ClimateWorks Foundation:
Lessons in Leadership and Learning
Executive Summary

November 2016

I. Preface

This case is part of a teaching series developed by pfc Social Impact Advisors. The case will be featured in a book to be published by Stanford University Press titled, "Good, Evil, Wicked: The Art, Science, and Business of Giving." One thousand interviews with global leaders in North America, Europe, and eight emerging economies inform an anthology of 20 cases that examine the strategies used to tackle "Wicked Problems." Berkeley professors Horst W.J. Rittel and Melvin Webber first used this term in the 1970s to describe large, messy, "wickedly complex," and systemic social problems that include many of the most challenging issues we face today. "Good, Evil, Wicked: The Art, Science, and Business of Giving" is the first comprehensive study on how philanthropy, business, and the social sectors are mutually and simultaneously transforming each other, blurring lines, and hybridizing business and social objectives, actors, resources, systems, and partnerships. This plurality of identities working in the same space of philanthropy mirrors the oftentimes perplexing and entangled complexity of Wicked Problems. The immensity and intractability of problems like climate change has summoned a new paradigm -– one where solutions straddle business and social sectors, marrying tools and perspectives from each into collaborative responses. It requires new kinds of leaders and learning frameworks. pfc Social Impact Advisors helps develop these new skills and perspectives through its distinct Deliberate Leadership model.

According to the World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Report, poverty and the systemic and devastating consequences of income disparity; climate change and the volatility of energy supplies; food and water scarcity; and cyber-attacks are among the threats that keep world leaders across sectors awake at night.[i] The Wicked Problem framework offers leaders better tools to tackle these seemingly intractable challenges. Since Wicked Problems were first described, much has been learned about what it takes to address the world's most difficult problems successfully. We have gathered these lessons together under the rubric of Deliberate Leadership, a suite of tools and approaches used in business and social sectors that empower leaders to deal with complexity more effectively.

Because each problem is unique, leaders must choose their approach carefully. Should they command and control because they face a crisis? Can they manage the problem by calling on previous successful experiences? Do they face a challenge that requires them to be collaborative and adaptive leaders, adjusting their strategy based on a clear-eyed understanding of what is and isn't working? Can they hold to their vision while putting their preconceived notions aside, recognizing the strengths and limits of their expertise, and seeking solutions where one might least expect them, including within communities affected by the problem?

Deliberate Leaders, as explored in this series, are leaders who act with intention and recognize that they must accept not only the risk of the challenge ahead, but also the consequences of their actions. If Wicked Problems were easy, they would have been solved. With Wicked Problems, it is a given that there will be mistakes. What's important is to learn, adapt, and move forward. The series of cases pulls together examples of Deliberate Leaders worldwide to help their peers solve the biggest challenges of our time. The goal of the case studies is not to prescribe answers, but stimulate discussion.

II. Background

In 2007, leading private foundations the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation made a high-risk, US$1 billion investment over five years to solve a crisis for which there might be no solution: greenhouse gas emissions. They were guided by one of their North Star principles—a bedrock belief in supporting talented leadership to take big risks to solve intransigent, long-term problems. Their grand vision was articulated in a strategy document called "Design to Win." This document and the organization (ClimateWorks Foundation) created to implement its recommendations, elicited strong opinions from top leaders within the initiative and outside it that described it as both "brilliant" and "an epic failure." Like most complex phenomena, the truth is somewhere in between.

In 2007, there could not have been a better stage set to galvanize world leaders when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) announced that the earth was warming due to human activity and would result in irreversible and catastrophic injury to the planet.[ii] That year, the US alone was recovering from four devastating hurricanes; the IPCC and Al Gore won the Nobel Prize for efforts to raise awareness about the earth's rising temperatures; and An Inconvenient Truth, a documentary developed by Al Gore to raise awareness about global warming, won the Academy Award. Yet, little coordinated commitment among international leaders to halt earth's rising temperatures transpired.

ClimateWorks Foundation

In this context, key philanthropists, namely the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, mobilized. They reached deep into their pockets and across their networks and were fueled by the unacceptability of doing nothing to abate climate change. In 2007, the Hewlett and Packard foundations, joined by Doris Duke Charitable, McKnight, Energy, Joyce, and Oak foundations, commissioned a comprehensive strategy to address climate change. The result—a document entitled Design to Win (DTW), created by the consulting firm California Environmental Associates (CEA), offered philanthropists an approach that its authors believed could "turn the tide against global warming."[iii]

The 2007 DTW report identified which sectors and places in the world produced the most greenhouse gases. It also outlined a policy-driven plan to cut those emissions significantly—by 30 gigatons by 2030. An 11-member international advisory committee, a thorough survey of the scientific and economic literature, and the input of more than 150 of the world's "leading experts on energy and climate change"[iv] targeted power, industry, building, transportation, and forestry as priority sectors. It focused on the US, Europe, China, and India as priority regions, plus Brazil and Indonesia for their forest preservation efforts. For each sector and region, it laid out broad policy objectives to meet specific emissions reduction goals tailored to each region's context and strengths.

To operationalize the "30x30" strategy, ClimateWorks Foundation (CWF) would implement DTW by focusing on three activities: support existing NGOs with knowledge of local contexts; create nation-specific expertise through a network of Regional Climate Foundations (RCFs) to facilitate grantmaking targeting policy reform; and build international Best Practice Networks (BPNs) for sharing knowledge and innovation quickly. The "hub" of the organization would be located in San Francisco where staff would manage strategy, network infrastructure and grantmaking, communications, and fundraising, as well as oversee evaluation headquarters. The "spokes" would be based in the priority regions. However, while policy-focused RCFs were operating in the US, Europe, China, and India (and later in Latin America), not one of the technically-focused BPNs was based outside of the US or Europe. This begs the question: can a Silicon-Valley based organization really envision and effectuate a global strategy for climate change?

This is one of the many questions that are explored in the vignettes presented in the following case. As a whole, the vignettes express deep reflection on the first five years (2007-2012) of CWF, referred to as "CWF 1.0". After a year of tumultuous change and recalibration, "CWF 2.0" emerged in 2013. It is a transformed organization with organizational adjustments that align with the deep learning from and examination of failures and flaws in CWF 1.0. CWF 2.0 is no longer a top-down organization with sweeping policy solutions. It has a funders' table, for one thing, embodying and enacting a commitment to collaboration.

Wicked Problems

Climate change is a Wicked Problem; some would even say Super Wicked. "Wicked" doesn't mean inherently evil—a Wicked Problem doesn't wear devil horns and a forked tail. But Wicked Problems are devilishly complex. A Wicked Problem won't go away using conventional problem-solving methods. It has developed immunity to outworn thinking.

The best problems humans face these days are wicked. They are the best because Wicked Problems catalyze new patterns of thinking and behaving around an assumption that problems are complex, and solutions are borne from sensitivity to complexity. If, as Einstein noted, "Problems cannot be solved at the level of thinking that created them," then Wicked Problems hand us the opportunity to think never-before-thought thoughts, unravel the knottiest knots, and expand everyone's thinking to a new level. Once we stretch to a new size, we can never go back to smaller versions of thinking and acting.

Deliberate Leadership

The model of Deliberate Leadership was developed by pfc Social Impact Advisors and its partners as a thinking-and-acting framework for organizations addressing Wicked Problems head-on. Deliberate Leadership calls for more servants and fewer heroes, for more humility and less hubris, and for more curiosity and less knowing. Anchored by seven core principles and three organizational processes, Deliberate Leadership summons an individual's and an organization's material and intangible resources—its financial, technical, cultural, and imaginative stores—for learning and doing.

In the following vignettes (the core narrative of the ClimateWorks Foundation case study), key actors in the CWF story are interviewed about their experiences in the founding, scaling, and implementation of CWF's mission during the period of 2007-2012. Each vignette presents a theme—from how the Wicked Problem of climate change was defined to choices about strategy, organization, and leadership. Using the concepts in the Deliberate Leadership model, the experiences of these actors are analyzed for the benefit of other organizations, individuals, and students tackling the world's wickedest problems.

III. Core Concepts

1. Critical, Tame, and Wicked Problems. Rittel and Webber described "wickedly" complex social problems as large, messy, complex, and systemic, and include many of the most challenging issues we face today. Some scholars distinguish between Critical, Tame, and Wicked Problems. The first are urgent and require command-and-control leadership (as in "the house is on fire"). The second are technical and have been solved many times before and require technical expertise (as in "the road must be built"). The third are always being approached for the first time and require adaptive leadership.

2. Super Wicked Problems. Academics, advocates, and policy makers describe "Super-Wicked Problems" as problems that have all the characteristics of a Wicked Problem with added challenges: "Time is running out; those who cause the problem also seek to provide a solution; the central authority needed to address them is weak or non-existent; and irrational discounting occurs that pushes responses into the future." There is a "deficiency in our technical and social capabilities to be able to deal with a phenomenon with multiple sources, actors, stakeholders, cross-scale influences (externalities), and linkages."[v]

3. Deliberate Leadership responds to Wicked Problems and enacts seven core leadership characteristics (7 C's): Courage to embrace risk and live with the ambiguity; Collaboration to seek out and listen to divergent viewpoints; Community to build solutions together from the ground up; Candor to speak and hear the truth about what is working and what isn't; Creativity to imagine a new future and move beyond the constraints of the past; Capital to examine how financial and non-financial resources are invested and impact is analyzed; and Compassion to understand how empathy and partnership, not ego, impact the power dynamics within and surrounding an organization.

4. The learning organization practices at least three cycles of self-examination: The three phases of organizational learning and change are: Phase I—Partner and Plan. In this phase, stakeholders and partners are mapped out, deep listening with communities occurs, threats and opportunities are analyzed, and a theory of change and learning framework are developed. In Phase II—Act and Assess—the framework is implemented and impact, numbers, and nuance are assessed within a reflective assessment culture that rewards candor and risk. In Phase III—Reflect and Recalibrate—open learning with partners occurs. Integrating frank feedback and reflection, the organization recalibrates and renews its strategies and assumptions.

IV. Key Learning

1. Organizational Strategy as Priority: Mark Burget, former CWF Chief Operating Officer
When building an organization to create immediate impact, how do you balance the need for action with the need for organizational structure? According to Burget, "To take on an issue as big as climate change, you need both a substantive strategy and an organizational strategy, and both have to be well thought out, well designed, and well managed."[vi] CWF invested $45 million with McKinsey to develop strategy, but parallel efforts to "build an organization that's enduring" were also needed in CWF 1.0. One of the deep lessons of CWF 1.0 is that **organizational development is as important as strategy**.

There are some key questions to ask about governance, roles, and accountability when developing an organization. These include: What is the optimal governance model for an intermediary organization with multiple funders? What is the relationship between the intermediary's senior management, its board of directors, and the funders? Developing **clarity on governance structures, expectations, and lines of accountability** was under-enunciated in CWF 1.0. As Pam Matson, a current CWF board member who joined in 2011, recalls, "There was no clear definition of what a board member should be nor clear expectations about the board's role. There was such a start-up mentality with a very strong leader, and the board was trying to support the launch much more than the ongoing management."[vii]

Burget expresses that CWF 1.0 tended to be organizationally over-complicated and that it did not recognize the **value of simple**: "We built an organization that was more complex than it needed to be from the beginning.... We thought we had to do it ourselves, and it takes a lot of work to start something new—we did that with 10 new organizations.... It was too complex organizationally…."[viii] Start-up organizations addressing Wicked Problems must address the question: How do you avoid unnecessary complexity and face internal and external challenges with integrity and resilience?

In an organization like CWF that relies on networks of teams to implement activities globally, Burget also emphasizes the **time it takes to build a team**. According to Burget, you build teams by building "a shared outcome that you all embrace."[ix] And no matter how counterintuitive, he emphasizes the importance of **hiring people you don't know with skills you don't know you need**. Do this in order to avoid creating an "echo-chamber" of groupthink.

At all stages of organizational development, and especially during start-up while protocols are still maturing and sometimes informal, it must be remembered that **integrity is key to organizational health**. In order to build trust between partners, the organization must be able to demonstrate flawless accountability. Burget recalls that, while both explicit and tacit accountability systems were in place, CWF 1.0 could have done a better job communicating and assuring accountability: "…when questions came up very early on about how we were managing, I wish I'd known how crucial it was to send a message of impeccable character."[x]

Finally, at the helm of an organization as complex as CWF 1.0, **the roles and skills of leaders** are crucial in developing balanced leadership composed of both vision-builders and pragmatic and skilled managers. Former Packard board member Lynn Orr captures the insights offered by other interviewees, "Organizations start with visionary leaders; without them nothing would have happened. However, it is often true that the visionaries are not the right ones to handle the nitty-gritty of getting it to happen."[xi]

2. Courage to Embrace Risk, Threats, and Failure: Walter Hewlett, Hewlett Foundation co-founder and former board chair

How should leaders embrace risk and create a culture that allows for failure and openly discusses threats? Walter Hewlett believes that "The solutions to serious problems are seldom known with anything close to certainty. The Foundation must therefore be prepared to experiment and take risks…. [It] also requires a willingness to acknowledge and learn from failure."[xii] Some types of stakes exceed the typical risk equations. For the leaders of CWF 1.0, **the risk of doing nothing** was one of those and simply too great: "I think the feeling of the board was the risk of what would happen to the world if nothing were done. It wasn't the risk of success or failure.... We didn't think that, if we didn't do something, somebody else would, so we could sit back and wait to see what others would do. We felt that something dramatic really needed to be done...."[xiii]

After mobilizing consensus to act, the more familiar risks of philanthropy came next—namely, **the risk that other funders may not join**. What are the obstacles in creating pooled resources in an intermediary like CWF? Is collaboration a problem for the field? Hewlett recollects the operative belief in the early days of CWF 1.0: "If we got it started, other money would come in…. You might in hindsight say that was an unrealistic expectation."

There was also the risk that CWF 1.0 was gearing up to slay a dragon that might never die. **The risk of an open-ended problem**—a very expensive and complex open-ended problem—was real. The resolution of a Wicked Problem cannot be scheduled, and managing this message to a board fueled by the belief that sufficient technical expertise could deliver a solution, was challenging. Hewlett: "There were some differences among board members about how long it would take. Some board members were a little irritated when we agreed to do this and we didn't have a wind-down strategy."[xiv]

One type of risk CWF readily accepted was **investing in entrepreneurs when placing big bets**. As an analogue, they were prepared to accept the inevitable **failures and adaptations** that would naturally follow. How can philanthropy encourage candor and celebrate failure as a natural step to innovation? Hewlett recalls this welcoming of entrepreneurial innovation and risk, "We needed a vision that early entrepreneurs have that drives things forward.... We are always in a state of learning and transition. It is not a well-oiled machine. We are a different foundation than we were 10 or 20 years ago and in another 20 years we will be different again."[xv]

Risk and failure are basic aspects of the calculus of philanthropy, but so is scenario-planning. While CWF displayed a healthy attitude toward risk, interviewees acknowledge a lack of **"what-if" and scenario-planning**. "CWF did not think through or develop different scenarios or alternative pathways…. Neither did it ask 'what if' around other emerging issues and technologies and how it would consider or accommodate such emergent events."[xvi] Several interviewees mentioned the lack of scenario-planning and imagining of other outcomes as a major weakness of CWF.

3. Building Strong Community through Diverse Collaboration: Kate Wolford, President of The McKnight Foundation

How do you correct the power imbalance between funders and grantee partners and allow people to speak honestly without fear of retribution? In the face of complex Wicked Problems where there is no single solution, the tendency is to default to a command-and-control crisis response or to import legions of experts. However, as two scholars of leadership, Ron Heifetz and Donald Laurie, explained in a path breaking article in *Harvard Business Review* in 2001, "Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite but in the **collective intelligence** of employees at all levels."[xvii]

Mapping the constellation of **community partners** in your niche helps visualize potential partnerships and understand the terrain. Where power disparities exist, the voice of the affected community may too easily be lost in a strategy that prioritizes expertise, even while their insights can be critical in dealing with complex problems. Heifetz urges leaders to give voice to the powerless and listen to people who are not power brokers, but who are "positive deviants." Those are the people within every organization, community, and society who do things a little differently, innovate quietly (or not), and discover unexpected solutions.[xviii] Knowing the community of partners and valorizing **local knowledge in local contexts** correct power imbalances and also help organizations discover **what message works** in each community.

Listening and **fostering ownership** among collaborators were commonly noted areas of weakness for CWF 1.0, and true for both funder partners and community partners. As one Latin American interview participant remarks, "You can never be completely successful in anything if you are not engaged in populations that are most affected. They need to be engaged. We said [to CWF], 'We could help you access them. We work with the larger organizations [who] don't usually have access to local populations.....' We offered, but nothing happened."[xvix] The McKnight Foundation, an early funder partner in CWF, left the collaborative in its fourth year for many reasons. Ownership, understood as having the ability to contribute to decision-making, was a critical issue for The McKnight Foundation and a primary reason they pulled their commitment. Kate Wolford, President of The McKnight Foundation explained, "We believed we could offer assistance in organizational development and in network building. Our foundation had extensive experience in creating diverse collaborations and networks. We kept offering, but nothing happened."[xx] How can CWF 2.0 stakeholders tap diverse viewpoints and respect each other's perspectives without losing momentum and effectiveness?

When meaningful bi-directional and lateral communication happens between those with power and with the affected communities in which they work, a continual process of **learning, adapting, and alignment** can take place. This is one of the lessons learned that has carried over into CWF 2.0. Initially, CWF did not incorporate feedback from its Indian affiliates that carbon reduction could not happen outside of the discourse of energy poverty in India. Poverty was outside of the rubric of Design to Win, a gap in the imagination of CWF for the Indian context. However, these interviewees report CWF has developed a new flexibility that accommodates this kind of contextualized understanding. The ongoing question for CWF will be: In what ways should the culture of philanthropy change to benefit from business world lessons about valuing "collective intelligence"?

4. Align Expectations and Values: Hal Harvey, former CEO of CWF

When working in a fast paced environment, what are some of the processes that need to be in place to assure that the expectations of the multiple stakeholders stay in alignment? In complex organizations addressing Wicked Problems there are "100 ways to get it wrong and very few ways to get it right,"[xxi] says Harvey. Aligned leadership is an ongoing maintenance job. It can be nurtured and, just as quickly, it can break down. CWF, for example, experienced strong alignment with leadership and funders in its initial stages but witnessed a breakdown of alignment in key areas over time.

Harvey reflects on misalignment due to **no clear understanding of timing**. He mentions that clearer messaging about the potentially slow pace of change, what he refers to as the "law of philanthropy"—that "there are no significant social changes happening in...one or two or even three years…"—would have helped manage expectations about the tempo of programming.[xxii]

Another area of misalignment was on **how much control funders would retain**. How can funders balance their need for accountability against the urge to influence the activities of the intermediaries? Harvey, for example, expressed that CWF "dramatically underestimated the extent to which the funders wanted to control," resulting in tensions that ultimately, as Harvey described, "ended the model."[xxiii]

A hub-and-spoke organization like CWF requires strong alignment across teams that are geographically widespread. How can leaders ensure that teamwork, not competition, occurs within networks? Here again was a breakdown in alignment as **competition rather than shared goals** in the CWF network exacerbated tensions among teams.

Harvey recognizes that CWF underestimated the importance of organizational sovereignty for each organization in the network: "Once people think they have a budget for work, that's their floor. They've written that into everything, it's in their psychology."[xxiv]

Misalignment on **fundraising expectations** also became an area of tension within CWF 1.0. Raising funds was included as a success metric, and, according to Harvey, it was, "a colossal mistake. The amount of time I spent dealing with funder requests exceeded everything else, and, when you're trying to put something together this ambitious, this fast, with this much money, you can't afford to spend time on that because you're taking your eye off the main goal."[xxv]

A final area of misalignment was around CWF's **definitions of success**. When some partners perceive high-profile activity as the main success metric, and others value incremental, operational, and technical gains, then motivation, strategy, and reward will be asynchronous among leadership.

Organizations tackling complex problems in fast-paced environments must ask themselves: How can the shared understanding of goals and alignment of values be refreshed once the first flush of enthusiasm has disappeared in the realities of working to solve Wicked Problems? **Communication and realignment must be leveraged to refresh and renew both goals and commitment**. While CWF goes on in its 2.0 version, and the accomplishments of 1.0 will produce long-lasting results in terms of future carbon abatements, the divergence of views that occurred during CWF's first phase raises key questions for the philanthropic field.

5. Recalibration: Carol Larson and Larry Kramer, presidents of the Packard and Hewlett foundations, respectively:

As Peter Drucker once said, "Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action." Effective organizational self-examination will drill down to the level of beliefs and motivations. Harvard scholar Chris Argyris describes a deeper, more adaptive learning framework called "double-loop learning."[xxvi] It recognizes that program outcomes are shaped by values, beliefs, and assumptions, as well as by strategy. In contrast to double-loop learning, single-loop learning refers to an outcomes-based learning framework. It asks one question, "Did we do what we intended?" CWF 1.0 was mostly a single-loop organization. In this vignette, Larson and Kramer engage in double-loop reflection.

Larson firmly believes that Packard's commitment was a clear case of **values shaping culture, strategy, and commitment**. Packard's values of taking big risks on important issues, supporting talented leaders, and collaborating with partners are clearly aligned with its commitment to CWF: "We seek to identify talented leaders, give them a lot of support, and then let them lead. We do not micro-manage." Moreover, says Larson, "We have a high tolerance for risk and take pride in making significant investments," and "We also are committed to collaboration. In the case of ClimateWorks, we had a strong relationship with Hewlett."[xxvii]

But the alignment of values to strategy and action did not preclude the expectation that both failure and learning would be inevitable features of CWF. Larson explains, "It is a Wicked Problem, and you go into it recognizing that your approach can fail."[xxviii] This tolerance of failure also indicated sensitivity to **when to recalibrate**. In the case of CWF 1.0, both Kramer and Larson wonder if they recalibrated soon enough: Larson acknowledges that it took "a series of traumas—lack of success at Copenhagen and fundraising and the big recession hit—before Packard joined the chorus to say we needed a new model for CWF." Kramer adds, "We had lots of eyes on this...foundation staff watching, Packard board members and Hewlett board members. We still didn't get it right."[xxix] Larson believes that having closer proximity to CWF would have helped with recalibration. (This is in contrast to Hal Harvey's belief that a more hands-off approach by funders would have helped, demonstrating the misalignment on funders' control.)

Larson and Kramer reflect on **lessons about organizational structures and lifecycles**, including tensions created by CWF's insistence on pooling funding, which did nothing to assuage partners' concerns over **funder sovereignty**. Overall, the greatest weakness of CWF 1.0 was its inflexibility. Says Kramer: "The process was cumbersome and lacked adaptability and wasn't nimble enough to change to accommodate changing conditions…." He continues, "The biggest problem with CWF 1.0 was lack of flexibility, but, when dealing with Wicked Problems, you can't beat it to death. At a point you just need to adjust things as we go, and that requires a structure that will be adaptable."[xxx] How then can leaders create a learning environment where partners and collaborators can safely challenge core beliefs and values, encouraging recalibration and flexible models? Larson suggests that relationship building to promote porous learning, **partnering, and collaboration is key**, "ClimateWorks was not porous to innovation and was pretty US-centric in its staffing."[xxxi] She believes that under ClimateWorks 2.0 many of these gaps have been filled.

Both Kramer and Larson concede to the importance of on-going **evaluation and real-time adaptation**. Organizations must value evaluation as a form of self-examination and a pragmatic tool for course correction. Yet, CWF 1.0 did not give significant weight to rigorous evaluation and organizational learning in its early days. Of 11 interviewees who mentioned evaluation, all noted the relatively minor role it played in CWF 1.0. Kramer candidly reflects, "Evaluation...was underfunded, and it wasn't taken seriously." But he points out that things are changing: "There is a sea change happening in philanthropy. Funders are taking evaluation more seriously. Hewlett is building evaluation into the beginning of projects...."[xxxii] An ongoing challenge for organizations seeking social change is to incentivize listening, learning, and adaptation internally.

6. Leadership in the Face of Wicked Problems: "What kind of problem was climate change?" and "How did the definition of the problem also define and influence the culture, program, and operations of CWF?"

"Climate change, unlike a lot of large-scale problems, is actually one that is solvable. It is also one where we know what we need to do." — Hal Harvey, New York Times[xxxiii]

"[In the corporate world] we put at least half of our risk analysis into political and social risks, because that's what gets you, not the engineering risks. — Chad Holliday, Chairman, Royal Dutch Shell and former CWF Board Member [xxxiv]

"In a system you can't control and can't fully understand, take your best shot, be open and willing to change, and don't forget that with systems, structures, complexity, data, it comes down to people."— Chris DeCardy, Vice President and Director of Programs, Packard Foundation[xxxv]

Here we have—in one ecosystem—three different voices representing three potential solutions to the Super Wicked Problem of climate change. This exemplifies what Oxford professor of science and civilization Steve Rayner has said about Wicked Problems: "We are not dealing with problems where we're just uncertain, we're dealing with problems where people know what the answer is. Different people know what the answer is. The trouble is the answers they have are just irreconcilable with each other." In the face of Wicked Problems, Rayner continues, there is a "deficiency in our technical and social capabilities to be able to deal with a phenomenon with multiple sources, actors, stakeholders, cross-scale influences (externalities), and linkages."[xxxvi]

Deliberate Leadership tries to address this deficiency by developing leaders who can balance diverse, irreconcilable viewpoints and experiences in a continually evolving, progressive response. Reconciling diverse perspectives in order to craft a plan of action requires a leader who can give up power and live with ambiguity.

Language shapes culture. How one defines a problem shapes the response, imbues relationships and discourse, and creates culture and organization. CWF defined climate change as both a crisis and a tame problem with a managed solution rather than as a crisis and a Wicked Problem. The language of its strategy "Design to Win" suggests a battle, a strategic game, a complex problem that can be solved with just the right technical gambit. This language shaped how CWF was structured and managed, how it collaborated, partnered, and implemented. It was language for a tame problem and a crisis that did not correspond to the true nature of the problem: ceaselessly complex Super-Wickedness.

Related to CWF 1.0's belief in technocratic solutions was its ideological and methodological rigidity to "Design to Win," a rigidity which was mirrored proportionally by the deflection of feedback from **diverse sources and in-country knowledge**. Chris DeCardy, VP and Director of Programs at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, acknowledges that "Design to Win" was "necessary, but not sufficient"[xxxvii] to address the Super Wicked Problem of climate change. As one interviewee who wished to remain anonymous noted on CWF's methodological rigidity, "There was an overly deterministic mindset at CWF that singularly focused on policy. It actively refused to consider how to use or leverage the financial market or social change movements."[xxxviii] Amy Luers, Director of Climate Change at the Skoll Global Threats Fund, observes, "[CWF had] a classic reductionist approach to a complex problem. Climate change is a systems problem requiring social/political and biological aspects."[xxxix]

V. Using the Teaching Case

Following each vignette in the teaching case are a series of questions for the field. Practitioners, academics, and students may use these questions to reflect on their own efforts to lead organizations tackling Wicked Problems or in conjunction with the three phases of organizational learning described in the Deliberate Leadership Model. Some examples of "Questions for the Field" students of social investing will consider include:

- When building an organization to create immediate impact, how do you balance the need for action with the need for organizational structure?

- How should leaders embrace risk and create a culture that allows failure and openly discusses threats?

- In what ways should the culture of philanthropy change to benefit from business world lessons about valuing "collective intelligence"?

- How can leaders ensure that teamwork, not competition, occurs within networks?

- How can an organization seeking social change incentivize listening, learning, and adaptation internally?

Endnotes

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v   John Fitzgibbon and Kenneth O. Mensah, Climate Change as a Wicked Problem: An Evaluation of the Institutional Context for Rural Water Management in Ghana (Sage Publications, 2012), http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/2/2/215824401244848

vi   Peterson, Gayle. *ClimateWorks Foundation: Lessons in Leadership and Learning* (Chicago, IL: pfc Social Impact Advisors, 2016) 20.

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ix   Ibid., 22.

x   Ibid., 23.

xi   Ibid., 24.

xii   "About the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation," http://www.hewlett.org/about-us

xiii   Peterson, Gayle. *ClimateWorks Foundation: Lessons in Leadership and Learning* (Chicago, IL: pfc Social Impact Advisor, 2016) 26.

xiv   Ibid.

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xvi   Ibid., 28.

xvii   Ronald Heifetz and Donald Laurie, "The Work of Leadership," Harvard Business Review (2001), https://hbr.org/2001/12/the-work-of-leadership/ar/1

xviii   Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin, and Monique Sternin, The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2010).

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xxii   Ibid., 37.

xxiii   Ibid.

xxiv   Ibid., 39.

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