# Amplifying Stewardship:
## Characteristics and Trends Stewards Consider When Expanding Equitable Well-Being

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# Table of Contents

# Introduction

Rowan, a 13-year-old middle schooler from Chicago, sums it up perfectly in this clever image (left). As the artist explains, "The sign the girl is holding says, 'Keep your coins. I want change.' It doesn't matter if people give her coins because nothing will change." Written on the wall are things we all need to thrive, such as equal funding for all schools, community farms and gardens, higher wages, cheaper housing, affordable health care, accessible public transportation, and more. Each brick matters, and together they form a system of interdependent conditions that we all need to reach our full potential.

We cannot unlock our full potential for well-being with token gestures. It takes serious change—in ourselves, our relationships, our institutions, and the systems that we create together. A growing network of people and organizations share Rowan's insistence on system change. Moreover, they see themselves—and one another—as system stewards. Throughout this report, we define stewards of well-being as people and organizations who take responsibility for working with each other to create conditions that each of us need to participate, prosper, and reach our full potential.
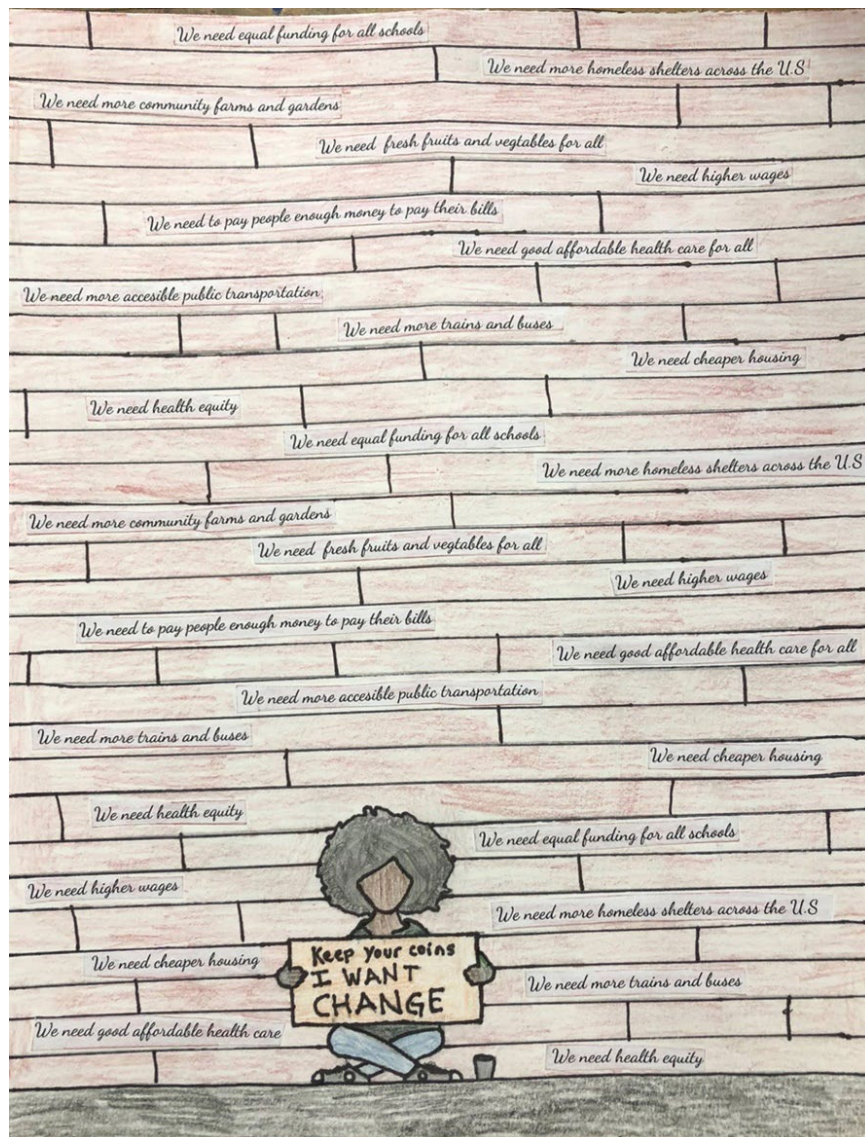


*Source: Rowan L. National Academy of Medicine. 2019.Young Leaders Visualize Health Equity Art Gallery* https://nam.edu/youngleaders/#/artwork/28

This report profiles characteristics of people who are not only impressive stewards, but also are helping to grow the entire field of system stewardship for well-being. It describes what prompts them to set new standards for what system changers can do while also inspiring many other people and organizations to join them in this work. Two concluding sections summarize: 1) the major trends shaping how these field-building stewards think and act, and 2) their efforts to enhance recovery and resilience as our society grapples with multiple systemic crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and economic recession.

# A Time to Amplify Stewardship for Well-Being

**Stewards are people or organizations that are developing their abilities to:**

- Take responsibility for **forming working relationships** with others to transform well-being across a region;

- Serve as **natural boundary spanners** because they are informed by place-based, interdisciplinary, multisector, and multicultural perspectives; and

- Understand that **purpose** must be larger than oneself and one's organization, **power** must be built and distributed with others, and **wealth** must be invested to create long-term value as well as address short-term urgent needs.

Well-being describes how we think, feel, and function, as well as how we evaluate our lives as a whole. It is both personal—changing over time as we live our lives—and dependent on a system designed long ago that was not built to be fully inclusive. Even today, it helps some people to thrive, while leaving many others behind to struggle and suffer.

## What can we do to create a system that enables everyone to thrive—without exceptions?

Many innovators answer this question by making an intentional choice to become system stewards (see sidebar to the left).

Stewardship is not a widespread norm, nor is it a new idea. The practice has evolved over millennia as certain people in each generation (albeit too few) have endeavored to leave behind unjust or inhumane legacies and instead pass along a world that enables everyone to survive and thrive—continually learning what it takes to create systems for people and places that are prosperous, sustainable, and equitable. Today, in an era marked by deep divisions, unprecedented systemic crises, and new heights of system consciousness, a rising cadre of system stewards are turning—and in many ways returning—to sacred practices for living together that enable all people to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Many contemporary stewards have built strong networks of like-minded allies; and those networks seem poised to expand even more as stories of system stewardship are becoming increasingly common. However, we have observed that stewardship mindsets and practices have yet to take hold as the status quo across the country.

> **"** *This work requires bigness and boldness. People must be willing to say the things that have been swept under the rug for generations that have led to the dysfunctional ways we tend to see and address problems.*

# Listening to Stewards Who Are Growing the Field

In late 2019, ReThink Health, an initiative of The Rippel Foundation, teamed up with the RAND Corporation to explore major trends that affect how selected stewards think and act. Both groups co-designed the study, and RAND conducted the majority of interviews. We spoke with 29 colleagues who are both impressive stewards and engaged in building a stronger field of practice with others across the country (see contributors and selection criteria in Appendix 1).

Some of these "field-building stewards" work locally in particular places, while others have nationwide influence to catalyze and support local action. Their organizational homes include nonprofits, local governments, corporations, businesses, and philanthropies; and they work across many areas of practice, including the economy, ecology, democracy, placemaking, health, education, and more. Invariably, all stewards selected for this study recognized deep, systemic interdependencies across content areas, although their organizations tend to focus on one or several areas of practice.

**Through a mix of individual and group interviews, we learned...**

- Who steps up as **both a steward and a field builder?**
- What are their **superpowers** or special characteristics?
- How do they **navigate tensions** in established institutions and dominant cultures?
- Which **trends, opportunities, and obstacles** shape their efforts to expand well-being?
- What are they doing to enhance **recovery and resilience** as our society seeks to emerge from multiple, systemic crises?

To place these interviews in a wider context, we also scanned public and professional literature looking for signs that show how innovators across the field frame contemporary systemic challenges. This rapid review focused on systemic trends, opportunities, and obstacles that either expand or impede well-being in areas such as the economy, ecology, placemaking, democracy, and health (see search terms, themes, and examples in Appendix 2).

The study team shared a summary of initial insights with the original contributors, as well as with a wider group of fellow stewards. More than dozen colleagues joined two virtual "sense-making" sessions to critique and clarify the study's main findings. We also convened two additional sessions with 24 colleagues focused on stewardship as society grapples with multiple systemic crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and economic recession. Direct quotations in this report are presented without attribution to respect the confidentiality of contributors.

## A Springboard to Amplify Stewardship

This is an exploratory study. It seeks to characterize the special significance of the work that stewards do and the roles they play within the complex system that affects the well-being of everyone in our society. It also explores the trends, opportunities, and obstacles that stewards face in a rapidly changing and inequitable world. We did not set out to confirm fixed answers, but rather to surface significant themes while remaining sensitive to important areas of similarity and difference. We did not delve into areas where stewards are weakest or need more internal capacity. Capacity-building is a critical priority that we plan to address in a separate effort. For now, stewards everywhere may use these findings as a springboard to connect with others, advance their own goals, and grow the field of system stewardship for well-being, together.

# Characteristic Superpowers

**Those who step up as field-building stewards are unique individuals. They have diverse personal and professional backgrounds, as well as eclectic areas of expertise. There is no single entry point or established career path into this work. No core curriculum exists nor are certain advanced credentials needed to enter this field. Virtually anyone can be a steward of well-being, and anyone can help to grow the field of system stewardship by drawing others into the work.**

After speaking with dozens of field-building stewards, we discovered that they share several strikingly similar characteristics. These common traits shine through in their life experiences, as well as in what they know, believe, and can do—their heads, hearts, and hands. We call these special characteristics "superpowers," not because they are beyond the reach of mere mortals, but because they are so unmistakably human. Given that many large, well-established organizations tend to reward detached, analytical thinking, it takes real courage to embrace the following set of concerned, humane, and adaptive characteristics.

## Experiences (Life Paths they Travel)

### Many field-building stewards...

- Celebrate their eclectic personal, cultural, and professional backgrounds, actively integrating and infusing these perspectives in their work.

- Typically start their careers in one area of practice or geographic scale, but eventually work in multiple areas and across multiple scales as they experience the power—and see the results of—working across conventional boundaries.

- Acquire credentials through formal education, but view traditional professional expertise as inadequate and sometimes inhibiting given strong tendencies toward narrow specialization and an emphasis on understanding the "part" rather than "the whole." They appreciate the need to unlearn many things in order to work more effectively—and more equitably— with others who have different kinds of expertise.

- Listen for meaning and switch terms when talking with others who use a different vocabulary. They are often willing to struggle through experiences of disagreement, confusion, and tension whenever language fails to convey things that really matter. Even so, sometimes a common vocabulary does not yet exist to describe the new futures and new ways of working together that stewards often envision.

*"The most profoundly influential stewards are those who [can hold space] because they... know the subject matter, but also have a level of comfort with not knowing and not having a lot of control."*

*"What I bring from previous sectors is a different way of looking at things. Each sector has its own biases. I am able to speak to the strengths of each sector and also have awareness about some of those biases."*

## Head (Things they Know)

### Many field-building stewards...

- Acknowledge their own power and privilege, understanding they can be used for just or unjust purposes.

- Focus on one or two areas of practice while remaining nimble enough to explore new paths or possibilities that may emerge when working with others to nudge complex systems toward equitable well-being.

- See many intertwined facets of well-being (such as connections between economic incentives, the environment, democratic processes, and health). They are often drawn to systemic actions that travel across multiple spheres and scales, such as a just marketplace or regenerative capitalism.

- Trace patterns of history, culture, and social movements to better understand the status quo and to envision how a different future could unfold.

- Recognize that place holds special and specific meaning for residents, those who do business there, as well as outside allies. They understand that inclusive placemaking and placekeeping fits naturally at the center of community and cultural identity. Striving always to situate people in place is a practical way for stewards to connect across their many areas of practice and institutions.

- Think in terms of assets and see resources as abundant, even if often overlooked, misaligned, or devalued. They strive to make better use of all available assets including time, treasure, and talent wherever it may be.

- Are curious and rely on action learning to simultaneously under-stand and influence the world.

- Are conscious of their own intuition, and have a high degree of comfort and humility in not always knowing and not always having control.

## Heart (Things they Feel)

### Many field-building stewards...

- Stay in touch with their emotional intelligence, humility, and willingness to take risks, proudly modeling these qualities for others to encourage different ways of being and acting.

- Center equity as a guiding concern, honoring the dignity, humanity, and agency in all people, especially those who are struggling and suffering.

- Value different ways of knowing and interacting, such as empathy, indigenous wisdom, cultural traditions, and instincts informed by "street degrees."

- Trust the emergent nature of system change where unexpected shifts may occur either before or after moments of decisive action. They expect the unexpected when planning for organizations and initiatives, building plans but holding them lightly.

- Welcome the difficulties and discoveries that come when people with vested interests and perspectives both learn from and teach each other.

- Hold tensions and differences as opportunities to create new understanding and possibilities, not as problems to solve.

*"The more we can co-create and co-design with the people on the ground—the people who are nearest to the solutions—the better things will be."*

*"One entity or one sector won't be able to do it alone... we have to zoom out, take a holistic approach, and look at systemic issues that rest underneath the disparities that our communities face every day."*

*"Many people don't spend enough time translating what's really in our hearts into action. If we can bring our best selves to the world every day and help others do the same, we can change things fairly quickly."*

*"Not only do stewards need to have a deep capacity to learn, they need to help create the space for everyone they touch to be in a similar place of learning."*

# Hands (Things they Do)

## Many field-building stewards...

- Act with a combination of love and power to avoid the extremes of one without the other. As Martin Luther King Jr. observed: "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic."

- Reframe narratives and encourage people to change the stories of their own lives and places, individually and together.

- Enable others to lead and share responsibility for work that no one can do alone.

- Use creative arts to dig deeper into sticky issues, as well as to connect, commune, and communicate more fully.

- Apply skills gained in one setting (e.g., training, conferences, different jobs) to other areas over the course of their careers, building their capacity as boundary-spanning, nimble leaders who are able to play many roles at multiple scales.

- Design and make the case for sound policies that establish inclusive goals, shift incentives, set rules, or address the short-comings of a fragmented, inequitable system.

- Invest in the capacities needed to spread and sustain new ideas and practical innovations that drive long-term change.

- Regularly convene and join with fellow stewards to work across silos, confront wicked problems, develop shared priorities, and make sense of their wider work together.

- Work in particular places and contexts while seeking to adapt, replicate, or spread what works to other places and other areas of practice.

- Devise inventive ways to measure change and chart progress, especially in areas that are typically unseen or undervalued. They also look for existing venues or create new spaces where people can come together across differences and make "common sense" of experiences that are often difficult to see and interpret individually.

*"In a system that values counting, I work to honor diverse sources of knowledge. This helps me to spot patterns and build narratives with others in a way that is inclusive and engaging."*

# Tensions with Dominant Cultures and Established Organizations

**Field-building stewards tend to show up as savvy managers, entrepreneurs, or visionaries. Because they instinctively look for better ways to expand well-being, they often encounter tensions when working in dominant cultures and established organizations. They are quick to critique systems that are inhumane; and they easily spot flaws in prevailing policies, practices, and priorities that cause harm or lead to unfair adversity. At the same time, they routinely offer alternatives, some of which take hold as new norms. The most daring stewards sometimes launch new organizations or pursue counter-cultural ventures of their own design.**

This mix of insider-outsider roles gives field-building stewards a special vantage point from which to work. Some questions that guide their search for cultural and organizational leverage are the following.

- **Where are unexplored spaces to do this work?**
  Field-building stewards frequently look for unexplored spaces within and between organizations that are often not formally established. They must figure out how to nurture system change by moving inside and around existing organizational structures without becoming "boxed into a corner." Few organizations encourage this sort of exploration. However, when done well, stewards who usher organizations into new frontiers can gain respect as pioneers.

- **Where are "kindred spirits" within a large organization?**
  Stewards in large, established organizations often look for like-minded innovators elsewhere in the enterprise. Over time, those internal bonds help them to think more creatively and carve out new kinds of work precisely because there is a stronger base of support across their own organization. Of course, it is not always easy to know who one's true allies are, and missteps can have harsh consequences.

- **How can schools and workplaces better prepare people to become system stewards?**
  Mainstream education and conventional companies don't teach much about the realities of human system change—including ethics. Students and professionals tend to develop hyper-specialized, technical identities instead of seeing themselves as adaptive learners and "system citizens" who use multisolving and prototyping backed by strong moral principles to advance change.

  *"We're not focusing enough on teaching young people the kinds of skills that will help individuals and organizations meaningfully connect and work together."*

- **How can we enter into richer, more authentic exchanges?**
  Many changemakers want to mobilize more and more people around their own leadership. However, stewards who seek system change tend to concentrate on having deeper, more meaningful exchanges among those who care passionately about an issue, and who, in turn, will attract new stewards to the cause.

- **How could philanthropic and government investments be more supportive?**
  Mainstream funding relationships are marred by a stark mismatch between the norms that guide resource flows and the real-world requirements for stewarding complex systems. Funding relationships notoriously focus on addressing problems rather than building sustainable solutions. As a result, system change efforts are often funded through short-term cycles, making it challenging to integrate practices that are central to sustaining long-term action—such as building trust over time with and among residents and organizations. Stewards believe that valuing and adequately funding relationship- and trust-building efforts as part of normal operations could catapult their work to become far more effective and equitable.

  *"We vastly underestimate the amount of work it takes to build understanding and trust—both are critical for real progress in this space. The push to get things done and done quickly are twin factors that work to keep stewardship at a transactional level."*

For some individuals, exercising stewardship through interdependent relationships feels like a bold new way of doing business. To them, this way of working feels counter-cultural because it overturns the detached, transactional norms that prevail in many organizations. For others, particularly those from indigenous cultures or marginalized populations, values centered around resilience, interconnectedness, and shared prosperity are already familiar. Those views—even though ridiculed for centuries—are still alive in cherished traditions that view well-being as the positive consequence of a balanced, fair, and just system. Faced with increasingly serious systemic crises, many field-building stewards see a pressing need to nurture a renaissance of these time-tested stewardship values and practices. They are asking: how can institutions with dominant cultural world views evolve to become better shared stewards of well-being in a system fraught with injustice and fragmentation?

> **The major stumbling block to long term system change is the tunnel vision that leaders tend to have. Narrow perspectives have many stuck on a path toward short-sighted strategies and siloed approaches that don't place the multi-faceted needs of community and people first.**

> **We must let go of the norms, practices, structures that maintain a rigid, linear illusion of control with no regard for context. Developing better methods of sense making, collective learning, and means of amplifying promising solutions is critical.**

# Systemic Trends, Opportunities, and Obstacles

**Stewards virtually everywhere are contending with vast, systemic trends that are changing how they think about well-being across the country and around the world. The following themes surfaced prominently in both our interviews and literature scan, which sought to understand how stewards frame the landscape of systemic issues that either enhance or impede well-being (see Appendix 2, Table 2 for more details).**
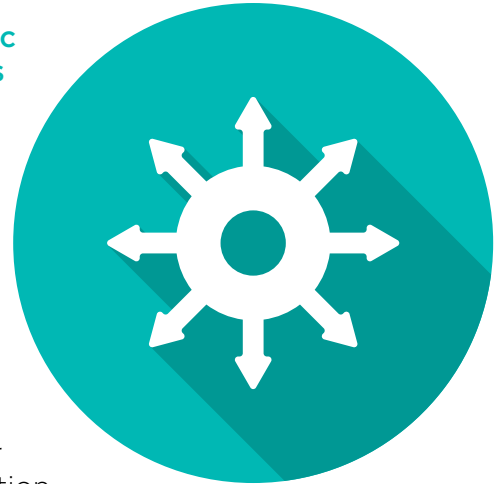
Conventional leaders may feel daunted by sweeping systemic changes, or attempt to separate them into discrete problems to solve. Field-building stewards, however, are often galvanized by even the most complex challenges. They regard such challenges as new frontiers, where they may engage with others to stand up for cherished values and shift the course of change in a healthier direction. Field-building stewards are both influenced by and seek to influence the most significant trends and opportunities of our time. Here is a summary of the things we heard and read from stewards about how they frame systemic challenges.

- **Massive threats to well-being:** All stewards in this study are focused on one or more systemic crises that threaten well-being on a massive scale—such as climate catastrophes, economic inequity, an aging population, partisan polarization, addiction, declining trust in institutions and in each other, loneliness, structural racism, or authoritarianism. They view these as key trends that occupy their attention and texture their work. Moreover, these and other threats have become even more conspicuous in the wake of the world's worst pandemic in more than a century (see the section below for a summary of responses to systemic crises in 2020, including Covid-19 and racial injustice).

- **Well-being as a guiding priority:** At the same time, stewards report a growing number of countries are establishing well-being as a nationwide priority, creating policy agendas and fiscal frameworks around well-being, along with cabinet-level offices for well-being. Several stewards draw inspiration from these and other examples that connect prosperity, democracy, and health at a national scale. Similarly, while the United States maintains the world's most expensive health care industry and many have been strongly devoted to the mistaken idea that health requires more health care, a growing number of leaders in the United States are paying more attention to the ways that social, economic, and environmental conditions affect the health and well-being of people and places.

- **Questioning the wisdom of unlimited growth:** While the U.S. lags other western countries, stewards see efforts underway to rethink traditional economic structures and to challenge the harmful impacts of a mindset devoted to unlimited growth. They point to emerging alternatives that feature goals beyond gross domestic product (such as well-being or genuine progress), smart growth, shared value, impact investing, just marketplaces, and stakeholder capitalism.

- **Reconnecting business to long-term social value:** Business leaders increasingly acknowledge that they must combine purpose and profit to generate long-term social value. Stewards see this shift from nearly 50 years of "shareholder" primacy as a potentially effective way to form new relationships with corporations, who might now have incentives to become strong champions (or at least constructive partners) in efforts to enhance well-being. Other related business trends include greater attention to anchor missions (among institutions like hospitals, universities, local governments, and community philanthropies that anchor regional economies), rising employee ownership, and co-determination (an approach to shared power that encourages businesses to appoint employees to corporate boards).

- **Rising ecological understanding:** Stewards see principles of sustainability and regeneration becoming more prominent in economic affairs through ideas such as regenerative capitalism and the circular economy. There is also a greater push toward thinking about climate resiliency as central to government and non-governmental action, in propositions such as the Green New Deal. And there are emerging efforts to legalize the rights of nature and the rights of future generations. Those most affected by environmental degradation are the same people most likely to push for change and most likely to bear the burden when industries change—all of which forms a call for environmental justice.

- **Civic life and good government:** There is growing attention to the impact of democracy on well-being, resulting in greater focus on civic muscle, civil discourse, and places for diverse people to come together physically and virtually. While stewards share the perspective that good governance itself can improve well-being, several point out that this is not yet a commonly held belief in the United States and there is much work to do to connect the character of civic life with other goals such as health or economic prosperity.

- **Localism and inclusive places:** Around the world, and increasingly in the United States, decision-making is being decentralized to smaller geographies, placing more power with smaller groups of people to direct their own lives. With this growing emphasis on local control, each locality faces difficult choices about what the future might look like there in line with local values and capacities. A related aspect of localism also emphasizes that places matter unto themselves. A growing body of evidence shows that well-designed public places are pivotal to all aspects of community life. Many stewards see their role as helping to craft common spaces (e.g., parks, farmers' markets, libraries, transit corridors, etc.) as inviting and inclusive venues for civic identity, socioeconomic mixing, contact with nature, recreation, and multicultural expression.

- **Polarization and media:** Stewards note the need to have both a shared national identity and local expression of our national identity. Yet polarizing influences in social media and in news sources challenge us to hold a shared national commitment to others. With the decline of local news outlets, growth of social media, and more diverse but siloed news sources, there is a greater tendency toward narrow perspectives that prevent us from creating a larger shared identity. While "othering" and partisan divisions seem more pronounced than ever, many are working to emphasize our shared experiences and common values. A growing number of innovators recognize the importance of local efforts to engage diverse actors across ideologies and ways of working. These local endeavors are bolstered by national efforts to weave our fraying social fabric, such as solutions-oriented journalism.

- **New technologies and big data may solve problems and create pitfalls:** Many innovators are excited by the promise of new technologies (e.g., workforce automation and artificial intelligence) as well as big data to solve certain problems. Others caution that those same innovations will present pitfalls that displace jobs, threaten privacy, reinforce technical thinking, and distract us from making public judgments with an overwhelming amount of data available for analysis. Stewards see a pressing need to gain greater foresight and create new ways to govern the effects of science and technology.

# Stewardship During 2020 Systemic Crises

Stewards express ambivalence about their efforts to navigate equitable system change while society grapples with multiple, layered systemic crises—including Covid-19, racial injustice, and economic recession. On one hand, they feel the brokenness of our shared systems has been laid bare, and that our shared experiences navigating these fraying systems has made it easier to articulate and spread a convincing case for large-scale system change. Additionally, individuals, organizations, and communities have stepped forward in ways that signal promising futures. Entire industries have rapidly shifted seemingly entrenched ways of working. And many communities mired in partisanship and deteriorating civic life have come together in solidarity to support the health and well-being of their most vulnerable.

On the other hand, stewards deeply appreciate that the pull of "business as usual" is strong, and times of crisis can cause some organizations and individuals to retreat into short-sighted, individualistic behaviors that do not serve common interests. Many note that a majority of large institutions—including corporations, government agencies, and philanthropies—are leaning into entrenched, self-preserving ways of working rather than emphasizing practices that support equitable system change, such as relationship-building, agility, and transparency. Others note that structural issues underpinning deep inequities are slow to change and ultimately require widespread shifts in culture. Stewards are skeptical that rapid efforts to alleviate urgent needs are not well-designed to couple with broader cultural shifts that would help individuals, organizations, and whole communities rebuild in a more just and equitable way.

To surpass these significant sticking points, stewards note that we all must let go of certain norms, practices, and structures—and work to let others emerge. Some of the most needed shifts include:

| What we must let go of: | What we must work toward: |
| --- | --- |
| Working to get back to normal | Building a new normal |
| Traditional leadership styles that overvalue hierarchy, linear project plans, and bottom-line thinking | Stewardship that centers interdependence, agility, and putting people at the core of solutions |
| Centering the voices of large, established organizations | Centering the wisdom of those who are often most resilient (and least resourced) |
| Mindsets that emphasize scarcity and zero-sum approaches | Compelling narratives of the shared values that we want to drive our systems |
| Unlimited market growth and shareholder primacy | New models for profit and service delivery |

While some feel stifled to move forward amidst significant and mounting uncertainties, a strong majority of stewards appreciate the need to lift up and sift through the tensions inherent in letting go of tired ways of working while embracing new mindsets and actions.

As one steward notes, "Crisis calls us to our muscle memory or to find new ways forward."  To propel sustainable progress, stewards appreciate the need to lean into the many characteristic "superpowers" they have built throughout their lives. Stewards especially value the importance of helping others to make sense of all that is going on so they can more clearly see their role and chart a path forward. They understand the importance of leading with honesty, vulnerability, and transparency to build relationships with new allies and foster shared trust. And, perhaps most importantly, they fuel hope based on a pragmatic belief that an expanding network of stewards, each with their own superpowers, can in fact create a better future where all people and places can thrive.

# Amplifying Stewardship as a Field of Practice

Although there are unmistakable signs that system stewardship is becoming a more prominent practice to expand well-being in a rapidly changing and inequitable world, those who do this work remain largely disparate, disconnected, and outmatched by the forces of injustice and systemic crises. The tension between these two realities raises many provocative questions for field-building stewards, such as:

- How can we avoid pursuing narrow, technical solutions when the barriers to well-being are known to be complex, adaptive challenges that cannot be "solved" by any single expert or organization?

- How do we resist quick fixes that are often insufficient or make matters worse, when we know that lasting success usually depends on sustained efforts to form trusting relationships, reinforce an inclusive sense of belonging with strong civic muscle, and expand equitable opportunities?

- How do we move from problem-focused approaches that are mechanistic and technocratic to solutions-focused approaches that are flexible and holistic?

- What will it take to listen to a more diverse mix of people and organizations who would enrich our collective understanding of stewardship as a practice? How can newcomers to stewardship humbly and respectfully learn from indigenous cultures and marginalized populations that have evolved stewardship values and practices over many centuries?

- How do we recognize one another's strengths and see the potential of what we could do with greater alignment instead of magnifying our differences?

- How can we co-create and leverage local agency, inclusion, and power for equitable well-being?

These and other field-building questions must be explored in ongoing dialogue with those who see system stewardship as a promising way to expand well-being in a troubled world. The stakes could hardly be higher because the strength of our shared stewardship will likely determine whether we sink deeper into an adversity spiral, or whether we find pragmatic ways to create the vital conditions that all people need to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

**You can learn more about [Amplifying Stewardship Together](#) on the ReThink Health website.**

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## APPENDIX 1
# Contributors and Selection Criteria

## Selection Criteria

Contributors to this study included a mix of field-building stewards working at the local and national levels who:

- Amplify stewardship for regional well-being as an organizational theory and strategy;

- Are well-networked individuals within well-networked organizations;

- Together, work across many areas of practice, including the economy, ecology, education, democracy, placemaking, and health;

- Exhibit complimentary "superpowers" to other stewards;

- Are working to solve long-term rather than immediate issues related to resource-constraints; and

- Together, are diverse in race, gender, and age.

## Contributors

Individual Interviews (N=19), Group Interviews of Three or More (N=10)

**Kia Baker**
Raleigh/Southeast Raleigh Promise

**Mateus Baptista**
Panasonic Corporation of North America

**Becky Bartoszek**
Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce

**Amit Bouri**
The Global Impact Investing Network

**Craig Brammer**
Network for Regional Health Improvement

**Jane Ellery**
Project for Public Spaces

**Kirk Emerson**
Institute of the Environment, Univ. of Arizona

**Grant Ervin**
City of Pittsburgh

**Joanna Frank**
Center for Active Design

**Jamie Hand**
ArtPlace America

**Ulcca Hansen**
Boundless Education

**Jennifer Ito**
Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, University of Southern California

**Cailean Kok**
Project for Public Spaces

**Thomas Linzey**
Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund

**Stanley Litow**
Duke and Columbia Universities

**Elizabeth Lutz**
The Health Collaborative

**Tony Moore**
Gathering Place

**Adair Mosley**
Pillsbury United Communities

**Frank Nam**
Seattle Foundation

**Tyler Norris**
Well Being Trust

**Gracy Olmstead**
Writer and Journalist

**Gregory Paulson**
Trenton Health Team

**Beth Rabbit**
The Learning Accelerator

**Julie Rusk**
City of Santa Monica

**Kostas Skordas**
Appalachian Regional Commission

**Nathaniel Smith**
Partnership for Southern Equity

**Tina Smith**
Just Growth

**Laura Torchio**
Project for Public Spaces

**John Wood, Jr.**
Braver Angels

## APPENDIX 2
# Rapid Literature Scan

To place the interviews with field-building stewards in a wider context, we also scanned public and professional literature, looking for signs that show how innovators across the field frame contemporary systemic challenges. This rapid review focused on systemic trends, opportunities, and obstacles that either expand or impede well-being in areas such as the economy, ecology, placemaking, democracy, and health. Search terms are included in Table 1, and themes and examples are included in Table 2.

## Table 1. Search Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Civic commons | Open democracy |
| Civic engagement | Placemaking |
| Civic well-being | Placemaking + equity |
| Deliberative democracy | Regional health + rural health |
| Gentrification | Regional health + social need |
| Governance + well-being | Representative behavior + well-being |
| Health + community | Smart growth |
| Health equity | Social determinants |
| Health in all policies | Social determinants + social needs |
| Health reform + regional health | Social determinants of health |
| Healthy communities | Social needs + health |
| Hospital + social determinants | Targeted universalism |
| Institutional trust + public confidence | Well-being budget |
| New social compact | Wellness + equity |

## Table 2. Themes and Examples

| Trends, Opportunities, and Obstacles | Example/Explanation |
|---|---|
| Loss of trust and confidence in public institutions and political actors is trending in US and around the world. | Pew surveys on public trust in government<br><br>Pew surveys show that even newer institutions such as tech leaders and companies have very low levels of trust |
| Despite above trend, work is being done to mend social ties and improve trust between individuals in the US. | Weave project from the Aspen Institute is focusing on interpersonal ties |
| People in other western countries (especially in the EU) have a greater appreciation for the role of governments in promoting health and well-being, some with specific agendas for and cabinet offices of well-being. | Promotion of the Wellbeing Economy in EU states<br><br>Interest in developing "wellbeing budgets" and assessing the impact of laws on wellbeing in the UK parliament |
| There is some work beginning in the US around civic engagement and well-being. | RWJF convened a working group of various youth engagement groups and found a large range and breadth of work in this area with a focus on health equity<br><br>RAND has taken a look at the causal effects of civic engagement on health and well-being |
| Governance structures play a large role in who has the power in regions to implement health-based initiatives. | Some communities have a greater trust in government, so public health agencies or other government agencies may hold greater influence and power, whereas other communities may prefer private actors in this role. Consideration of community-level beliefs will help see what initiatives or perspectives are effective in a region |
| A growing body of research shows that good governance itself can improve health and well-being beyond that of just improving the economy, but this has not become a dominant belief in the US yet. | OECD working paper on the effects of good governance on the economy of wellbeing |
| New concepts emphasize inclusion and interdependence, counteracting tendencies towards individualistic or narrow approaches from government and other institutions. | Targeted universalism as a focus of work from the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society and the push for a New Social Compact that recognizes a shared humanity among individuals |

| Trends, Opportunities, and Obstacles | Example/Explanation |
|---|---|
| Further exploration and focus on ideas of local governance and sovereignty in response to larger international trends. | New Localism as a lever to improve economic competitiveness, social inclusion and opportunity; a renewed public life; the challenge of diversity; and the imperative of environmental sustainability |
| rinciples of sustainability and regeneration are present in both the ecology and economic domains through ideas such as regenerative capitalism/ development/ economics. | Regenerative capitalism framework |
| There is a greater political push toward thinking about ecology and the environment as central to government action. | Green New Deal bridging ecology, economy, democracy, and health together |
| There also is a growing movement toward the "Rights of Nature" and understanding that the environment and health are inextricably linked. | Lake Eerie Bill of Rights (in line with the Rights of Nature) and other local bill of rights initiatives |
| As mentioned in the Green New Deal, with the change in economic activity needed for environmental sustainability, careful consideration of just transitions is needed. | Shorter-term action networks (such as the Just Transition Fund) and longer-term thinking (such as the Great Transition Initiative) are looking to transition individuals earlier and more actively using bottom up approach |
| There is growing recognition that low-income and historically marginalized populations will be most heavily impacted by environmental degradation—and that they are pushing for change. | WeACT focuses on people of color and low-income residents of communities and actively pulls them into community-level decision-making |
| There is much discussion now around the role of corporations in society—are they profit maximizers or do they need to incorporate social values? | Business Round Table statement on corporate role |
| Other countries have greater incorporation of worker well-being in corporate structures; there is some attention to this in the US, but concept is seen as a fringe idea, with other approaches in the spotlight for greater focus on workers. | Certified B Corporations specifically call for worker well-being in their missions |
| There are some international examples of the integration of well-being into government-level decision-making. | Australian Sustainable Finance Initiative |
| There is a business-sector push for sustainable financing that takes a long-term view with an emphasis on financial, social, and environmental returns. | Sustainable Finance Framework and focus by some financial institutions on this new model |
| There are efforts underway to improve local economies by promoting social cohesion and well-being. | Promotion of Opportunity Zones and Smart Growth Principles. Using the Economy of Wellbeing concept to produce greater economic returns in the future |
| There are attempts to answer the question: how can we reinstitute the common space as the center of civic life to promote of civic engagement and connection across diverse populations and pursue environmental sustainability and value creation? | Reimagining the Civic Commons focused on five major cities to improve civic engagement and community connection |
| Using connections between producers and consumers to produce policies that increase social, economic, and ecological sustainability | Project for Public Spaces work on farmers markets highlighting their role in community cohesion<br><br>Community Farmers Alliance in Kentucky is using this model to improve the food system in the state |
| There is growing attention to the socioeconomic determinants of health and how the social and economic systems surrounding individuals have a strong influence on the health of communities. | Accountable Communities for Health (ACHs) are community or regionally lead collaborations between healthcare, social safety net providers, and community groups to ensure the health of their residents |
| There is tension within the health care community around the role of health care organizations (clinics, hospitals) in addressing social determinants of health. | Some models of care are making steps toward social determinants due to their payment structures (Kaiser Permanente, some ACO models, other capitated health plans). Others are slow to embrace the trend |
| Large health care organizations and institutions are investing in their communities in new ways that influence the social determinants of health. | Kaiser housing development plan and other initiatives that are moving out of the traditional health realms |
| Even smaller entities are pushing for measuring and evaluating social determinants more systematically. | Aetna and NQF collaborative to identify best practices in addressing social determinants |
| Certain communities have adopted regional approaches to health improvement, understanding that health is determined more by social factors than actual health care provision. | Bay Area Groups (BARHII and BALI) focused on health equity, with the inclusion of community actors and government bodies |
| Growing attention is being given to the fact that health and well-being are affected by a range of policies, not just those related to the health care system. | Health in All Policies (HiAP) recognizes that agencies outside of health agencies have a significant impact on disease prevention and health promotion |
| Placemaking sits at the center of each of the domains and acts as a linkage, bringing these domains down to the level of organizations and communities. | The use of public markets and farmers markets that bring together disparate communities (urban purchasers and rural producers) together in a market (economy) for local/organic produce. These are often co-located with initiatives to promote better diets and health and connect consumers with the land around them (ecology and health) |
| The increasingly recognized intersection between ecology and the economy is becoming more salient in the US. | Greater emphasis on how to include individuals in economic transitions associated with changes needed for ecological sustainability (in contrast to a focus on how the economy will be affected negatively by ecological considerations |
| Perspectives about governance and trust in communities inform stewardship efforts | In one interview, we discuss how a change from a legal/ technocratic perspective to a community-engagement perspective allows an organization to make sustainable, long-term change through the leadership of the community |