

“We are doing **more talking and listening** on the team and on the board. We have a new structure for board meetings, **more hugs, more check-ins, more listening.**”

TELLING THE STORY OF THE ANGELL FOUNDATION'S Organizational Spirituality Initiative

EVALUATION BRIEF

What did we learn?

THE ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY INITIATIVE IS BEST SUITED TO THOSE ORGANIZATIONS THAT:

1) Have sustained commitment from the Executive Director and senior leadership; 2) have a willingness to strengthen their internal culture and processes; 3) want to support leadership behavior amongst staff, 4) set aside the time and resources to actively participate in the initiative; 5) encourage participation across all levels of the organization; and 6) have a desire to express the highest aspirations of their mission to increase their organization's impact in the world.

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT FROM C4CW WAS A CRITICAL COMPONENT FOR ORGANIZATIONS.

C4CW facilitated multiple sessions with each organization and supported them through difficult conversations and sensitive issues by helping organizations understand and apply the LfCW framework. In total, C4CW expended nearly 2,000 hours in direct support of the eleven organizations. Organizations spent at least that much time, and more.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE FRAMEWORK WAS ACCESSIBLE TO SOME MORE THAN OTHERS.

Through OSI, organizations learned a new framework and vocabulary related to collective wisdom. While some felt the framework provided a language for work they already were doing, others found the framework's terms challenging. Organizations were encouraged to translate the language into concepts that they found more accessible to ease application.

OSI HELPED ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESS A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES.

Though organizations began the initiative with a particular issue to address, over time focus shifted from the initial dilemma to building their capacity to approach any organizational challenge.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE ORGANIZATIONS INCREASED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF COLLECTIVE WISDOM, A GOOD PROXY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY.

While the organization growth experiences change in different ways, in general, participants felt more joyful, more generosity, less overwhelmed by stress and that their organization is impactful in the world.

SOME ORGANIZATIONS HAD A DESIRE FOR TIME AND SUPPORT BEYOND THE TWO YEAR ENGAGEMENT.

Some organizations stated that they needed additional time and support to accomplish their goals and were looking for ways to continue the work that began during OSI.

Will OSI learnings, practices, and results be sustained?

Early reports from the organizations indicate that they intend to sustain their results, though it is too early to assess the long-term impact of the initiative. Specifically, participants highlighted various strategies for sustainability and also reported that they are committed to sustaining improved communication and relationships.

In their final November 2014 survey, 97% of participants said “I am committed to helping my organization embrace the collective wisdom framework in support of our work in the world.”



For more information about the Organizational Spirituality Initiative, please visit www.angellfoundation.org

Overview

The Angell Foundation, in keeping with their commitment to empower people, organizations and communities to realize their highest and best self, launched its second two-year Organizational Spirituality Initiative (OSI) in 2012 for nonprofit organizations in Southern California.

The goal of OSI was to introduce organizations to new ways of engaging with one another and approaching their work in order to strengthen their ability to adapt and thrive, amidst complex challenges. The underlying premise of the initiative was that if organizations spend time cultivating their internal culture and systems, then they would create more collaborative and joyous work environments, increase their ability to creatively manage their challenges and become better equipped to accomplish their mission.

The initiative was designed and implemented by the Center for Collective Wisdom (C4CW) and evaluated by Applied Survey Research (ASR). Eleven nonprofit organizations completed the full two-year initiative and their aggregate findings are included in this evaluation brief.

What is the Organizational Spirituality Initiative?

C4CW used the following definition of organizational spirituality to guide initiative implementation, “an intentional and ongoing process within each organization to cultivate a capacity for collective wisdom so that they might increase their experiences of joy and generosity and increase their positive impact in the world.”

Initiative activities were guided by C4CW's Leadership for Collective Wisdom framework (LfCW) which consists of a set of commitments as well as individual and group practices that are intended to help cultivate the conditions that enhance organizational effectiveness. OSI posits that nonprofit organizations tend to focus on the exterior dimensions of their work and consequently neglect their internal environments, which in turn can undermine an organization's progress and make it hard to operate at its greatest capacity.

Throughout the initiative, C4CW provided each organization with access to one-on-one coaching, in-house trainings and facilitation support on the LfCW framework. Additionally, each nonprofit received a small grant to support implementation, and organization representatives attended three overnight inter-organizational gatherings intended to deepen the learnings and facilitate relationship building/sharing amongst participants.

At the heart of the LfCW framework are three foundational concepts:



THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE:

The individual and group interior – attitudes, feelings, norms and values; and the individual and group exterior – practices, skills, budgets, and procedures.



COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP:

Embrace not knowing, Deepen self-awareness, Strengthen relationships, Orient to the whole, Welcome all that arises, and Nurture alignment of intention.



COLLECTIVE WISDOM:

The understanding that emerges when individuals within groups work together towards action.

“OSI is reinforcing some of the best tendencies of [the organization]”
... **“The process brought us together through this change.**
I don’t think we would have been together as cohesively from
beginning all the way through [without OSI].”

Who participated in the Organizational Spirituality Initiative?

The organizations that participated in OSI varied across multiple dimensions, including: organizational purpose, origins, budget, staff size and operating philosophy. Participants within each organization had various roles including Board member, senior staff, front-line staff and volunteer.

A Summary of Organizations that Completed OSI

ACADEMY FOR JEWISH RELIGION, CALIFORNIA (AJRCA) is a transdenominational, pluralistic institution dedicated to the training of rabbis, cantors, and chaplains. *Number of Employees: 45 | Number of Board Members: 16*

BEIT T'SHUVAH is both a residential treatment center and a supportive, spiritual community that approaches addiction and other destructive behaviors by focusing on the integration of the whole self- the mind, body, and spirit. *Number of Employees: 96 | Number of Board Members: 36*

CASA OF LOS ANGELES improves the lives of children in the dependency system by pairing them with trained volunteer advocates. *Number of Employees: 27 | Number of Board Members: 22*

FLINTRIDGE CENTER works in collaboration with the community to combat the effects of poverty and violence in Northwest Pasadena and West Altadena. *Number of Employees: 10 | Number of Board Members: 10*

LAMP COMMUNITY'S mission is to end homelessness of Los Angeles' most vulnerable individuals - primarily adults living with mental illness through a continuum of services and housing, enabling them to reach their highest level of self-sufficiency and community integration. *Number of Employees: 123 | Number of Board Members: 13*

MARY & JOSEPH RETREAT CENTER'S (MJRC) mission is to provide an environment of serenity, prayer, and natural beauty. *Number of Employees: 13 FTE, 8-10 PTE | Number of Board Members: 14*

NAMI POMONA VALLEY is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy. *Number of Employees: 2 PTE, 60+ volunteers | Number of Board Members: 20*

PEACE OVER VIOLENCE is a sexual and domestic violence, stalking, child abuse and youth violence prevention center dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual, domestic and interpersonal violence. *Number of Employees: 39 | Number of Board Members: 14*

SELF-HELP AND RECOVERY EXCHANGE'S (SHARE!) mission is to help people in Los Angeles pursue personal growth and change. *Number of Employees: 35 | Number of Board Members: 8*

THE RELATIONAL CENTER'S mission is to serve as a catalyst for empathic, diverse, sustainable community in Los Angeles and beyond. *Number of Employees: 8 | Number of Board Members: 8*

THE WESTSIDE INFANT-FAMILY NETWORK (WIN) ensures that families with prenatal through three-year-olds receive the culturally sensitive mental health care and community resources they need to strengthen their families and achieve secure attachment with their children. *Number of Employees: 9 | Number of Board Members: 9*

Telling the Story: How was the Initiative evaluated?

ASR's evaluation of OSI used a blend of methods including: self-assessments at three time points, site visits, key informant interviews, observations and secondary data. The evaluation tracked activities, as well as changes in knowledge, attitudes, perspectives and behaviors across the participating organizations using the Result-Based Accountability framework to distinguish between OSI's inputs and outcomes, test its theory of change, and generate Initiative-wide learnings while documenting organization-specific accomplishments.

THEORY OF CHANGE

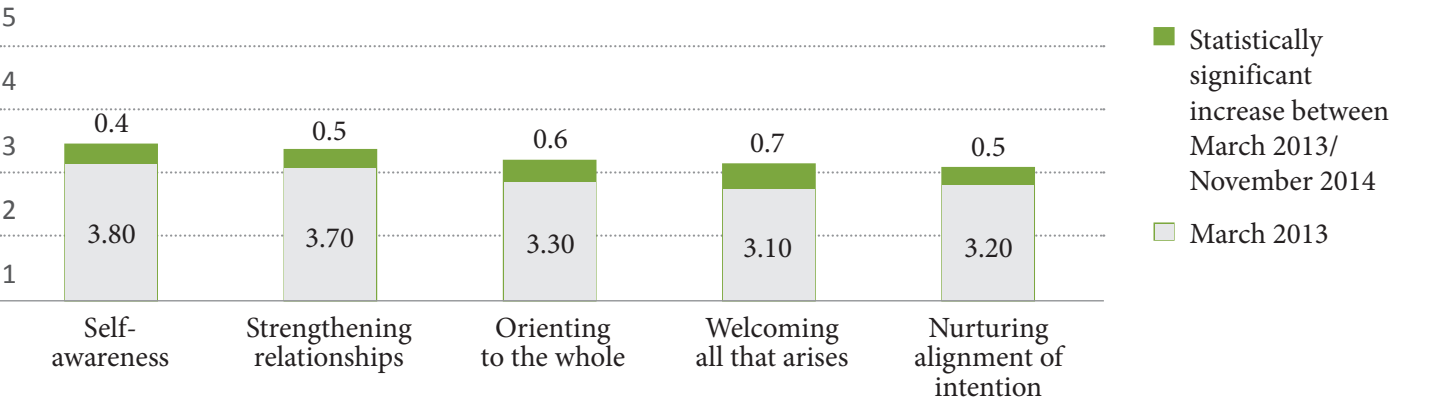


What impact did OSI have on the participating organizations?

Participants reported that their organizations were positively impacted by OSI. Major changes such as improved communication, greater leadership and stronger relationships were attributed to OSI. Participants felt that the initiative helped strengthen infrastructure and contribute to their ability to handle organizational changes and meet specific milestones. Many organizations noted how OSI allowed staff to have difficult conversations while honoring divergent perspectives. Additionally, the quality of interactions between staff and board members was cited as a positive outcome of the initiative.

The evaluation found that over the course of the initiative, participants in the organizations understood and practiced the concepts. Participants were more likely to report feeling joyful, and were statistically more likely to report feeling generosity towards others and themselves. Participants were also less likely to report feeling overwhelmed by stress.

INCREASED PRACTICE OF SELF AND COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES



Note: 1-5 Scale: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree.

In their third and final self-assessment (November 2014), participants said “As a result of my organization participating in OSI, I believe my organization has an increased capacity to...

