisdom did not include the results core competency, given budget and time constraints. Instead, we have shared some of the key concepts and practices of this core competency during various Action Team Leads, Action Team, and Steering Committee meetings. We provided a first systematic introduction of the Wisdom Dialogue process to Action Team Leads in early January 2020.

“doing something.” It requires regularly engaging the interior dimensions of change to ensure that we are building an ever-deepening *yes* to the increasingly complex work of cohering a movement. Multiple quotes from the September 2019 table dialogues spoke to this depth of passion and commitment. For example:

This is the best way to move forward. None of us individually have the resources to make a change and make a difference. But collectively we do. ... I've learned that there are some problems that are bigger than what we can solve on our own. —*Table dialogue participant*

Cradle to Career created a vehicle, a come-one come-all, so we can start having the really important discussions that need to happen at a countywide basis, on a regional basis. I can't think of a better initiative. Ultimately, it's going to help all of us be more effective ... I just don't think we could be doing anything more important than this. —*Table dialogue participant*

This passion and commitment—so evident among Action Team Leads and participants—have been essential for the progress Action Teams have made to date. So too has the support of C2C staff and consultants.

Beyond progress on extend the invitation and define the change, most Action Teams have begun one or more processes related to the third and fourth Wisdom Dialogue practices, explore the current reality and discern right action—e.g., baselines, learning dialogues, and asset mapping. And two Action Teams—StanREADS and StanFUTURES—have begun the fifth practice—act • reflect • adapt—in relation to small bets initiated prior to the emergence of C2C.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDGES

Leads and others associated with all five Action Teams have articulated similar developmental edges related to cohering a movement. First, Action Team Leads as a whole are already challenged by the growing demands of work associated with cohering a movement, and the work is only going to increase in scale and intensity in 2020 and beyond. With one or two exceptions, all of the Action Team Leads have had the responsibilities of stewarding the work of their Action Teams added to their full-time responsibilities.

A second developmental edge is that Action Team Leads have not been fully trained or supported in mastering all of the Wisdom Dialogue practices needed for cohering a movement. This developmental edge relates to the first challenge in several ways. Finding time for this training and support has been difficult. And given this dearth of training and mastery, most Leads groups are not planning the work of their Action Teams developmentally, lacking a clear understanding of the arc of the entire process they are stewarding.

The risks of these two challenges are significant. Some Action Teams may soon begin to feel that their process has stalled because their Leads groups do not have a clear plan for how to organize, expand, and deepen the work in the coming months. Other Action Teams, worried about the time pressures and seeking to simplify the process, may start to focus on getting a product done without tending to the layers of work needed to cohere a movement. Either or both of these potential responses to the first two developmental edges could dissipate the good will and momentum Action Teams have cultivated over the past two years.

A third challenge voiced across all of the Action Teams is how to continually and effectively add new members to the process without slowing or stalling progress. Part of this challenge is about creating processes to help new Action Team members learn what already has been done and decided so they can appropriately enter and engage. A second part of this challenge is about helping new members begin to understand and acclimate to the Living Collective Wisdom framework, particularly the commitments and practices of the leadership core competency.

When and how to add community members to Action Teams, and/or engage them in other ways through a Wisdom Dialogue, is a particularly daunting dimension of this third developmental edge, as an excerpt from one of the September 2019 table dialogues vividly describes.

...

Math has gotten political.

Yes. Now, all of a sudden, there are different definitions about what math is. And these differences inform the community's perception of what's happening in schools. Now, it's hard to even have parents in the room when I'm exploring my own pedagogy.

It's a fine dance because we need community involvement.

For that reason, I do appreciate that our framework starts with intentions. We can develop solutions more quickly that way even though it ironically also takes longer.

I agree. There's a fine line of inviting community into our Action Teams and learning how to navigate that and its political implications.

...

None of these three challenges are surprising. They do not signal that anyone has done anything wrong or that the work is significantly off track. Indeed, we use the phrase *developmental edge* to indicate that such challenges, in our experience, are fairly typical for large-scale change efforts at this stage of development. Left untended, however, these challenges can significantly undermine Action Teams' capacity to continue making progress in cohering movements in support of their results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support more full-time leadership for Action Teams • Work plans for each Action Team

The most urgent—and complex—of these three developmental edges is the first: the need for more dedicated time from individual Action Team Leads, and from Leads groups as a whole. As impactful as the hiring of the Executive Director and Program Coordinator has been, these two full-time staff persons cannot, by themselves, provide the depth of administrative and implementation support, design work, and leadership needed for cohering five movements.

This challenge has a number of possible responses—e.g., the Steering Committee helping to raise funding to hire additional full-time staff; anchor institutions rewriting job descriptions so that existing staff can assume larger leadership roles. Moreover, what may be needed for one movement may not work or be necessary for another. Ultimately, the decisions needed to make progress on this developmental edge will likely best emerge through dialogue among members of the Backbone Team, Steering Committee, and Action Team Leads as part of their work to stabilize a living system (see below).

Such dialogue will be better informed, however, if Leads groups are supported to develop work plans beforehand to map the next 12-24 months of work in support of cohering (and building) their movements.

2. Offer more training and process supports to Action Team Leads

We provided a half-day introduction to the Wisdom Dialogue process for Action Team Leads in January 2020, but more training and process supports will likely be needed to help Leads groups master this process, and to plan for the next 12-24 months of work. In the same way that Leads groups need to think and plan developmentally for the work of their Action Teams, the Backbone Team and Steering Committee need to work with Action Team Leads to plan for the ongoing development of Action Team Leads.

BUILDING THE MOVEMENT

Grounded in the community core competency, the work of building the movement—maturing processes and structures for communication and engagement—has unfolded both through the Communication Workgroup and the Action Teams. We catalogued some of the products and progress of the Communication Workgroup in Section 1. Our principal focus in this section will be on the work of the Action Teams.

PROGRESS

Action Teams have developed various ad hoc ways for both communicating with current participants, and engaging needed representatives from systems and institutional partners to join the movement. Participants on each Action Team currently range from about 30 to more than 60.

Beyond these numbers, equally impressive is the understanding of Action Team Leads about the importance of this developmental work and the community core competency.

I think education is in a silo and doesn't branch out. If I had known about half of what exists in the county as I do now when I was a principal, I could have helped my program so much better. But I had no idea. So that's amazing about what we're doing. —*Table dialogue participant*

What are we doing as a movement to keep reaching out—to be kind and generous? We want you to join us and be who C4CW is asking us to be in an authentic way. Let's do this first through our small bets. —*Table dialogue participant*

We have a tendency to think of community as an 'other' that we are trying to fix, rather than as an essential organ that permeates throughout the living system. Our Action Team is a unique community and like nesting dolls; there reside multiple communities within. We need to see all of this and create space for new relationships to emerge. —*Action Team Lead, June 2019 immersion feedback survey*

I see challenges around data. ... What are we not looking at—not just quantitative data but qualitative data—say, empathy interviews and what we find out from actual human beings who are living with the issues? How do we involve them? —*Table dialogue participant*

How do we help the entire community do this—for brand new teachers, counselors who live in the neighborhood, everyone? It's really cultural. It's about changing our mindset. —*Table dialogue participant*

Why are these shifts in perception important markers of progress? Because, in our experience, large-scale change efforts often begin to falter when the commitment to build the movement wanes, and when participants stop nurturing relationships of mutuality across the movement.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDGES

The work of cohering and building the movement are closely entwined, particularly in the early stages of a large-scale change effort. The third challenge identified for cohering the movement—how to effectively add new members without slowing or stalling progress—is a dimension of the primary challenge for building the movement as well. As impressive as Action Team participation has been, the numbers are relatively small compared to what will be needed as Teams move to develop and begin overseeing the implementation of countywide strategies.

Participants in the September 2019 table dialogues gave voice to some of the nuances of this developmental edge:

When I'm sitting in on a meeting, other people who need to be present jump to mind. But it's not just about holding a seat but actually doing the work. So aligning and ensuring intention is key. —*Table dialogue participant*

Some people say they want to hang back until we have everything all figured out with specific action steps for them to do. But we have to help them understand that it's about a movement. That's probably the biggest challenge. —*Table dialogue participant*

As I reviewed the list of participating organizations, they're not all really stepping in and showing up yet. How do we approach that? —*Table dialogue participant*

The next phases of work will likely require not only larger numbers of participants, but also new structures and processes to conduct the work beyond monthly Action Team and Action Team Leads meetings. This will be especially true for efforts to engage and involve young people, parents, grandparents, and other community members who may not be able to participate in meetings during school and work hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 2. The two recommendations from cohering a movement

Not surprisingly, the recommendations to strengthen the work of cohering a movement apply to building the movement as well. More full-time leadership support for Action Teams, and more training and process support for Action Team Leads, will benefit both developmental aspects.

3. Expand the focus of engagement and communication strategies

A recommendation to expand the focus of communication strategies will also benefit both cohering and building the movement. No matter how extensive the plans developed by the Action Teams are, achieving sustained progress toward all six C2C results will likely necessitate efforts beyond those the Teams can directly oversee or implement. One implication of this reflection is that engagement and communication strategies developed by Action Teams, the Communication Workgroup, the

Steering Committee, and others should strive both to inform partners and others about progress, and to inspire aligned action beyond the formal C2C action plans. As author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry observed:

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the people to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.

STABILIZING A LIVING SYSTEM

Action Teams and Action Team Leads have played the primary roles in the first two developmental aspects to date. In contrast, the Backbone Team and Steering Committee have played the primary roles in the third and fourth developmental aspects: stabilizing a living system and sustaining the living system.

This differentiation in roles and focus is not surprising. While each Action Team has focused on building a movement for their particular result(s), the Backbone Team and Steering Committee are focused on evolving a living system for all of C2C.

PROGRESS

Grounded in the living systems core competency, stabilizing a living system focuses on evolving decision-making structures to navigate the growing complexity within the system, and on securing long-term institutional support for funding, staffing, data, and other resources needed by an emerging system.

Section 1 enumerated noteworthy achievements within this developmental aspect, including the:

- ▶ Development of initiative-wide leadership and planning structures—e.g., the Steering Committee, Backbone Team, and Data Committee;
- ▶ Hiring of two full-time staff;
- ▶ Commitment of thousands of hours of in-kind support from multiple institutions and organizations;
- ▶ Successful application to join the StriveTogether network; and
- ▶ Securing of flexible funding to pay for external consultants and other resources.

Here, we want to highlight a more subtle but no less significant marker of progress: namely, that the emergent leadership and planning structures have achieved a threshold level of credibility, both with participants and with current and potential partner systems.

Multiple developments over the past year support this observation. First, there was no drama, and no evident erosion of support for C2C, as a result of the evolution of roles for the Leadership Network and the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members have graciously, even enthusiastically, accepted a much larger leadership role than was initially imagined for the Leadership Network. Leadership Network members who chose not to continue with the Steering Committee have expressed continued support for C2C. In our experience, such transitions can create the perception, and sometimes the reality, of instability and erode confidence and commitment among key stakeholders. That did not happen here.

Second, superintendents across the county had several discussions to decide who should represent them—first on the Leadership Network, and then more formally on the Steering Committee—and now receive monthly reports from their representatives on relevant developments. Moreover, multiple superintendents are participating, and have directed senior staff to participate, in Action Teams, the Data Committee, and other initiative-wide structures. They are clearly taking these structures and the overall initiative seriously.

Third, the Presidents of both CSUS and MJC have joined the Steering Committee, as have Directors of two County Departments, and all have committed additional resources, including the time and expertise of other staff members, to the effort.

SCOE and SCF senior leaders and staff, both individually and as a Backbone Team, have played vital roles in cultivating this credibility, as highlighted by two quotes from the September 2019 table dialogues:

I've been involved in other efforts where there was only a grant and it was limited. Once the grant was gone, everything kind of fell apart. I feel like there's a commitment here that's long-term so it feels like we can stick it out. So, I have the confidence of being able to continue the work. In reality, the work is never-ending, but at least we can continue until we begin to see successes. Having the Community Foundation and SCOE behind us has been important. —*Table dialogue participant*

Personally, I feel that having somebody who it's their job to give the initiative structure and make it go forward is key. The Backbone Team invites us in so we get to drop in, do our thing, and go back to our jobs. ... [The Backbone Team's] support enabled us to keep steadily moving forward. —*Table dialogue participant*

Such endorsement of, and institutional engagement with, the emerging leadership and planning structures provide a foundation of legitimacy for C2C that is essential for the next levels of work needed in stabilizing the living system.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDGE

A defining characteristic of any living system is *self organization*, a capacity to self regulate and become more complex. As we shared with participants during the June 2019 immersion, this capacity—particularly within human systems—requires freedom, experimentation, and a certain amount of disorder.¹⁵

From our perspective, C2C is an emerging living system on the cusp between a relatively stable state of development, and a new, more complex state of engaging and acting. This in-between space is precarious. A successful transition is absolutely possible, but not assured.

Several developments are already, or soon will be, converging to create this moment of transition. First, Action Teams will begin moving en masse from the Wisdom Dialogue practice define the change into the practices explore the current reality and discern right action. These practices are more complex, requiring more planning, more work outside of Action Team meetings, and more engagement and discernment among Action Team members than has been needed to date.

¹⁵ Meadows, Donella H. *Thinking in Systems*. Hartford: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008.

Second, the baseline report will be released in the first quarter of 2020, generating unpredictable responses and feedback.

Third, Backbone Team and Steering Committee members are beginning to make formal presentations to organizations and systems, inviting their formal endorsement of C2C and the six results. Among other purposes, these presentations are intended to increase awareness of and participation in the March 2020 Summit, a countywide event designed to significantly increase C2C's visibility.

These *known* developments will bring a “certain amount of disorder” into a system that already is showing some signs of strain. And as always, one or more currently *unknown* developments could further stress the emerging system.

How will the system respond to this emerging complexity?

One of the developmental edges we identified for cohering a movement was that Leads groups do not yet have a clear understanding of the arc of the entire process they are stewarding. Similarly, we believe the Steering Committee and Backbone Team do not yet have shared understanding of a developmental arc for C2C as a single, integrated initiative that they are managing and tracking progress toward. Backbone Team members are anticipating and managing urgent needs within the system, and Steering Committee members are actively engaging in various meetings, but neither group has yet internalized a long-term developmental arc that they regularly reference together to guide their learning and decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given our analysis of progress and developmental edges for stabilizing a living system, we anticipate several dimensions of this developmental aspect that will benefit from attention in the coming year.

4. Formalize—and begin managing to—a theory of change

The Living Collective Wisdom framework provides one way to evolve and manage to the developmental arc of the overall initiative, including assessing the capacity and effectiveness of the various emerging structures over time. The StriveTogether Theory of Action may be another way. We say *may be* only because we are not experts in the StriveTogether framework. While these two frameworks have similarities, they do provide somewhat different starting places and points of emphasis.

C2C's development has been influenced by both. As C2C evolves, we recommend that the Backbone Team and Steering Committee develop shared agreement about C2C's specific theory of change, and the concomitant assessment tools, protocols, and data to guide their stewarding of the overall initiative.

We do not see this as an abstract exercise, but rather as an essential step to help the C2C living system evolve to the next level of complexity required to deepen and expand its impact.

5. Compose a long-term developmental plan and initiative budget

The recommendations for cohering and building the movement intimate an emerging need for a longer-term developmental plan and budget for the overall initiative. Once the Backbone Team and Steering Committee have agreed upon a theory of change, we recommend that they compose

a long-term plan and budget, consistent with this theory of change. This plan and budget should embrace the orientation to complexity detailed in Section 2, reflecting a commitment to “continuously scale experimentation, adaptation, and evolution of responses to reflect diverse contexts, new learnings, and shifts in the environment.”¹⁶

6. Develop agreements about Action Team autonomy, alignment, and accountability

Another emerging complexity relates to Action Team requests of partner institutions. As Action Teams begin to identify potential priority strategies and high leverage actions for their theories of change, the number and depth of asks to school districts, County Departments, CSUS, MJC, and other partner institutions will certainly increase, substantially in some cases.

Some of these asks may be for resources and other process supports; other asks could be for changes to policy or approach. The request that all twenty-six school districts adopt the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile to assess school readiness of kindergarten students—a request that arose from the work of Stanislaus READS! before the advent of C2C—is an example of this kind of request.

Now imagine five Action Teams generating multiple such policy requests directed at the same systems simultaneously, along with requests for resources from those systems. Several questions immediately become apparent:

- ▶ When can Action Teams pursue resources or change agendas on their own, and when must such requests be vetted?
- ▶ If vetted, by whom, and with authority to do what?
- ▶ And what is the process by which these first questions are answered and agreements reached that will be honored by the anchor institutions, Action Teams, and other relevant stakeholders?

Ideally, the Backbone Team and Steering Committee will explore these questions and develop beginning adaptive responses to be tested and refined in the coming year.

7. Develop an ongoing process for garnering endorsements of C2C and the six results

As noted earlier, Backbone Team members are already acting on this recommendation, with efforts to secure high profile endorsements in advance of the March 2020 Summit underway. We have several additional reflections about how to build upon and extend this beginning work. First, this work should be ongoing and not just as preparation for the Summit. There will always be next institutions or communities who can be invited to embrace and engage with C2C.

Second, Action Team Leads should be regularly consulted about the timing and content of various presentations, since Action Teams may have interests and information that could affect these presentations.

Third, these presentations are excellent opportunities to develop the skills of Steering Committee members and others, both in learning some of the practices from the living systems core competency—e.g., next order questions—and in making effective presentations on behalf of C2C. Over time, this work could give rise to a C2C speaker’s bureau, whose members could include

¹⁶ Cabaj, Mark, *op.cit.*

students, teachers, parents, and other community members who are prepared to share stories about why this work matters.

8. Formalize and strengthen institutional alignment and support for C2C

Beyond endorsements, long-term institutional alignment and support are essential to stabilize the emerging living system. Without such support, the initiative risks losing its momentum as each of the movements reaches a stage when progress can only be sustained through institutional action, or even sooner as founding individuals leave and replacements do not share the same commitment, understanding, and/or history.

Two steps that can be implemented immediately to deepen efforts to cultivate this alignment and support include:

- ▶ Identify what stakeholders already are doing to transfer aspects of the initiative back into their institutions—e.g., MJC Institute Day—and distill lessons learned and protocols for how others can more intentionally cultivate alignment and commitment. These lessons learned and protocols can help guide regular 1:1 conversations with institutional leaders, led by Backbone Team, Steering Committee, and Action Team members.
- ▶ As part of the long-term budget (see Recommendation 5 above), document how institutions already are contributing to the initiative (through both financial and in-kind contributions), along with next levels of desired support.

SUSTAINING A LIVING SYSTEM

As the five movements cohere and build, and the living system that is C2C begins to stabilize, the question becomes how to sustain the effort for the long haul. For us, this question is ultimately about *culture*. That is, sustaining a living system is about cultivating a way of being and acting that permeates and helps define the living system, transcending any one individual, system, or community to replicate and deepen an ongoing capacity for learning, reflection, and adaptation.

PROGRESS

Sustaining a living system focuses on nurturing a culture grounded in Living Collective Wisdom and core values adopted by the system. While C2C has articulated a draft set of core values,¹⁷ we are not aware of any sustained effort to purposefully socialize these values across the initiative. There have been multiple streams of work to socialize aspects of Living Collective Wisdom, however, most notably two two-day immersions in the leadership, living systems, and community core competencies. Additionally, C4CW has also introduced selected practices and commitments from the framework in Steering Committee, Action Team Leads, and Action Team meetings we have facilitated, and provided 1:1 and small group coaching and refresher sessions.

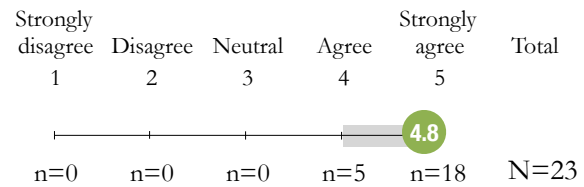
The most systematic data available to assess progress of this work to sustain the living system is from the online feedback surveys completed by participants immediately following the two immersion sessions. Representative excerpts from this data document participants' commitment to embrace Living Collective Wisdom, and their understanding of the import of this framework for sustaining the effort over time.

¹⁷ Attachment A includes a list of these values.

For example, all participants who completed the surveys agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the sessions were a good use of participants' time.

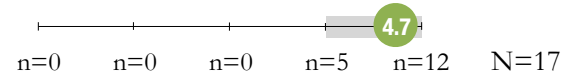
From the April 2019 session:

16. These two days were a good use of the group's time.



From the June 2019 session:

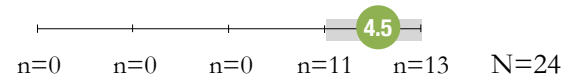
13. These two days were a good use of the group's time.



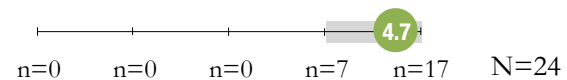
Similarly, when participants were asked whether they wanted to embrace, or if they thought their group *should* embrace, particular commitments of Living Collective Wisdom, again, almost all participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. For example:

Sample data from the April 2019 session:

- 7.b. I want to embody the commitment *embrace not-knowing* within my group.



- 12.b. My group should embody the commitment *nurture alignment of intention* in support of our work.



Sample data from the June 2019 session:

5. How do I think the living systems core competency and related concepts can help our work in Cradle to Career?

The ENTIRE training was transformative—especially the idea of adapting within living systems, and the idea that complexity is natural and not something to be resisted or solved ‘perfectly.’ Also that adaptation happens in real-time and the fluidity of our responses to issues ... all groundbreaking realizations for me. And this is the perspective that we need over the long haul of our C2C movement.

—*Steering Committee member*

8. How do I think the community core competency and related concepts can help our work in Cradle to Career?

I found the idea of mutuality and reciprocity to stick out to me over the 2-day training—and the need to build community vs. provide charity. —*Action Team Lead*

Many reflections offered by participants spoke to the potential impact of embracing Living Collective Wisdom as a fundamental orientation for C2C.

... The work is challenging both in scope and process. It is reassuring to know that the group is committed and receiving support to develop in a way that becomes

organically capable of adaptation as needs arise and evolve. —*Action Team Lead, April 2019 Immersion*

There is clear evidence that we need to permeate the Collective Wisdom process throughout our organizations, [l]earning a new way to lead and implementing processes and procedures with people at the center. Dare to dream big and care for each other in a kind and vulnerable way, show me a leader who can do this and a change of heart in his or her organization will emerge. —*Action Team Lead, April 2019 Immersion*

I am very grateful to be a part of this learning. I clearly see how it connects to the movement and how it personally and collectively is critical to our outcomes.
—*Steering Committee member, April 2019 Immersion*

This is as much about HOW we orient to the work, to our systems, and to each other, as it is about WHAT we produce. We are building the capacity to cultivate a new way of working together and in a sense, awakening systems and institutions to see reality through a completely different lens. We can't force this change to happen and we will need a heavy dose of patience and discipline to pause, listen, and reflect.
—*Steering Committee member, June 2019 Immersion*

In addition to the feedback surveys from the two immersions, anecdotal and observational data suggest that Action Teams, the Steering Committee, and the Backbone Team are utilizing various concepts, commitments, and practices in support of their work. For example, an excerpt from one of the September 2019 table dialogues illustrates how immersion participants are seeking to embody Living Collective Wisdom in service of the day-to-day work of C2C:

...

When we looked at the data this morning, I noticed how some people were used to these conversations and very comfortable. Some of the new people though weren't focusing on the data. They were trying to name specific schools instead.

Yes, I could see how some people were trying to guide the new people through a different kind of conversation. It was very interesting.

We were still looking at data but we were doing it in a way that was very strategic so we could all keep going and not get hung up. We were avoiding a kind of "gotcha."

A lot of times when people analyze data, they want to be able to create a story right away. "That school is such and such and all the reasons why." But it's kind of like, "Stop, we're not talking about a story yet. Let's look at the data first." It was very interesting to see that.

...

Beyond this story, a number of the Action Teams have used the Four Dimensions of Change concept to guide some of their planning and design work. Participants have invoked various leadership commitments—e.g., embrace not-knowing, orient to the whole, and welcome all that arises—during meetings and planning sessions.

Of course these data are incomplete, but taken together they demonstrate a nascent understanding of, and commitment to, Living Collective Wisdom among C2C participants.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDGES

A number of participants in the September 2019 dialogue gave voice to the need for, and the challenge of, mastering Living Collective Wisdom.

What the C4CW group is bringing is really new. Before they became involved, it was a different ask—more in line with what we typically understand to be leadership: here's your task, and it was just like everything I already knew. But when they came on board, it was like learning Spanish or Portuguese. I have to adopt and adapt to this new way of thinking and speaking and inviting people to attend with me in the same way. And because of this shift, you have to listen harder. ... The language of C4CW gives us a different foundation from which to build from, whereas other processes just start with action. —*Table dialogue participant*

Having C4CW helping to facilitate the leaders of the Action Teams so they can learn and build their capacity for leading has been key. I feel like I've grown in my leadership ability. Being able to step back and have that lens of curiosity really supported this work. Our Action Team has stated on multiple occasions that they really appreciated the time to talk to each other and learn from each other. They feel like their work is worthy. So, learning how to slow down together has supported progress. —*Table dialogue participant*

Our Action Team doesn't really know how to access the interior yet. Like, we don't ask people how they feel about being a parent if they are a parent. They have families and children but it's only about the hat they're wearing when they come in. —*Table dialogue participant*

The training we did with C4CW was a mindset change. We have to change the way we do things—the way we think about things. And we have to do that across the whole county, that's the fundamental challenge. But when something like this comes into the picture, it's like "whoa, slow down." I'm still evolving. I have to change. So if I can barely do it myself, how can I have the expectations of my entire organization implementing a different mindset? —*Table dialogue participant*

While the immersions provided a useful introduction to Living Collective Wisdom, embodiment and mastery require ongoing commitment, practice, and support. This is true for individuals and groups, even more so for institutions and systems, and especially true if the aspiration is to cultivate a culture defined by this way of being and acting.

These levels of engagement frame the developmental edges for sustaining the C2C living system. Specifically, what structures, processes, and resources—including time, commitment, expertise, and financial resources—are needed to help support embodiment and mastery among:

- Current and new individual participants;
- Action Teams, the Steering Committee, the Backbone Team, and other emerging groups;
- Anchor systems and institutions; and
- The larger culture?

RECOMMENDATIONS

From our experience, both within C2C and across numerous other change efforts, the ad hoc approach deployed to date to support understanding and embodiment is insufficient to nurture a culture defined by Living Collective Wisdom. At the same time, we are acutely aware of the challenges and constraints that necessitated this approach last year. What follows are several recommendations to strengthen efforts to sustain the living system in the coming year and beyond.

Recommendations from Cohering a Movement and Stabilizing a Living System

Several of our recommendations for strengthening efforts to cohere a movement and stabilize a living system have implications for sustaining the living system as well. For example, increasing the amount of full-time leadership available to support Action Teams would increase the potential for Action Team Leads to participate in additional training, coaching, and peer support for Living Collective Wisdom. Developing and raising funding for a long-term initiative budget can provide resources to support this deeper level of development.

Nurturing a culture grounded in Living Collective Wisdom will become far more likely when anchor systems and institutions have embraced this framework as well. Our recommendation to formalize and strengthen institutional alignment and support for C2C can include inviting anchor systems and institutions to embrace Living Collective Wisdom, in addition to formally endorsing C2C and committing as appropriate to the six results.

Finally, our recommendation to develop and begin managing to an integrated theory of change is ultimately about deepening the commitment across the living system to embody Living Collective Wisdom, assuming that the Steering Committee and Backbone Team more formally embrace this framework. Developing assessment tools, protocols, and data to guide the assessment of progress, both across the developmental aspects and the core competencies, will support efforts to both stabilize and sustain the living system.

9. Designate and support a group for intensive engagement with Living Collective Wisdom

Any effort to sustain the living system must build capacity within C2C to continue the teaching, coaching, and facilitation of Living Collective Wisdom independent of C4CW. Over the next twelve to eighteen months, we recommend creating a group to receive intensive training, coaching, and other support in mastering the framework. Ideally, the group would include Leads from each Action Team, members of the Steering Committee, and members of the Backbone Team.

Selection criteria for this group would include commitment to and facility with the framework, credibility with their groups, and connection to anchor institutions, among others. Intentions would include supporting participants to:

- ▶ Deepen their understanding and mastery of Living Collective Wisdom;
- ▶ Identify and lead opportunities for integrating aspects of the framework as appropriate into all aspects of the initiative's work, and into relevant aspects of anchor systems and institutions;
- ▶ Learn to coach to and teach aspects of the framework; and
- ▶ Learn to develop process designs consistent with Wisdom Dialogue.

To realize these intentions for this group, we recommend a combination of additional immersions; 1:1 coaching with shadowing support; small group coaching; interactive video sessions; peer learning sessions; and other embodiment resources. If the Backbone Team and Steering Committee accept

this recommendation, we would work with you to develop a plan, timeline, budget, and potential funding sources for this work.

In summary, we have nine recommendations for strengthening C2C across the four developmental aspects of Living Collective Wisdom in 2020 and beyond. These include:

1. Support more full-time leadership for Action Teams • Work plans for each Action Team;
2. Offer more training and process supports to Action Team Leads;
3. Expand the focus of engagement and communication strategies;
4. Formalize—and begin managing to—a theory of change;
5. Compose a long-term developmental plan and initiative budget;
6. Develop agreements about Action Team autonomy, alignment, and accountability;
7. Develop an ongoing process for garnering endorsements of C2C and the six results;
8. Formalize and strengthen institutional alignment and support for C2C; and
9. Designate and support a group for intensive engagement with Living Collective Wisdom.

CONCLUSION: EVOLVING TOGETHER

Over the past two years, C2C has begun cohering and building five movements focused on improving the wellbeing of children from birth into their careers, and stabilizing a living system to nurture and deepen these movements into an integrated whole. Progress over these two years has been laudable, and has given rise to new developmental challenges and increasing complexity.

Ancient Greeks had two words for the concept of time: *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* referred to chronological time: sixty-second minutes, sixty-minute hours, twenty-four-hour days. *Kairos*, by contrast, referred to the experience of *timelessness*, of time beyond time.

In the midst of complex change, many of us can become exhausted by the relentlessness of *chronos*. When these feelings arise, our impulse can be to deny the complexity we are experiencing, and to grasp instead for familiar or over-simplified responses. So common is this impulse that it has a name: the *streetlight effect*,¹⁸ after a story about a confused man who had lost his keys.

One night a policewoman comes upon an old man looking intently at the ground beneath a streetlight. The policewoman asks what he is doing.

“Searching for my keys!” is the gruff reply.

The policewoman joins the search for a few minutes, with no luck. “Are you sure you lost them here?” she finally asks.

“Oh no. I lost them over there, across the street.”

“Then why are we searching *here*?!”

“Because the light is so much better here.”

Rather than deny or ignore complexity, Living Collective Wisdom invites us to embrace it. We learn how to access *kairos* in the midst of *chronos*, and to trust our capacity to evolve together in support of profound results. When realized, this capacity can substantially increase our positive impact in the world, and our experience of joy, generosity, and wellbeing.

Across C2C, many participants, and some of their systems and communities, have made a beginning commitment to Living Collective Wisdom. Among other intentions, our recommendations are designed to amplify this commitment in support of sustaining C2C for years to come.

As C2C evolves toward greater complexity, there will be moments when participants become dispirited: when the gaps between C2C’s results and the current reality become apparent, or participants become mired in some past or present conflict, or other setbacks occur. In these moments, Living Collective Wisdom invites us to remember that we are part of a larger unfolding, and that we can access a deeper wisdom to help us discern right action in support of our highest aspirations. Indeed, the arising of C2C—and so many other inspiring change efforts across the county—is, to us, compelling evidence of this deeper wisdom. Our hope—and invitation—is for C2C to continue to access and feel buoyed by this collective spirit in the months and years ahead.

¹⁸ Freedman, David H. “Why Scientific Studies Are So Often Wrong: The Streetlight Effect.”
<https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/why-scientific-studies-are-so-often-wrong-the-streetlight-effect>

Attachment A

STRUCTURES MAP • LEADERSHIP ROSTERS

EMERGING STRUCTURES FOR ACTION • LEARNING • ENGAGEMENT • ACCOUNTABILITY

S T A N I S L A U S
CRADLEtoCAREER
P A R T N E R S H I P



STANISLAUS CRADLE TO CAREER PARTNERSHIP VISION • MISSION • VALUES • RESULTS • LEADERSHIP ROSTERS

VISION: A healthy and thriving community built on educational success and economic well-being for all.

MISSION: Align sectors and systems in Stanislaus County to ensure successful outcomes from cradle to career.

VALUES: Data-driven results • Systems alignment • Compassion • Trusted relationships • Long-term commitment

RESULTS

StanREADY: Stanislaus County children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
StanREADS: Stanislaus County children read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
StanMATH: Stanislaus County students of all ages demonstrate confidence, success and joy in math.
StanFUTURES: Stanislaus County students graduate high school postsecondary ready.
Postsecondary students successfully complete their certificate or degree.
StanCAREERS: Stanislaus County job seekers are ready to enter self-sustaining employment.

BACKBONE (BB) TEAM MEMBERS • STEERING COMMITTEE (SC) MEMBERS ACTION TEAM LEADS FOR EACH MOVEMENT

	Name • Organization	BB	SC	Action Team Leads				
				READY	READS	MATH	FUTURES	CAREERS
1	Amanda Hughes Stanislaus Community Foundation	•					•	
2	Amy Peterman Ceres Unified School District						•	
3	Annie Snell Stanislaus County Library				•			
4	Carolyn Viss Stanislaus County Office of Education					•		
5	Christina Rubalcava Stanislaus County Office of Education					•		
6	Christine Sisco Stanislaus County Office of Education				•			
7	Daniel Marker California College Guidance Initiative						•	
8	David Jones First 5 Stanislaus			•				
9	Deb Rowe Stanislaus County Office of Education							•

	Name • Organization	BB	SC	Action Team Leads				
				READY	READS	MATH	FUTURES	CAREERS
10	Debra Hendricks Sylvan Union School District		•					
11	Don Davis Waterford Unified School District					•		
12	Ellen Junn Stanislaus State University		•					
13	Erin Cross Stanislaus County Office of Education					•		
14	Erin Littlepage Stanislaus State University						•	
15	James Houpis Modesto Junior College		•					
16	Jeff Albritton Stanislaus County Office of Education							•
17	Jeff Rowe Patterson Unified School District							•
18	Jenni Abbott Modesto Junior College							•
19	Jennifer Rangel Center for Human Services			•				
20	Jennifer Zellet Modesto Junior College						•	
21	Joe Duran Self Help Credit Union		•					
22	Julie Villanueva Salida Union School District					•		
23	Kandy Woerz Stanislaus County Office of Education						•	
24	Karen Williams Learning Quest		•					
25	Lisa Clifton Stanislaus County Chief Executive Office			•				
26	Lisa Tiwater Stanislaus County Office of Education				•			
27	Lise Talbott Golden Valley Health Centers			•				

	Name • Organization	BB	SC	Action Team Leads				
				READY	READS	MATH	FUTURES	CAREERS
28	Marian Kaanon Stanislaus Community Foundation	•	•					
29	Mary Pedraza • C2C Program Coordinator Stanislaus County Office of Education	•						
30	Megan Lowery • C2C Executive Director Stanislaus County Office of Education	•						
31	Ruben Imperial • Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services		•					
32	Scott Kuykendall Stanislaus County Office of Education	•	•					
33	Susan Rich Retired/Oakdale Community Member				•			
34	Tim Curley Valley Children's Hospital		•					
35	Tony Jordan Stanislaus County Office of Education			•				
36	Twila Tosh Salida Union School District		•					
37	Yamilet Valladolid Golden Valley Health Centers		•					

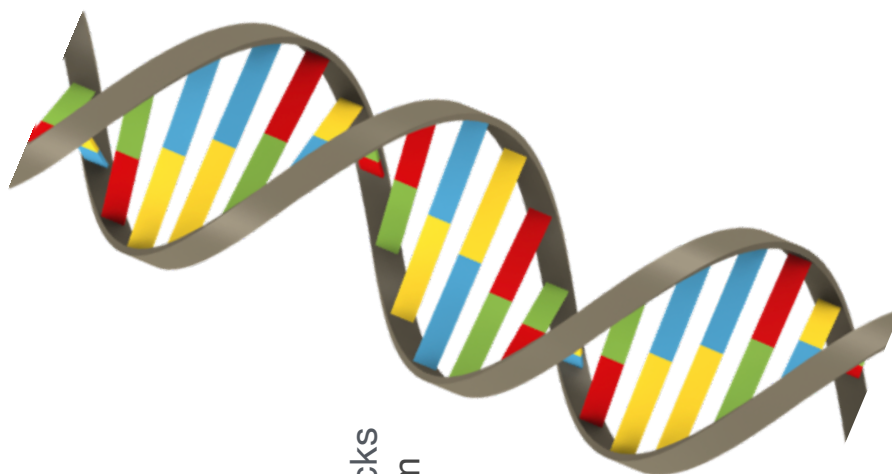
Attachment B

SUMMARY OF LIVING COLLECTIVE WISDOM CORE COMPETENCIES

LIVING COLLECTIVE WISDOM™

Evolving together for profound results

4 core competencies are the building blocks
—the **DNA**—of Living Collective Wisdom



Leadership

Inviting collective wisdom
to guide us

Living Systems

Mastering interdependence,
complexity, and emergence

Community

Creating and healing through
relationships of mutuality

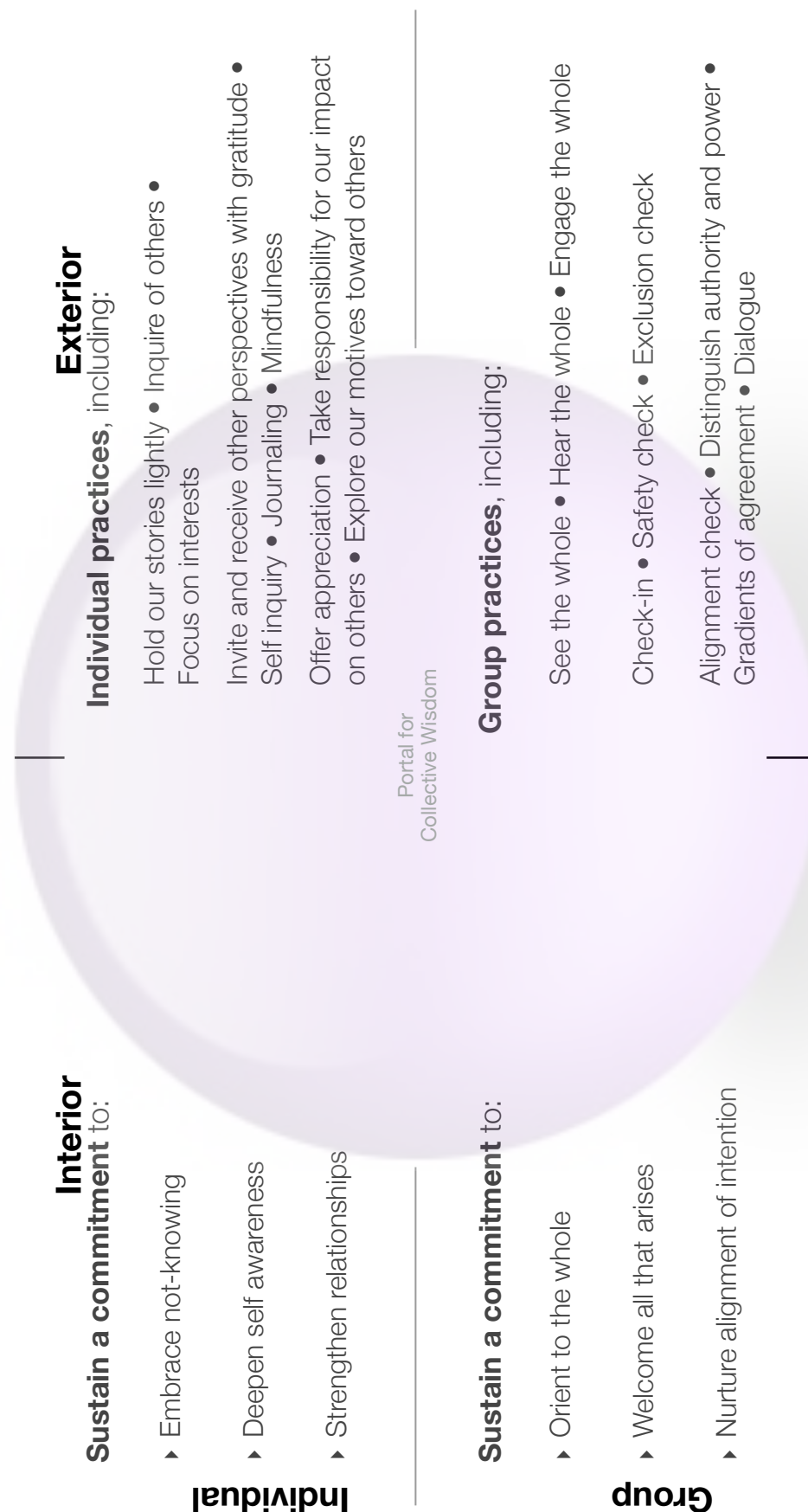
Results

Taking right action to realize
our highest aspirations

LEADERSHIP

Essence of
Competency

Inviting collective wisdom to guide us



LIVING SYSTEMS

Mastering interdependence, complexity, and emergence

