

Understanding Flourishing:

Developing a Global Community of Practice



MATTHEW T. LEE | BYRON R. JOHNSON | TYLER J. VANDERWEELE

Purpose & Mission

Launched in August 2004, The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) exists to initiate, support, and conduct research on religion, involving scholars and projects spanning the intellectual spectrum: history, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, philosophy, epidemiology, theology, and religious studies. Our mandate extends to all religions, everywhere, and throughout history. It also embraces the study of religious effects on such things as prosocial behavior, family life, population health, economic development, and social conflict. While always striving for appropriate scientific objectivity, our scholars treat religion with the respect that sacred matters require and deserve.

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VISION STATEMENT

“Promoting global conversation to more fully understand, appreciate, and act intentionally on the unique and universal aspects of flourishing. This commitment to inclusive dialogue supports a brighter future for people and societies everywhere.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Sir John Templeton reminded us that periods of change are opportunities to participate in a grand creative process of human progress.

The field of human flourishing is highly interdisciplinary, bringing together dynamic combinations of researchers across the physical, biological, and social sciences with scholars in philosophy, history, art, and theology.

The fact that so many different disciplines have approached the topic reflects its complexity and universality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to document lessons learned at the Templeton World Charity Foundation-funded (TWCF) workshop, titled, “Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing across Disciplines,” in Nassau, The Bahamas in November 2022, as well as drawing from the knowledge gained over the four years of existence of the Flourishing Network (FN) housed at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, in order to build a framework for a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing (GCPF), with a special emphasis on the Global South. The workshop in Nassau was part of TWCF’s *First Annual Global Scientific Conference on Human Flourishing* and benefitted from additional funding from Legatum and the Fetzer Institute, as well as the thought leadership of those who attended.

The first phase of the GCPF will focus on scholars, but the long-term plan is to create several Communities of Practice involving other essential but too often overlooked sectors (practice, business, nonprofits, education, government, and policy), following the developmental model that has been used to develop the FN. The long-term vision is to create a Global Flourishing Network (GFN) that will link a number of GCPF initiatives across sectors. The ultimate aim is to support a Global Flourishing Social Movement that—in collaboration with aligned organizations—is able to promote flourishing around the world. This movement will be influenced by and in tandem with the Global Flourishing Study, a joint project of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University, the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, Gallup, and the Center for Open Science.



·HUMANITY 2.0



The initial development of the GCPF will involve anticipated collaborations that begin with, but are not limited to:

The success of the GCPF will be a direct by-product of equal partnerships with institutions in the Global South. Cultivating these important partnerships will require significant time and energy. But this is overdue in light of the insights shared by thought leaders at the Nassau workshop, and broader conversations about the general dominance of WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) societies in the production of research on flourishing.

We envision the initial work of the GCPF unfolding along two parallel tracks. First, small groups of scholars will be convened in person and online to discuss the meaning of flourishing, or depending on the culture and issues dealing with translation, related constructs such as thriving, the abundant life, the good life, integral development, the fullness of life, wholeness amidst adversity, or complete well-being. These conversations will be inductive in nature, as local scholars in particular countries will be asked to offer their own definitions and conceptualizations of flourishing, including communal understandings. Second, conversations about flourishing shaped by the findings coming from the GFS will take place within a group of newly created Research Satellites that will be formed in the 22 countries covered by the GFS. This work follows a deductive approach because the constructs and research framework developed for the GFS (which contained an inductive component) will help to guide the conversations. Participants will have opportunities to offer their perspectives on GFS findings, suggest alternative interpretations, work directly with the data to develop alternative models and explanations, and more generally be part of a dynamic and inclusive global conversation about this unprecedented data collection effort.

We will then seek to integrate learnings from both the deductive and inductive approaches in order to inform not only the emergent work of a Global Community of Practice, but also to inform a set of Global Flourishing Goals that could influence policy-making. Dissemination will occur through scholarly and popular works, media reports, and podcasts.

INTRODUCTION

What is flourishing and why is a global community of practice necessary?

As with most constructs, there is no single definition of flourishing that is universally accepted by all scholars. Most agree that it involves multiple dimensions of well-being and some contend that it is a multi-level construct that includes individuals, groups, and their contexts (societal, ecological, and for some, spiritual). Most commentators in the Western tradition trace the construct of flourishing, at least in part, back to Aristotle’s eudaimonia. They point to individual traits such as wisdom and balance, subjective mental states such as happiness or positive affect, activities such as serving the greater good, and the objective life conditions (e.g., financial and material stability, a healthy natural environment) necessary to sustain these traits, states, and activities over time. Religious or spiritual people would add a concern with the sacred or the transcendent.

Scholars leading the Global Flourishing Study suggest that while well-being concerns the individual, flourishing is “the relative attainment of a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good *including the contexts in which that person lives.*”¹ Flourishing therefore involves emergent “interrelationships among the domains of material and spiritual well-being of individuals, communities, and ecosystems.”²

Flourishing in Critical Dialogue

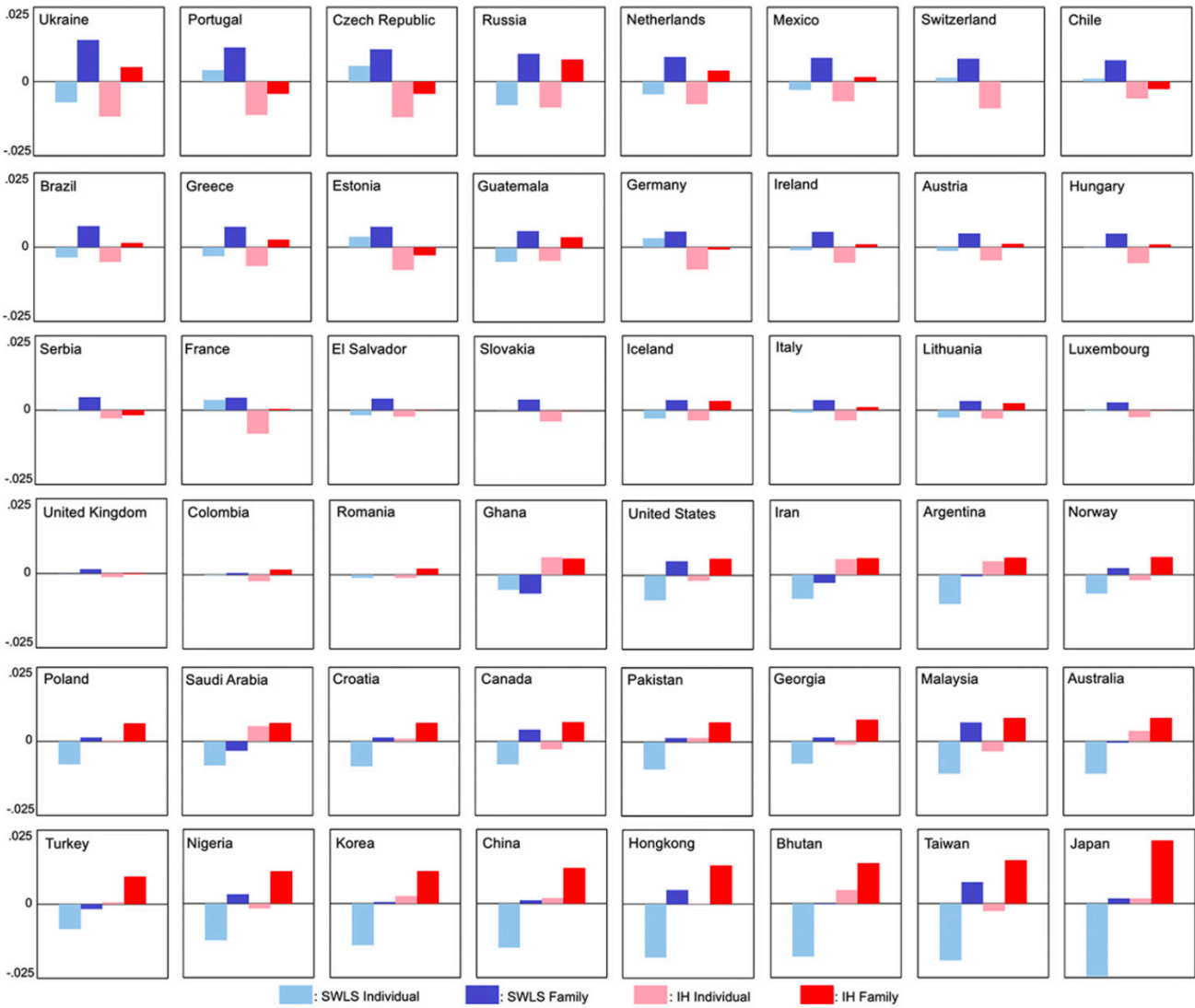
The fact that a particular understanding of flourishing has shaped the development of a research project like the Global Flourishing Study—however influential that study might prove to be—does not mean that other definitions of flourishing are not valuable. Indeed, one reason why a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing is necessary is that diverse perspectives and modes of inquiry are required for a robust and well-ordered science. Other definitions of flourishing from across disciplines do not necessarily conflict with the one mentioned above, although they might emphasize different aspects. Helpful examples include:

- Positive Psychology: “To be flourishing... is to be filled with positive emotion and to be functioning well psychologically and socially.”³
- Bioethics/Disability Studies: “Flourish is a verb ... To flourish is to do something. ... to ‘grow or develop ... In a vigorous way’ within ‘a particularly congenial environment.’”⁴
- Anthropology/Public Health: “We define the pursuit of flourishing as an active process of striving to live in keeping with one’s defining values, commitments and vision for the future, as individuals and in the context of one’s family and the communities to which one belongs.... Flourishing is not simply a psychological state, but an active pursuit informed by cultural expectations and social relationships, and influenced by the social, political and economic structures that shape people’s lives.”⁵

A synthesis of such definitions might reveal a more comprehensive portrait of flourishing, but the extant scholarship is all based largely on the Western tradition, with lesser engagement with Confucian East Asian cultures. A more robustly critical dialogue requires greater engagement with other cultures, especially in African, Latin America, southern European, and Asian cultures beyond East Asia.⁶ These broader conversations have the potential to offer alternative definitions, constructs, and empirical findings in ways that can bring greater cultural balance to the current dominance of WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) societies in the production of scientific research on flourishing.⁷

We envision the initial work of the GCPF unfolding along two parallel tracks. First, small groups of scholars will be convened in person and online to discuss the meaning of flourishing, or depending on the culture and issues involving translation, related constructs such as thriving, the abundant life, the good life, integral development, wholeness amidst adversity, the fullness of life, or complete well-being. These conversations will be inductive in nature, as local scholars in particular countries will be asked to offer their own definitions and conceptualizations of flourishing, including communal understandings. Second, conversations about flourishing shaped by the findings of the GFS will take place within a group of Research Satellites that will be formed in the 22 countries covered by the GFS. This is a deductive approach because the constructs and research framework developed for the GFS (which itself contained an inductive component) will help to guide the conversations. Participants will have opportunities to offer their perspectives on GFS findings, suggest alternative interpretations, work directly with the data to develop alternative models and explanations, and generally be part of a global conversation about this unprecedented data collection effort.

Informed by the insights that emerge from the GCPF and the Research Satellites, we will seek to integrate learnings from both the deductive and inductive approaches across cultures in order to inform the emergent work of a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing. Although we suspect it will be possible to identify some “universals” with regard to flourishing—e.g., we believe that all cultural groups will emphasize the importance of becoming a good, virtuous person and the centrality of healthy relationships—the extant research on well-being (partial flourishing) shows that there are importance differences, as illustrated in the figure below⁸:



Country-level weights for each type of well-being. Weights represent how much each type of well-being is valued (ie. idealized) within each country. To do so, we calculated the proportion percentage (out of 100%), that each type of well-being tended to be valued in that country. Countries towards the top (ie. top 3 rows) are those with higher SWLS Family weights (dark blue), while countries towards the bottom (ie. bottom 3 rows) are those with higher IH Family weights (red).

These bar graphs show that survey respondents value distinct types of well-being at different levels. For example, in Ukraine, there is more of an emphasis on satisfaction with life as assessed at the family level (e.g., a Likert-scale survey item such as “Your family is satisfied with its life”) and less emphasis on life satisfaction as assessed by the individual (e.g., “You are satisfied with your life”). In Ghana, on the other hand, survey respondents indicated that both family and individual life satisfaction are less valued than interdependent personal happiness (e.g., “You believe that you and those around you are happy”) and interdependent family happiness (e.g., “You believe that your family and those around your family are happy”). Again, life satisfaction and happiness represent only one domain of flourishing, which would, at minimum and at the individual level, also include emotional and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships, as well as the financial and material stability necessary to sustain these domains over time.⁹ Additional measures are required for communal, ecological, or spiritual flourishing.¹⁰

But we expect that, despite variations on the relative importance of each domain of flourishing, several key domains will emerge as especially important at each level of analysis and for each type of well-being, as indicated by this flexible map of flourishing¹¹:

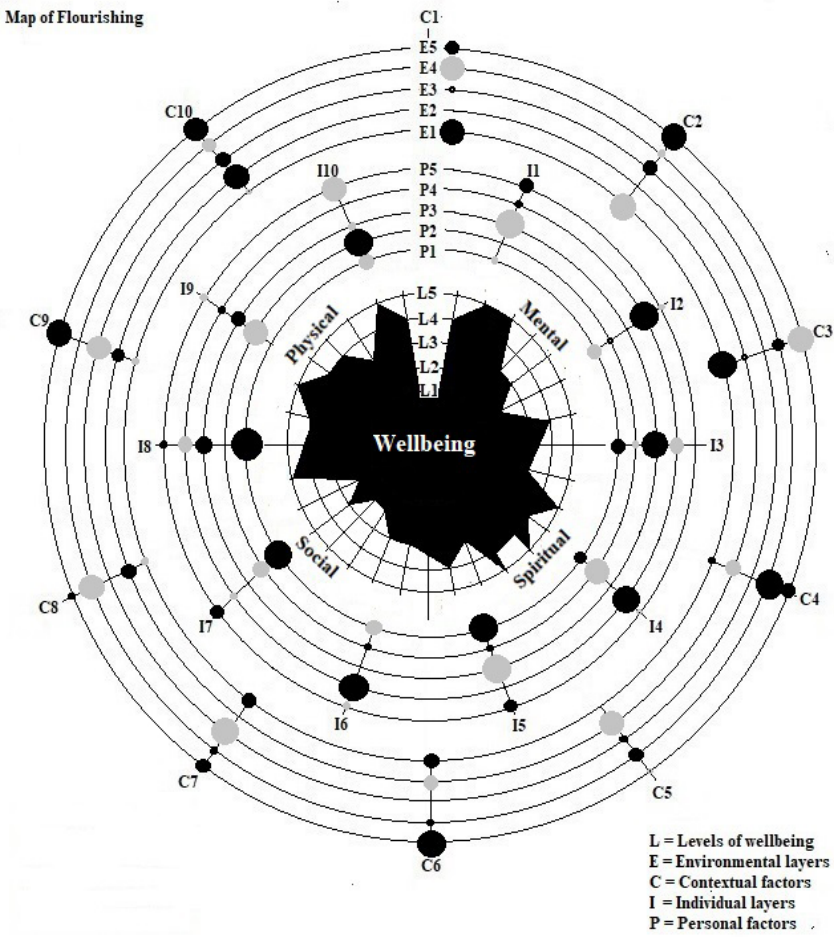
For this hypothetical person, the spider-web plot shows higher levels of self-reported flourishing in some domains of spiritual well-being as compared with social well-being. Again, this is just a hypothetical set of findings for a single person, but it shows the complexity of the attempt to capture environmental, contextual, individual, and personal factors across a range of domains. As the previously reviewed work implies, it is reasonable to expect that different cultures will place different emphasis on these various aspects. We would be surprised, however, if any of them are completely devalued in any particular culture. But we hasten to add that surprise is always possible in empirical research. A robust, cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary set of dialogues may reveal many surprises.

After the GCPF and Research Satellites have hosted a sufficient number of conversations, we will be in a position to affirm some of the extant measures of flourishing, suggest revisions, and propose new measures. Research will necessarily proceed across multiple modes of inquiry, reflecting qualitative, quantitative, archival, historical, and other methods, and informed by the deep wisdom of the disciplines from the humanities. As new findings become available, our expanding Communities of Practice (and indeed, multiple communities focused on somewhat distinct but overlapping practices) could support the development and consideration of diverse sets of Global Flourishing Goals that could guide policymaking as well as organizational practice. The ultimate aim is to create connective tissue to foster ongoing, iterative dialogues about the conceptualization, assessment, understanding, and promotion of flourishing around the world. We will encourage greater integration of flourishing scholarship and topics such as ethics, justice, politics, economics, environmental concern, and other pressing issues that have not been as strongly linked to empirical debates about flourishing. Dissemination of key learnings will occur through scholarly and popular works, media reports, podcasts, the creative arts, and of course, the various Communities of Practice themselves.

Why is a Community of Practice Necessary?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is defined as, “a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”¹² Such groups coalesce around a specific **domain** (in this case flourishing, or some related term like complete well-being), they become a **community** in the sense of sharing meaningful social bonds organized around a shared concern for a particular domain, as opposed to a loose collection of ad hoc acquaintances, and they seek to improve their **practice** together. In our case, the initial practice is research.

However, as we have learned from our experiences with establishing a Community of Practice in the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard, it is not long before multiple CoPs spring up, each devoted to a different application of flourishing, including research, education, policy, and business. The CoP that we started four years ago now has 300 members and multiple



Groups become a community in the sense of sharing meaningful social bonds organized around a shared concern for a particular domain.



subgroups. We decided to rename it as the Flourishing Network (FN): a collection of CoPs and related interest groups. The FN has aspired to model a scientifically transparent, cross-culturally inclusive, interdisciplinary partnership across sectors, and it forms a foundation of practice for launching the Global Community of Practice for Flourishing (GCPF). Although some of the FN members are based outside the United States, in places like Australia, Brazil, Japan, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela, most are from the U.S. Thus, the GCPF represents a major new undertaking.

The FN’s process of intentional relationship-building—in a spirit of virtuous friendship—helped to expand the initial group of twelve members of a CoP into a large network of CoPs and related groups, providing a blueprint for the development of the GCPF. Like Cowell College and the FN, the GCPF aims for the “pursuit of truth in the company of friends.”¹³ Philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Soren Kierkegaard, along with the existential psychologists like Viktor Frankl who followed in their footsteps, have emphasized that to know anyone or anything deeply always involves care and love. Indeed, love in the sense of commitment to the good of the other, very much aligned with principles at the heart of virtuous friendship, might be the essence of flourishing.¹⁴ Our experience with the FN suggests that more meaningful, longer lasting, and more significant collaborations form in the company of friends. We have experience fostering such ways of relating and have seen how enthusiasm and commitment to a topic is enhanced, along with the personal benefit of strengthening a key domain of flourishing in one’s life: satisfying and healthy social relationships.

We believe that advances in the science of flourishing around the world are best fostered in Communities of Practice that model such relationships. We envision scholars from around the world serving as dialogue partners, mentors, and virtuous friends to each other in ways that enhance the conceptual and empirical exploration of flourishing.

Examples of Practice Informed by Research


The Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine's Integrated Model for Transforming Medicine


In order to provide insight into how research to date informs practice, as inspiration to those who might join our Global Community of Practice for Flourishing, we offer two compelling examples starting with the Kern National Network (KNN). Until January of 2023, the KNN’s name did not include the word flourishing, but there was a growing recognition within the organization that the term was a good descriptor for their intentions and practice. Indeed, scholarly use of the term has increased “exponentially” since 2000.¹⁵

As Cheryl A. Maurana, Founding Director for the KNN and Medical College of Wisconsin Eminent Scholar, Professor, and Senior Vice President explains:

Every journey needs a constant point to navigate by, and a framework for flourishing shines brightly as the KNN's north star for making progress toward shifting the culture within medicine. While existing efforts around wellness and well-being are essential, **flourishing offers a more holistic lens and a new aspirational course to chart.**

Flourishing points us toward creating environments that allow and encourage a wholeness of being and doing, even amid adversity. It encourages us to shape systems that enable those within to reach their full potential while helping others do the same. And it invites us to consider flourishing on many different levels: individual, organizational and societal.

 **Flourishing Network**



“In order to better understand the science of flourishing, we have found that it is helpful to practice the domains of flourishing ourselves, with others who are also committed to this practice—to flourish as we seek to promote flourishing.”

MATTHEW LEE
Founder of the Flourishing Network at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard



KERN NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE
Character. Caring. Practical Wisdom.

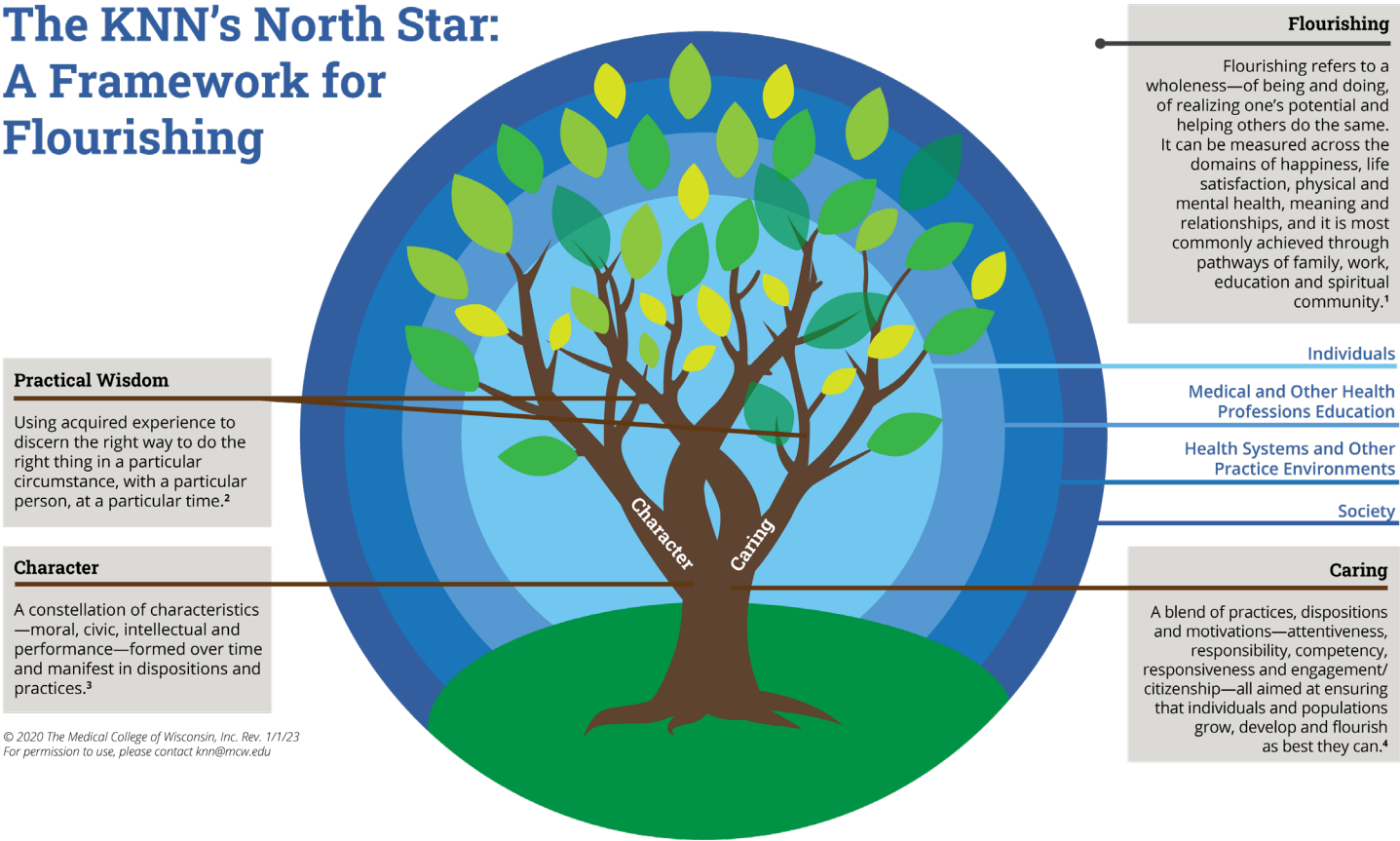
“A framework for flourishing shines brightly as the KNN's north star.”

- Cheryl Maurana, KNN

The KNN’s framework shows how together, the foundational elements of character, caring and practical wisdom offer a potential pathway to flourishing. Bringing all four concepts into dialogue equips us to navigate the complexities and trade-offs we face throughout life, both personally and professionally. By cultivating the organizational readiness needed for those concepts to take root and grow, we can create clinical learning and practice environments in which practitioners and their patients can truly flourish.

For the KNN, conceptual and empirical work on flourishing has provided a more inspiring and effective goal for the transformation of medicine. As a result of their leadership, thousands of doctors, administrators, and health care workers are discovering the power of this holistic north star.

The KNN’s North Star:
A Framework for
Flourishing



“As each employee flourishes, like a pebble dropped into the pond, their well-being ripples through to their work, families, and community—proof that one company can impact, positively and with long-lasting effects, the world around it.”

MARIE GILL
COO at FLORENS

The FLORENS Collective Levels of Organizational Transformation for Flourishing

A key activity in creating a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing is identifying partners like The FLORENS Collective—a purpose-driven organization on a mission to bring science-backed interventions to organizations to promote flourishing. In partnership with the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard, FLORENS recognizes that flourishing is a critical business imperative.

As their Chief Operating Officer, Marie Gill, explains:

We’ve lacked a roadmap or processes to guide a company to flourishing with veracity and clarity. Missing were insights: a lack of data on why and where employees are not flourishing; peer-reviewed research on what can work; and a lack of context in approaching teams and employees.

FLORENS offers a new way for organizations to support their people. Our mission is simple: learn a lot about people and the systems they work within. Then, help them. Starting with data and deep listening, we work to understand employees and how they intersect as part of a broad ecosystem—a system that extends far-beyond company walls.

ASSESS

Start with a simple assessment to map out your organization’s well-being priorities and through a phased approach, deploy tools specifically designed for your employees.



DESIGN

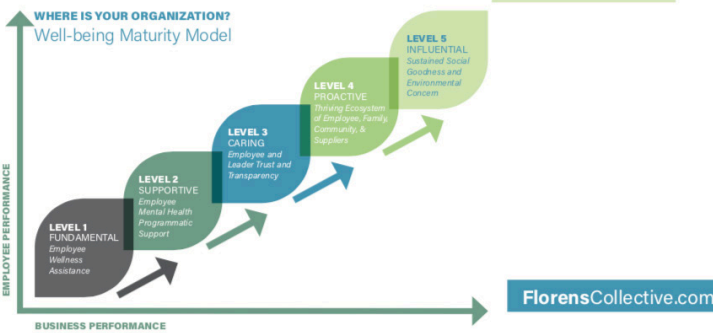
Establish a rollout plan for all aspects of your organization to create a sustainable, scalable approach to well-being.



FLORENS, a flourishing collective, is a purpose-driven organization on a mission to bring quantitative and qualitative science-backed well-being interventions to your organization so your people can flourish.

DEPLOY

Team leaders and employee feedback ensures programs will be well-received and measured for success. Our “deep listening” builds the critical trust between workers, managers, and executive leadership.



The FLORENS process starts with assessment, which includes an organization’s readiness to change, and then proceeds to the design stage (co-creation involving data analysis with organizational leaders who possess the local knowledge necessary to understand what will work in their context), and then moves on to deploy science-based interventions capable of bringing about deep, systemic change.

RESEARCH TO DATE

The Gallup World Poll, The Global Flourishing Study, Culturally Sensitive Measures and Beyond

Although the interdisciplinary science of flourishing is in its infancy, several studies have provided a solid foundation upon which to build. Some of these endeavors, like the Gallup World Poll, cover important aspects of flourishing but perhaps not everything in the flexible map of flourishing and the various definitions we have reviewed above (see page 6). It is also rare to weight the various domains of flourishing according to the extent to which they are valued by specific groups, as the “culturally sensitive” measure on page 7 does. The Global Wellbeing Initiative is taking steps towards more culturally sensitive measures. More recent initiatives, such as the Global Flourishing Study, cover more aspects of flourishing, but are just now in the initial data collection phase. Nevertheless, it is helpful for participants in the Global Community of Practice for Flourishing to be familiar with these efforts and to consider how future work might be improved. We therefore briefly review some of them, while offering the important caveat that other methodologies beyond survey research are essential to the development of a robust cross-culture understanding of flourishing across disciplines.

The Gallup World Poll¹⁶

Launched in 2005, the Gallup World Poll is the most comprehensive and farthest-reaching survey of the world. The survey connects with more than 99% of the world's adult population through annual, nationally representative surveys with comparable metrics across more than 140 countries. The survey makes it possible to understand the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the world’s 7+ billion people, and has become an indispensable tool for global leaders and decision-makers who need to understand the hopes, dreams and behaviors of the people they serve. Some findings are discussed below in the section on the book *Blind Spot*.



Gallup and Well-Being for Planet Earth¹⁷

Gallup and the Wellbeing for Planet Earth (WPE) Foundation have joined forces to establish a more inclusive and global understanding of wellbeing by incorporating cross-cultural perspectives into the science of well-being with the goal of significantly advancing our knowledge of this important topic.

The Global Wellbeing Initiative (GWI) includes concepts related to wellbeing such as the role of culture, community, governance and nature to build upon the science of wellbeing, which as we have noted has traditionally been Western-centric. By offering these additions, the partnership hopes to complement the work of the World Happiness Report and offer additional global data, reporting and thought leadership in the years to come.

The Gallup-WPE partnership is committed to advancing cross-cultural wellbeing research, creating a new set of globally accepted metrics and inspiring local action and public policy changes in service of societies, families and workplaces around the world. The Wellbeing for Planet Earth World Poll survey began gathering data in 2020. The GWI brings together leading experts across a multitude of disciplines to augment the understanding of wellbeing across the globe.



Spotlight on Blind Spot by Gallup CEO Jon Clifton

There are, of course, limits to what can be learned from survey research and the Global Community of Practice for Flourishing will encourage diverse modes of inquiry. But the lessons to date from the global research have raised important questions. For example, Jon Clifton, a participant in our workshop in Nassau and author of the important new book *Blind Spot: The Global Rise in Unhappiness and How Leaders Missed It*, notes that research on flourishing and well-being has neglected something fundamental:

In every country in the world, leaders know if GDP is growing or contracting. They know if the labor force is growing or shrinking. And, they know how much CO2 is emitted into the atmosphere. Humanity counts everything. But do leaders know how people feel? Do they know if the world is getting sadder? Or angrier?

15 years ago, Gallup began capturing the world’s official statistics for stress, sadness, anger, pain, and worry. In over 140 countries every year, Gallup conducted surveys over the phone and even showed up in people’s homes to ask them, “how is your life going?” Gallup has now conducted over five million interviews globally in over 140 languages.

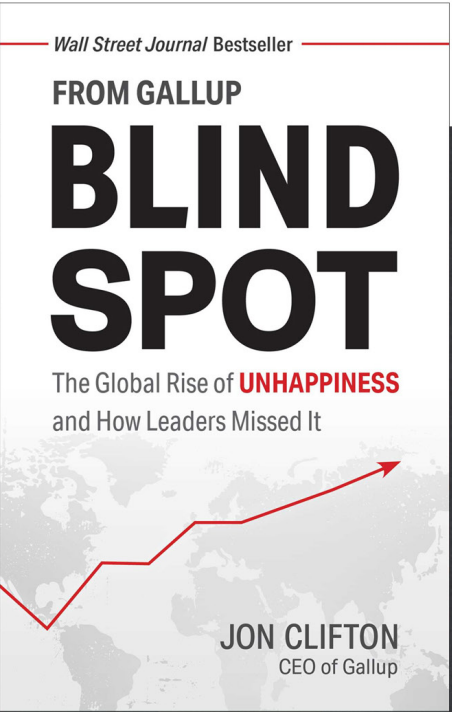
The results from this study are sobering. The world’s negative emotions are rising dramatically. In Gallup’s composite “unhappiness” index, which is made up of self-reported stress, sadness, pain, anger, and worry—negativity has increased 50% over the past decade. This rising misery is the world’s other global warming.

Jon concludes:

To flourish in life, a person cannot be miserable – yet that is exactly what millions more are experiencing. In 2021, Gallup, Baylor, Harvard, and several Foundations (including the Templeton Foundation and TWCF) took the research of “a life well lived” to the next level. The four organizations are building panels globally to take humanity one step closer to fully understanding what causes someone to be miserable. But even more important, the study seeks to understand what causes someone to flourish in life. The results of this collaboration will advance the understanding of flourishing more than any project in the history of wellbeing research.

“Rising misery is the world’s other global warming. The GFS helps us understand this social problem more fully, but it also promises to advance the understanding of flourishing more than any project in the history of wellbeing research.”

JON CLIFTON
CEO of Gallup





Global Flourishing Study

The GFS will expand knowledge on the extent to which, and in what ways, many of the world's largest nations are, or are not, flourishing, and why. Its longitudinal design will supply evidence concerning the causes of flourishing, while the large panel size and global scope and nationally representative sampling will give insights from around the world. The study thus has the capacity to fundamentally advance our understanding of the societal determinants of human flourishing, and to deeply enrich our knowledge concerning how this might vary by cultural context, and what might be universal.

Global Flourishing Study

One of the most pressing needs for the advancement of our understanding of well-being is the data to measure it. That is why the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University and the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University have spent the last three years collaborating with Gallup to plan a study to assess well-being in countries across the globe and over a significant duration of time. The recently launched Global Flourishing Study (GFS) is a longitudinal data collection and research project led by Byron Johnson (Baylor) and Tyler VanderWeele (Harvard), in partnership with Gallup and the Center for Open Science. With \$43.4 million in support from a consortium of funders, the GFS will include panel data on approximately 240,000 participants from 22 geographically and culturally diverse countries, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The study is obtaining nationally representative data within each country, with collection on the same panel of individuals annually for five waves of data.

In addition to its broad scope, the GFS utilizes a robust methodology to measure flourishing. It includes a rich set of measures not only on personal well-being but also including physical and mental health, religion and spirituality, and several social, demographic, economic, political, and psychological potential determinants. Moreover, it will measure these variables across the same group of people over a five-year period. Much prior research on these topics has relied upon cross-sectional samples (what we might call a “snapshot” approach) and has often been limited to the United States and Europe. By studying the same group of respondents over a five-year period, we will be able to obtain longitudinal data (taking a “film” approach, as it were), and we will do so across a broad spectrum of countries.

The design of the GFS has benefited from extensive feedback from a globally diverse group of scholars across a range of academic disciplines. Preparation began in 2018 and pilot work in each of the 22 countries took place between January and June of 2021. This process included a rigorous translation process, cognitive interviewing, and multiple waves of survey refinement. During the latter stages of 2021 and 2022, we began recruiting participants for the study. Following the empanelment process, interviewing started in August of 2022, with the first wave of data completion expected by July of 2023. After the first wave of data collection, analysis will focus on descriptive statistics across the different countries. The first-wave data alone will provide new insights into similarities and differences across countries on numerous aspects of religion and spirituality, on well-being, and on a number of social, political, psychological, economic and demographic characteristics. However, upon the collection of the second and subsequent waves of data, we will be able to carry out longitudinal analyses that can assess evidence for causation concerning various determinants of well-being.

The GFS intends to study flourishing as comprehensively as possible. It will, for instance, be measuring close relationships, social support, loneliness, civic engagement, political values, personality, gratitude, forgiveness, pro-sociality, religious beliefs and practices, depression, anxiety, trauma, vitality, suffering, pain, meaning, self-rated health, financial security, employment, income, self-rated health, life satisfaction, and numerous other aspects of the participants' lives and well-being.

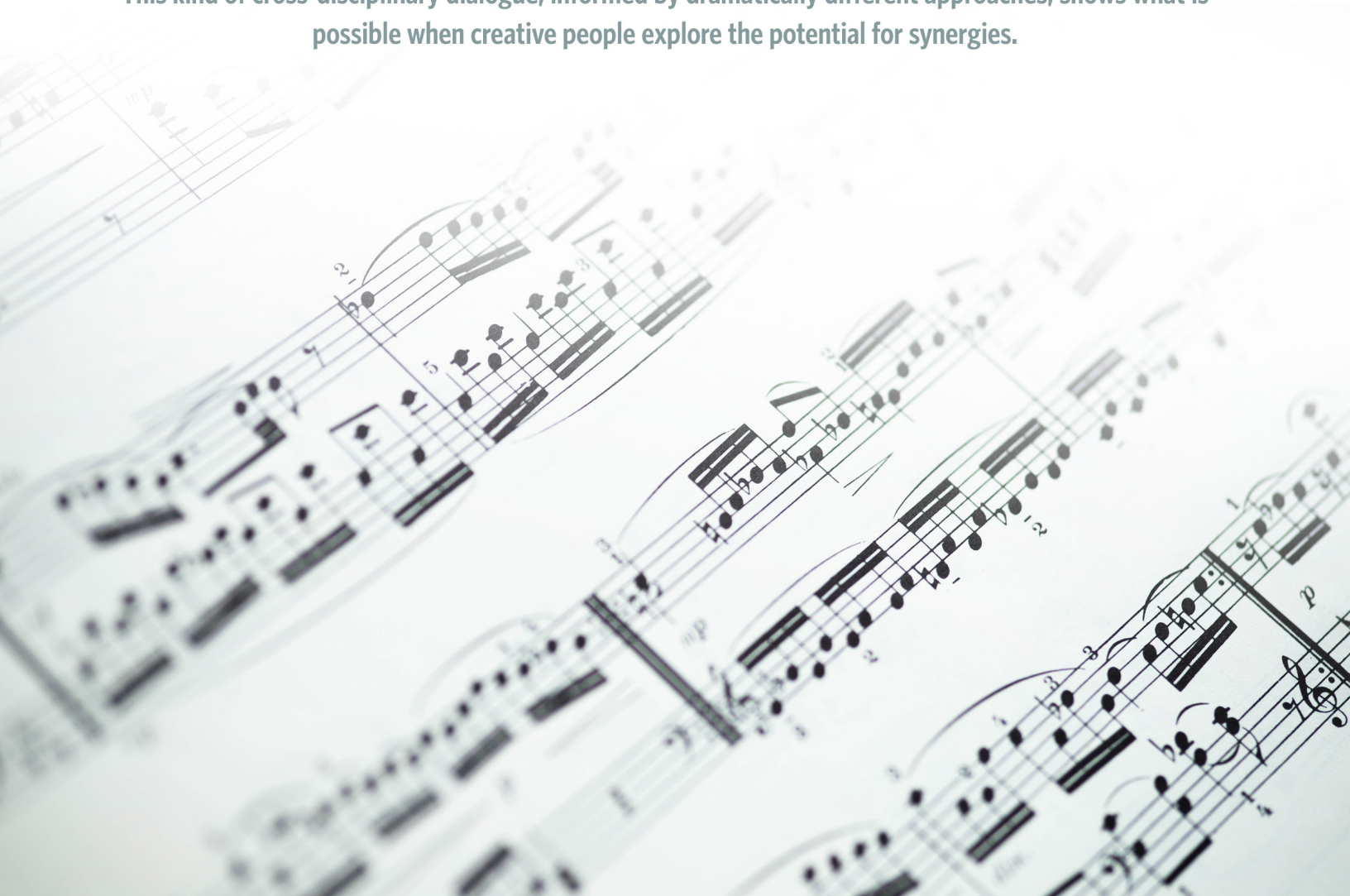
Research on these and other measures will be aided by a critical aspect of the GFS—the fact the data will be made publicly accessible via the Open Science Framework in a branded registry, hosted by the Center for Open Science. This data set will provide an important new resource for not only for researchers but also for journalists, policymakers, and educators.

Among the various audiences that will benefit, the Global Flourishing Study will be of particular interest to scholars of religion. For example, the GFS is currently collecting data not only for religious affiliation and service attendance but also for other key religion and spirituality variables, such as ritual practices, prayer and meditation, religious beliefs, religious experiences, spiritual struggles, views of evil, and others. Moreover, we will be studying these aspects not only among Western religions and cultures, wherein most of the existing research has taken place, but globally, across a diverse range of religious and cultural contexts, which will make it possible to track what Sir John Templeton referred to as “spiritual progress” as it pertains to numerous aspects of life.

Qualitative and Other Modes of Inquiry (Creative Arts and Music)

As helpful as the GWP, GWI, and GFS surveys have been and may turn out to be—and participants in the Global Community of Practice for Flourishing would be well-served by exploring their findings, after the inductive phase—there is additional value in approaching flourishing from qualitative and other modes of inquiry, including the creative arts. For example, TWCF’s Global Scientific Conference skillfully integrated insights from a bestselling author, a social scientist, and a musician in a session titled, “How Forgiveness Promotes Flourishing.” This kind of cross-disciplinary dialogue, informed by dramatically different approaches, shows what is possible when creative people explore the potential for synergies. Participants in the GCPF will be well-served by incorporating such diverse methodologies. As a result of the scope and visibility of the GFS, important conversations continue to emerge with experts in the creative arts, qualitative methodologies, and the positive humanities more generally. We are delighted that the GFS seems to be well-positioned to not only be a catalyst for the thoughtful integration of wide-ranging approaches in tandem with quantitative methods, but that taken together, such a comprehensive approach to scientific inquiry holds great promise for breakthrough discoveries.

This kind of cross-disciplinary dialogue, informed by dramatically different approaches, shows what is possible when creative people explore the potential for synergies.



LESSONS FROM NASSAU

Advancing the Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing Across Disciplines

Building on the conceptual and empirical work reviewed in this report, and many other works, Matthew Lee and Byron Johnson hosted a workshop, titled, “Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing across Disciplines,” at the Convention Center at the Grand Hyatt Baha Mar in Nassau, The Bahamas, on November 29-30, 2022. This gathering was part of TWCF’s First Annual Global Scientific Conference. Using TWCF’s language, we aimed for all of the following:

- To convene an interdisciplinary cross-section of researchers tackling a research question from different fields
- To gather a group of funders to explore a topic
- To assemble a group of innovators to tackle a solution using insights from scientific research
- To propose a unique workshop design

It might have been somewhat unusual to attempt these disparate goals in a single workshop. But we assembled a group of exceptional leaders across sectors in order to integrate all four. They represented diverse nations, including Japan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A pre-conference with a subset of our group on November 27-28 funded by Legatum and hosted by the Oxford Character Project (University of Oxford) explored the relationship between leadership, character, and the promotion of flourishing and set the stage for our workshop. Our specific purpose was to bring together a small group of researchers, funders, and innovators to explore how we might conceptualize, assess, and enhance flourishing across diverse nations.

We explored a range of questions, including: what are the challenges and opportunities for the development of more culturally sensitive and accurate measures of flourishing; how do translation issues, and language more generally, affect the meaning of flourishing in different cultures; what have we learned about points of alignment and tension in cultural understandings of flourishing from the survey translation and cognitive testing that Gallup has conducted for the Global Flourishing Study; and how are transformational leaders in the Global South promoting flourishing in ways that align with or diverge from our conceptualizations? These are just some of the questions that we addressed. Most importantly, to use TWCF language once again, we aimed to enhance an ongoing “commitment to work towards a common goal from different perspectives” and to “to build a human flourishing research, policy, and practice community” that will collaborate after the workshop (i.e., the GCPF).

Our conversations focused on the following topics:

- Friendship and the Pursuit of Flourishing
- Methods and Measurements for Human Flourishing
- Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing and The Global Flourishing Study
- Creative Perspectives on Advancing the Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing
- Philanthropic Perspectives on Advancing the Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing
- Conversations for Creating Flourishing Communities
- Finding Beauty and Purpose to Flourish
- The Meaning of Flourishing for Refugees
- The Importance of an Open Science Approach to Global Research on Flourishing
- Flourishing and Global Health
- Building a Global Community of Practice to Support the Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing

“Cross-Cultural Measurement of Flourishing across Disciplines,”
Grand Hyatt Baha Mar in Nassau, The Bahamas,
November 29-30, 2022.

This gathering was part of TWCF's First Annual Global Scientific Conference.



The following individuals actively participated in our workshop in Nassau, in addition to numerous collaborators who have supported our efforts but did not attend:

- **Adeyinka Adewale**, Deputy Director of Studies and Associate Professor of Leadership Ethics and Entrepreneurship in the Department of Leadership Organisations and Behaviour at Henley Business School
- **Andrew Serazin**, President of the Templeton World Charity Foundation
- **Anjali Sarker**, Social innovation expert and international development practitioner, currently leading student programs at the Oxford Character Project
- **Brian Nosek**, Director of the Center for Open Science, Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia
- **Byron Johnson**, Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences and Director of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University and Co-Project Director of the Global Flourishing Study
- **Chris Stewart**, Chief Grants Officer at the Templeton Religion Trust
- **David Addiss**, Director of the Focus Area for Compassion and Ethics at the Task Force for Global Health
- **Edward Brooks**, Executive Director of the Oxford Character Project
- **Emmie Bidston**, Associate Fellow of the Oxford Character Project, Senior Fellow of the Flourishing Network at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University
- **Eric Marshall**, Director of Programs in Discovery Science at the Templeton World Charity Foundation
- **Erik Carter**, Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt University and Co-Director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
- **Fatemah Alzubairi**, Assistant Professor in the International Law Department at Kuwait University
- **Guy Cave**, President of the Legatum Foundation
- **Hillary Tumwesige**, Founding Director of Albertine Hospital in Kisiita, Uganda
- **Jim Gash**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Pepperdine University
- **JoAnn Flett**, Executive Director of the Centre for Faithful Business at Seattle Pacific University
- **Jon Clifton**, Chief Executive Officer of Gallup
- **Jonathan Green**, Founder and Executive Producer at Paragraph Films
- **Jonathan Lever**, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of the Fetzer Institute
- **Juliette Ash**, Leadership practitioner, serving part-time with the British Armed Forces and as an elected County Councilor in the UK, also Operations Director for the Oxford Character Project's online course (Values Based Leadership for International Development)
- **Kaitlyn Randol**, Director of Global Health Strategies
- **Katy Granville-Chapman**, Associate Fellow of the Oxford Character Project, Doctoral Teaching Fellow at Oxford University's Department of Education, Research Associate at the Oxford University Wellbeing Research Centre, and Senior Fellow of the Flourishing Network at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University
- **Lina Tori Jan**, Social entrepreneur, public speaker, and leading advocate for equality and human rights, with a focus on the rights of women, girls, and refugees; Board of Directors, RefugePoint and Afghanistan Policy Lead, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security
- **Luna Wang**, Associate Fellow of the Oxford Character Project, expert on the place of women in contemporary Chinese society
- **Mami Yanai**, Integrative medicine practitioner and business consultant based in Japan, founder of the initiative "inochi no ie" ("a home of flourishing lives").
- **Maria Horning**, Vice President for Leadership Development at the Legatum Foundation
- **Matthew Lee**, Professor of the Social Sciences and Humanities at the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University, Research Associate and Founding Director of the Human Flourishing Program's Flourishing Network at Harvard University, member of the Global Flourishing Study research team
- **Mohammed Mohammed**, Senior Program Officer at the Fetzer Institute
- **Ron Ivey**, President of Humanity 2.0
- **Scott Heagle**, Founder and Chief Strategy Officer for Think Theory
- **Sharell Carroll**, Communications Manager for the Templeton World Charity Foundation
- **Tim Lomas**, Psychology Research Scientist in the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University
- **Verónica Fernández Espinosa**, Professor at the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid, Spain

One of the key takeaways from our two days together is the value of learning from the richness of different culture traditions around the world, and from groups within any society that are not often the focus of focus research, or that lack social or political power, such as refugees or the disabled. Regarding the definition of flourishing, Adeyinka Adewale shared with us the following nuances from the Yoruba language in Nigeria:

There are at least 3 words in the Yoruba tradition that speak to flourishing, each giving a different dimension to the depth of the concept of human flourishing:

Gbilè – Meaning to be firmly established—PLANTED, ROOT-ED—in something to the extent that it cannot be easily moved. It speaks to strength and depth of being so rooted into the soil that one can tap into available resources as one way to see flourishing.

Gbèrú – This one means to THRIVE. To grow, to blossom and to show richness. We use this word also when we see holistic healthy development in anything. This is a second meaning of flourishing. This would be a very common notion of flourishing.

‘Gbà is the abbreviated version of Dàgbà – This third word is used in everyday language simply meaning to DEVELOP. But in a deeper sense, it is often used to connote a ‘good long life,’ akin to what we would imply by saying someone has lived well and flourished in their life.

These sentiments are not in tension with anything in the flexible map or flourishing, or the definitions of flourishing that we have reviewed in this report. But they do offer a window into what is especially prized in a specific cultural context. Existing constructs and measures may not tap into the notion of being “rooted in the soil.”

Similarly, what does it mean for a refugee to flourish, with all the trials and dislocations that they experience? Separation from family and homeland, lack of the rights of citizenship, ongoing threats to personal safety—these are not the contextual factors we think of as supporting flourishing. And indeed, sadness and grief are to be expected for all people dealing with such major losses and stressors. But does that mean that refugees cannot flourish? Lina Tori Jan shared such inspiring stories with us that underscored her point that, “Refugees are the heroes of their own stories.” Rather than framing their experiences in terms of victimhood, Lina shared with us how they flourish despite adverse circumstances. She concludes, “the label of refugee is one of resilience, empowerment, leadership, sacrifice, heartache, love, perseverance, and hope.”

We explored the intersection of flourishing and suffering in a variety of ways, including in a contemplative dining experience led by Mami Yanai. In Mami’s language (Japanese), flourishing would be roughly translated as the “flavorful” or “delicious” life, not the life free from suffering. In the Japanese tea ceremony, for example, one tastes something bitter prior to experiencing a sweet taste, and the experience is all the sweeter due to the mixing of flavors. This is a more holistic way of understanding

To flourish means, in part, to be “rooted in something [that] cannot be easily moved. In Yoruba, we say, ‘Igi ti o ba gbile s’eti odo yoo dagba.’ Translation: ‘A tree that is established by the riverbed will flourish.’”

ADEYINKA ADEWALE
Associate Professor at Henley Business School

“Refugees are the heroes of their own stories.”

LINA TORI JAN
Lead of Onward for Afghan Women,
Georgetown University



“Flourishing is the delicious life.”

MAMI YANAI
Founder of ‘A Home for Flourishing Lives’



“I’m proud of how far I have come. When I look back, compared to where I am, I feel I’m in a better place.”

- Mama Juma

Source: Tobin Jones, Act for Peace

flourishing than is often suggested by Western, “analytical” approaches that draw clear distinctions between good and bad experiences. In our contemplative dinner, Mami invited us to sit in silence and be present with all aspects of our experiences, including the fact that living beings had to die to become our food. “You are eating the death of life,” she declared. If such a statement seems out of place at a workshop devoted to flourishing, this might reflect the presence of a worldview that makes it difficult to see beyond polarities of positive and negative. Participants later commented that “being present” in this way was a novel experience, one that they would not soon forget.

Erik Carter also pushed us to think more expansively about flourishing for people with disabilities, a group that comprises more than 1 billion people worldwide. He underscored that our efforts to understand and promote human flourishing must recognize that disability is an ordinary part of the diverse human experience. It cuts across every country, culture, and community. Many people experience temporary disabilities due to illness and at the end of life. Erik noted that families and communities can be strengthened and enlivened by the presence, contributions, and voices of people with disabilities. But scholars have been prone to overlook or exclude people with disabilities in research addressing human flourishing, whether due to sampling or measurement approaches. According to Erik:

As we work to advance human flourishing, we must not overlook the experiences and insights of people with disabilities around the world. We still have much to learn about what it really means to have abundant lives and the ways in which communities are enriched when every person has a place. Prevailing societal notions that disability and flourishing cannot be close companions must be challenged. Indeed, there is much that disabled people have to share with the field about what it means to experience and support thriving lives.

Taken together, these and other perspectives shared over the course of our two days together enriched our sense of the depths and the complex meanings of flourishing that future research might reveal, if we take seriously the cultural differences that exist within and across societies and we endeavor to reflect these nuances in our research. We left with a sense of what might be possible if we followed advice of George Gallup, offered many years ago when the human family was much less numerous: “There are 5 billion ways to lead a life, and we should study them all.”

Prevailing societal notions that disability and flourishing cannot be close companions must be challenged.

Erik Carter, Professor at Vanderbilt University

The Role of Friendship in Flourishing: The Story of Hilary Tumwesige and Jim Gash

The inspiring story of two “unlikely friends,” Hilary Tumwesige and Jim Gash, underscored the surprising paths towards flourishing that unfold over a lifetime. Jim, then a lawyer and now President of Pepperdine University, sought to help Hilary, then a teen in Uganda escape from two baseless murder charges. Referred to as “Henry” in their book, *Divine Collision*, Hilary’s path towards freedom was anything but straightforward. Engaging with setbacks and disappointments led to what the Japanese call kizuna: deeper relational bonds that are forged through mutually shared adversity. An abiding friendship blossomed between Jim and Hilary—a generative relationship that continues to inspire groups all over the world.

As they shared about their journey, including Hilary being exonerated of both murders and culminating in Hilary serving as founding Director of a new hospital in Uganda which was previously without such medical care, we were touched by the possibility that flourishing can be experienced even in times of great uncertainty and injustice. Friendship, faith, hope, and love can redeem the worst circumstances. Our session with them reinforced the value of the “pursuit of truth in the company of friends,” and reminded us of the importance of understanding flourishing in the fullness of life. For Hilary and Jim, a faith in God revealed an abundance amidst the hardships. The science of flourishing has been relatively inattentive to the transformative power of faith, especially in non-Western contexts. The Global Flourishing Study includes important variables on religion and spirituality, which is an encouraging development. But other methods of inquiry, including qualitative studies of life histories and even dialogues among friends, will enrich our understanding.

“What a blessing it was to spend a few days with like-minded leaders as we wrestled with big ideas about global human flourishing. The relationships developed and enhanced during the conference greatly enhanced the learning experience. The conversations about future partnerships and collaborations that continue to happen are multiplying the impact of this special gathering.”

JIM GASH
President of Pepperdine University

As Jim put it in his presentation: “Friends learn each other’s customs.” This inspired us to imagine how a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing might foster friendships across cultural boundaries in ways that encourage such learning and sharing. “Friends dream together,” Jim also shared. In fact, the realization of one such exciting dream is the opening of a Pepperdine University campus in Uganda in the fall of 2024. Finally, Jim declared, “Friends introduce others traveling on the same journey.” All people desire to journey towards flourishing. We left this session reflecting on how the GCFP might continue to expand over time, to the point of eventually touching the lives of all people, directly or indirectly, by sharing learnings about aspects of flourishing that are currently not well known, or perhaps unknown, outside of a particular cultural group or tradition. And how this work might foster more “unlikely” friendships. What dreams might emerge from collaborations within the GCPF?



Jim Gash, Hilary Tumwesige, Joline Gash, and Lilian Tumwesige at the opening of the hospital.



Sharing a meal.



Children who will benefit from the opening of the only hospital in the area.



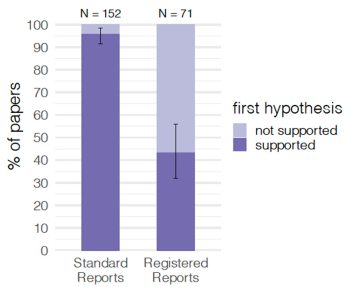
“Researchers endorse scholarly values such as transparency, humility, and disinterestedness, but the scholarly reward system disincentivizes living by those values. Researching on flourishing will flourish by nudging those reward systems so that transparency, humility, and disinterestedness are benefits rather than costs to career advancement. Solutions such as preregistration, Registered Reports, and visibility of open practices are effective and shifting scholarly norms toward these core values.”

Brian Nosek, Director of the Center for Open Science



The Open Science Revolution: Restoring Legitimacy, Transforming the Process

If friendship networks represent one resource for sharing knowledge about flourishing, another of our workshop’s sessions highlighted the importance of rigorous science in this work. Unfortunately, the legitimacy of science has been under attack. The “replication crisis” in many fields has revealed that many findings are not substantiated by subsequent research. High-profile cases of scientific misconduct cast a long shadow on good work. A “post-truth” orientation in some sectors of society promotes skepticism of empirical investigation. But there are solutions. Indeed, as Brian Nosek, Director of the Center for Open Science, shared with us, pre-registering hypotheses (publicly declaring them prior to conducting studies) dramatically changes the findings that are reported in the literature, leading to dissemination not just of findings preferred by the researcher, but also evidence of disconfirmed hypotheses. This can be seen in the extent to which a study’s first hypothesis is supported or not, based on whether the hypotheses are pre-registered:



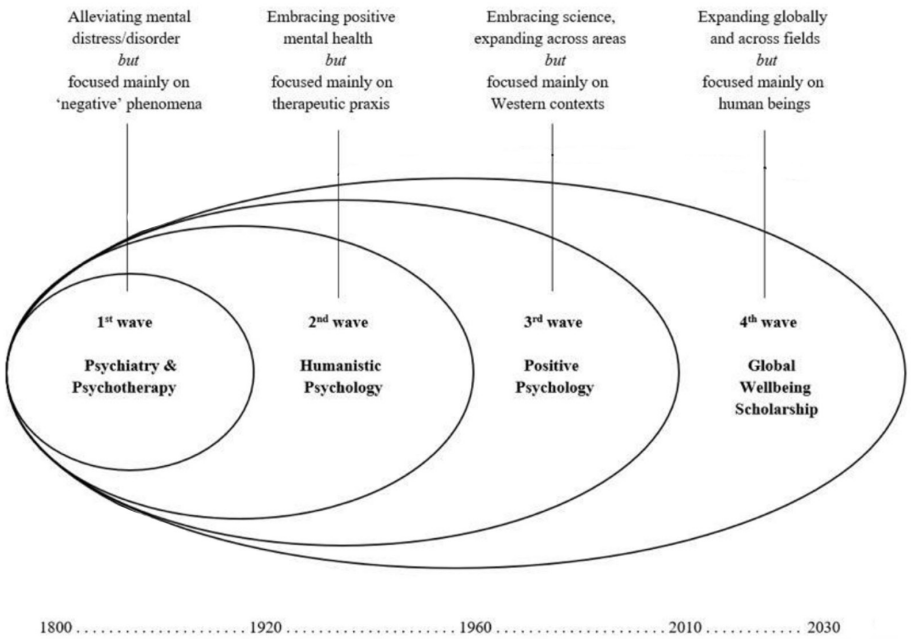
Citation: Scheel, A. M., Schijen, M. R., & Lakens, D. (2021). An excess of positive results: Comparing the standard Psychology literature with Registered Reports. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 4(2), 25152459211007467.

Pre-registration is just one aspect of the Open Science movement to make scientific research, data and their dissemination available to any member of an inquiring society, from professionals to citizens. By combining the tools of science and information technologies, scientific inquiry and discovery can be sped up for the benefit of society. Open science reduces duplication in collecting, creating, transferring and re-using scientific material. Thus, Open Science enhances increased rigor, accountability, and reproducibility of research. It is based on the principles of inclusion, fairness, equity, and sharing, and ultimately seeks to change the way research is done, who is involved and how it is valued.

We were grateful to learn from Brian about the best practices in Open Science and we will seek to infuse these practices in the Global Community of Practice for Flourishing. In this regard, the Global Flourishing Study is leading the way forward by making data available to all. The research team led by Byron Johnson and Tyler VanderWeele will make extensive use of pre-registration and other best practices, thus serving as a model of a more rigorous and trustworthy form of scientific investigation. The GCPF, and the aforementioned Research Satellites associated with the GFS, will share the Open Science framework around the world.

Waves of Well-Being and Flourishing Research

In addition to relational and methodological considerations, we heard from Tim Lomas about conceptual innovations in well-being and, more recently, flourishing research. As this figure shows, there have been four waves of such scholarship, beginning in the 1800s with attempts to alleviate sources of distress, shifting to the positive in therapeutic contexts in the early 20th century, then involving more rigorous scientific methods in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st century, and now being informed by diverse cultural traditions around the world.



“We are now seeing an emerging fourth wave of ‘global wellbeing scholarship,’ in which the Western ocean is beginning to truly intermingle with waves and currents from the world’s other vast oceans, thus creating a more globally inclusive picture of wellbeing.”

TIM LOMAS

Researcher at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard, from his 2022 article in the *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

As Tim pointed out—and consistent with the definitions of flourishing we reviewed that include not just individuals but also their contexts—the fourth wave of scholarship is not exclusively focused on human beings. The flourishing of the natural world, for example, is of increasing concern. For religious and spiritual people, which when combined represents the vast majority of human beings worldwide, sacred contexts are preeminent. Understanding the historical development, and expansion, of these focal concerns helps us to see aspects of our current research projects in light of these intermingling waves.

Flourishing and Global Health

It is not possible to do justice to all that was shared in Nassau in this brief report. But we would be especially remiss if we did not include an important discussion of the intersection of flourishing and global health provided by David Addiss, Director of the Focus Area for Compassion and Ethics at the Task Force for Global Health. David shared that:

Global health is a manifestation of compassion and a fruitful arena in which to study compassion and human flourishing, particularly in the presence of suffering. Global health practitioners are motivated by compassion—they desire to alleviate suffering and promote human flourishing. This impulse is explicit in some areas of global health, such as in palliative care and in programs to control and eliminate neglected tropical diseases—causes of massive suffering among people who are marginalized and economically impoverished.

Social, political, and economic factors, as well as power differentials pose ethical challenges for global health practitioners. To develop and sustain mature compassion in such complexity requires a high degree of self-awareness and a willingness to question one’s assumptions (and those of one’s institutions) and examine one’s actions. The practice of global health can contribute to one’s spiritual development.

One of the challenges to sustaining compassion when working to improve the health of populations is that we work abstractly, with numbers and graphs and data. We lose sight of the essential humanity embedded in our work. In a now-famous speech at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Bill Foege, Director of CDC once said, “If we [CDC] are to maintain the reputation this institution now enjoys, it will be because in everything we do, behind everything we say, as the basis for every program decision we make—we will be willing to see faces.” Not better laboratory facilities, smarter epidemiologists, bigger program budgets, but, rather, the need to see the faces of suffering.

This powerful statement is reflected in this image (next page), which shows that the faces of suffering can also express great joy when compassion leads to flourishing.

Once again, we witness the recurring theme that flourishing is grounded in a clear-sighted view of suffering and a sustained commitment to rise above it. From the resilience of refugees, to the friendship that grew between a lawyer and a falsely imprisoned teenager, to the insight that disability and flourishing are “close companions,” we learned so much from our time in Nassau. We aim to carry these lessons into the next phase of our collaborative work: founding a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing.



This photo of a healthcare worker (Dr. Esmail Habtamu) and a woman who underwent surgery for trachoma - a painful and debilitating eye disease - illustrates the fruit of compassion: the joy of sharing in human flourishing.

Brent Stirton/Getty Images for the International Trachoma Initiative

“In an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2019, Tyler VanderWeele and colleagues argued for the need to reimagine health as human flourishing. The current crisis in healthcare, fueled by unprecedented levels of burnout and disillusionment among healthcare workers and high levels of dissatisfaction with the healthcare system—not to mention the scandalously high percentage of Americans in medical debt (40%)—highlight the need for such a re-imagination.


–David Addiss, Task Force for Global Health



Philanthropic Perspectives on Advancing Flourishing

We invited visionary philanthropic partners to join our conversations in Nassau, and we are grateful that TWCF, the Fetzer Institute, Humanity 2.0, the Templeton Religion Trust, and Legatum were available to participate. Our experience suggests that a close collaboration with such partners at the earliest stages of discussion helps ensure alignment on purpose and process. All of these groups have supported the Global Flourishing Study or other aspects of our work and the relationships we have formed have been deeply generative.

As an example of the kind of wisdom that our philanthropic partners shared over the two days, we spotlight this slide from a presentation by Ron Ivey, President of Humanity 2.0. This organization seeks to co-create “a civilization that accelerates human flourishing” and is especially interested in supporting this work by building “connective tissue” linking organizations across sectors that share this goal. As this image suggests, there are several streams of work that proceed with relative autonomy but must intersect at strategic points in order for cross-pollination to occur. Without those regular, intentional engagements, the influence of academic work on policy, to take just one example, will be minimal. Spiritual ways of knowing are likewise less influential on scholarship in the absence of connective tissue that fosters constructive dialogue. And yet, such ways of knowing are at the heart of flourishing for many people around the world.



“We invest our ideas, energy and capital into companies, initiatives and people we believe will shape the future for the better. This is about promoting all the elements of wealth, wellbeing, relationship, purpose, and character that lead to human flourishing – of both ourselves and others.”

GUY CAVE
President of the Legatum Foundation



“With our human family facing multiple existential threats, the urgency is now to commit ourselves to embracing a paradigm of shared human flourishing. At the Fetzer Institute, we seek to catalyze and nurture the emerging movement of people and organizations committed to solidarity in Love for shared flourishing grounded in plural experiences of sacred mystery.”

JONATHAN LEVER
Chief Operating Officer and
Executive Vice President of the Fetzer Institute

Furthermore, the workplace is a strategic site for flourishing, as many people spend much of their waking lives working. Humanity 2.0’s vision includes greater partnership with industry and investment in order to scale “bold and innovative solutions.” After all, as Gallup’s Jon Clifton shared with us, the Gallup World Poll demonstrates that of the 3.3 billion people who want a great job, 3 billion do not have one and 75% are workers who are not fully engaged in their work. That is a crisis that leads to massive stress-related health and mental health problems—perhaps the single largest impediment to flourishing in the world today.

There are many road-blocks to flourishing. But as the quotes from Guy Cave and Jonathan Lever suggest, philanthropies like the Legatum Foundation and the Fetzer Institute are already identifying solutions that work in specific sectors. Legatum focuses on business, and Fetzer on spiritual communities. With support from Humanity 2.0, these and other philanthropic groups can partner with a Global Community of Practice for Flourishing in order to make the necessary cross-sector connections. By intentionally drawing in scholars, the Templeton World Charity Foundation is making it possible for science to play a more central role in guiding innovations that accelerate flourishing.

BUILDING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

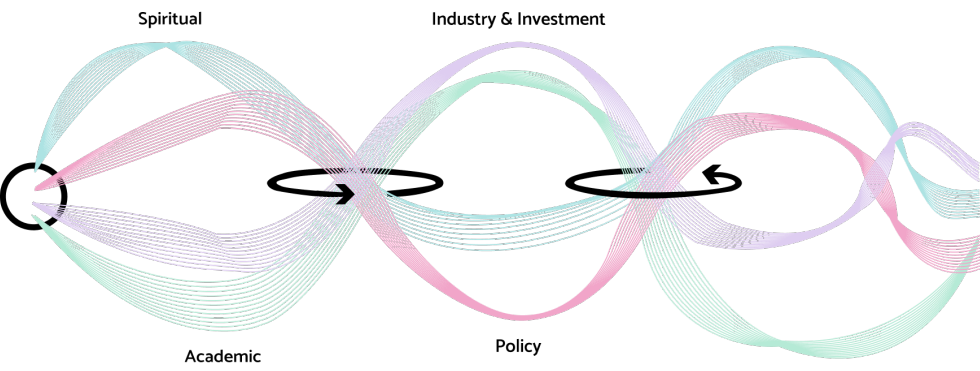
A Roadmap from the First Steps to the Last Mile

Great strides have been made in recent decades on the conceptualization and empirical assessment of flourishing, grounded in long-standing scholarship on health and well-being in the social and natural sciences, as well as the humanities. From the annual findings of the Gallup World Poll, to the conceptual and methodological innovations represented by the Global Wellbeing Initiative and the Global Flourishing Study, to the innovations in qualitative research and the creative arts, to the significant investments that philanthropic organizations have recently made into supporting the study and acceleration of flourishing—including TWCF’s \$60M investment in innovations in flourishing and the launch of the First Annual Global Scientific Conference on Flourishing—it is clear that we have embarked on a new era of interest and activity. Flourishing is quickly becoming a north star across sectors, from research to health care, to education, to business, to policy, and beyond. Groups like Humanity 2.0 are building the connective tissue needed to link these disparate endeavors to accelerate impact, while the Kern National Network’s recent inclusion of “Flourishing” in its name signifies the prominence that this term has achieved.

A young social movement to promote flourishing in diverse settings around the world—backed by conceptual clarity and wisdom and assessed with rigorous empirical methods—is beginning to form. The success of this movement, and therefore the possibilities for greater flourishing, will depend on the development of multiple platforms of integration and shared learning. As Andrew Serazin, President of the Templeton Foundation, shared with us during our workshop in Nassau, the global flourishing movement would do well to learn from the experiences of the global public health movement. In Andrew’s lifetime, global public health has emerged as a viable interdisciplinary field that offers positive benefits to billions of people. He shared that it started with exemplars who made breakthroughs on specific diseases and enlisted prominent leaders to champion the cause of expansion and distribution. These heroes inspired a nascent social movement to develop a clear research agenda and invite diverse groups into a growing fellowship that was aligning around consensus goals. David Addiss, from the Task Force for Global Health, shared that these leaders could envision what the “last mile” would look like: the emergence of cross-national institutions and the connective tissue necessary to spread health innovations around the world, effectively assess impact, and narrate successes in inspiring ways that continued to build momentum.

The global public health movement serves as a great historical example of how to scale for global transformation. We are at a strategic moment in the social movement for flourishing. A Global Community of Practice focused on flourishing offers a platform for connecting scholars with other sectors (e.g., business, government, education) that are able to promote social change. We will gain many valuable insights from the Global Flourishing Study and other research initiatives. But we will still have much to learn from countries not included, from other modes of inquiry, and from heroes who are already promoting flourishing around the world in ways that have yet to be recognized. We are inspired by the experiences of the Flourishing Network at Harvard and by

Creating “the connective tissue” of a global flourishing movement



Humanity 2.0 Mission:

- 1. Build the most comprehensive understanding of human flourishing.
- 2. Identify the greatest impediments to human flourishing.
- 3. Remove these impediments by sourcing and scaling bold and innovative solutions.

our workshop in Nassau to take the next step towards building a truly global community of practice that can help provide an integrated platform for sharing scientific findings, fostering fresh conversations that make more visible the great wisdom exists in the Global South, and linking heroes of flourishing across sectors. We believe that scholarship across disciplines is the foundation, so our initial community of practice will focus on scholars. But subsequent iterations will involve transformation leaders, policymakers, educators, business leaders, and many others, just as has been the case with the Flourishing Network at Harvard. What will be different about our GCPF is the scale and the intention to start with the Global South. We will create pathways for participants from that region to lead us forward, not merely respond to work that has been created primarily in the West, and to a lesser extent in East Asia.

We have already taken the first steps towards the creation of the GCPF and our time together in Nassau affirmed that relationships are the key to creating a durable, motivated, and even inspired group of collaborators—and, we are comfortable using this term: friends. Some of the feedback we received about our workshop indicated that we “held the space for all attendees with such care and compassion,” that our “sessions had such an open, respectful, and loving tone,” that some participants felt our time together was “an unimaginable blessing,” and that they “count it a privilege to be collaborating in important work.” In other words, we are flourishing together as we seek to promote flourishing for all. Put differently, we are interested in building the virtuous dispositions and institutional supports needed to accelerate flourishing.



We note that significant progress towards the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, and the widely-touted Environmental, Social, and Governance goals more generally, has been lacking. Objective assessments routinely decry the gap between verbal agreement with these goals and lack of practical action to attain them. This is one reason why we feel that the work to promote flourishing should occur in a community of friends who help each other experience integrity of values and action. To this end, we will expand our collaborations with both the Oxford Character Project and the Inner Development Goals initiative to work on the domains of inner development in the context of hosting communities of practice around the world. Both of these groups are active around the world and increasing their engagements in the Global South. The Task Force for Global Health is another strategic partner, as it already has robust networks in this region of the world.

What would the “last mile” of this journey look like? Again, taking our cue from the global public health movement, we aspire to create the conditions that enable generative sharing of experiences with flourishing—especially under conditions of adversity—around the world, the expansion of a global scientific community of friends united by the prospect of breakthrough discoveries for the greater good and motivated to work together to apply these discoveries with partners in all sectors, and ultimately the creation of a more flourishing world. This is our north star and many others have already committed to pursue it with us. We are grateful for the myriad ways that individuals and institutions have already supported these efforts and we look forward to taking the next steps on this journey with new friends around the world.

“We live at a time when there is both an incredible opportunity and real need to address global challenges and advance the flourishing of individuals, societies and the natural environment. Three things are essential to move forward: a renewal of values and purpose to guide decisions towards the common good, deep research to inform the best steps to take, and leadership to turn aspiration into concrete collaborative action.

Virtues of character like courage, hope, humility, and generosity are at the heart of a flourishing life and the cornerstone of the leadership that is needed to advance flourishing around the world. The Oxford Character Project at the University of Oxford joins research on character and leadership to programmes that aim to empower a new generation of emerging leaders. Our vision is for a new generation of wise thinkers and good leaders who will advance flourishing globally.”

EDWARD BROOKS
Executive Director of the Oxford Character Project

ENDNOTES

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