CENTER FOR POSITIVE LEADERSHIP

Local WorldChanger Teams
Empowering Teams by Breaking Down Barriers to Collaboration and Amplifying their Influence through Positive Leadership

There are many good people who are trying to improve our world but get stymied in their efforts. They try to reduce poverty, increasing prosperity, reduce pollution and waste, provide better housing options, combat human trafficking, foster peace, develop self-reliance, promote fairness for disadvantaged groups, strengthen families, or improve the world in other ways. In these efforts, people are often stymied by the need to work with other people who have competing incentives, contrasting ways of understanding the problem, other relationships that take priority, personal fears that inhibit action, or other barriers to collaboration.

Even if people collaborate with others, they may still struggle to have the impact that they desire. Teams with diverse backgrounds who learn to collaborate well can often do extraordinary things, but if the things they are trying to do involve changing the world in some way, then collaboration alone is insufficient. Team members must also learn to influence others in meaningful, powerful, and enduring ways. One of the central activities of the University of Louisville Center for Positive Leadership is to empower teams by breaking down barriers to collaboration and amplifying their influence through positive leadership.

Enabling Teams to Change the World

We refer to teams of people from diverse backgrounds who share a common commitment to work together to improve the world with respect to a common issue as Local WorldChanger Teams. These teams take seriously the adage to “think globally but act locally” to make the world a better place. We empower these teams by helping them with at least six months of project design, team design, measurement, training, coaching, and accountability structures, all related to the issue around which they are trying to improve the world. The project is designed to make a measurable difference in relation to this issue, but even more importantly, the developmental process gives local participants relationships, knowledge, skills, motivation, and resources that enable them to continue to change the world after the project is over.
What are Local WorldChanger (LWC) Teams?

WorldChangers are people who are motivated to improve the world in some specific way, irrespective of positions or rewards, and who are already working to make that change. We focus on WorldChangers who are all local to a geographical location to minimize coordination costs and to create high-leverage change. We organize Local WorldChangers into teams so that they can work on specific, concrete projects, and help them develop their abilities to practice positive leadership as they work on these projects. This approach enables us to achieve the following benefits:

- Developing people’s capacity for practicing positive leadership.
- Building enduring capability in the community for addressing challenges and improving the world.
- Accelerating and enhancing people’s impact on issues they care about through positive leadership.
- Making a specific, concrete, measurable difference in the issue about which they are passionate.
- Generating new ideas for tackling issues beyond the specific project.
- Expanding their networks.
- Breaking down silos between people on these issues.
- Giving people a framework for working together with people who approach problems differently.
- Creating ideas and relationships by learning from people who work on different issues.

Tiff Crooks
Talent Director
Louisville Athletics

“Our inclusion in the Local WorldChangers has been positive for both our larger organization and for the individuals involved. On an individual level, we’ve observed a notable increase in empowerment of the staff involved in the group. Members are feeling heard and valued on a larger organizational level, and it’s been an empowering opportunity to influence larger organizational change. On an organizational level, we’ve observed a very well-received implementation of a revamped Employee Recognition Program which has led to excitement for future recommendations and changes that will come from the WorldChangers group.”
What do LWC teams do?

LWC teams work together for six months or longer on a concrete project that improves the world around an issue about which the members of the team are passionate. As they work on the project, the University of Louisville Center for Positive Leadership (CPL) supports them with their project, provides them education and development in positive leadership, provides them with networking opportunities, and provides additional tools and events for them and for the organizations or communities from which the team members come.

A Typical Timeline for a Local WorldChanger Team

A typical timeline for LWC teams is depicted in the figure above. The minimum timeline for a team is six months. The LWC process begins when the CPL begins working with a team sponsor to design the project, select measures for project success and begin data collection, identifying team members, and acquiring the funds to support the team as they go through the project. Team members go through the following process.

**Launch day.** Each team participates in a one-day launch event. During this event, they establish themselves as a team, receive training, and begin their projects.

**Ongoing project.** Participants are expected to work on their projects and coordinate with each other throughout their time as members of a LWC team.

**Coaching.** At the launch day, the team also meets their coach and begins the coaching process. They commit to practice positive leadership at least weekly as they work on their project and receive weekly coaching from their coach and from each other.

**Tyra Family Distinguished Conversation Series.** Teams attend monthly breakfast events with other LWC teams. These events give participants the opportunity to network with people in other teams, report on their progress, receive feedback, make plans, and (in some of these events) receive training from visitors such as authors, artists, experts, and experienced professionals.
Tools and events. The CPL creates leadership tools and hosts events related to positive leadership. These events and tools will be free to LWC team members and to people from the organizations to which LWC team members belong. (They will not be free to people who are not LWC team members or their organizations.)

Post-project data collection. At the conclusion of the project, the CPL will help teams and their sponsors collect data again, so that we can assess the impact of their project.

Final report. The team concludes their project by presenting the results to their sponsor and to other interested, invited parties.

How to Create Teams

We are always looking for issues to address, projects to tackle, and Local WorldChangers who will serve on teams. If you have issues, projects, or people that you would like to suggest to us, please contact us at cpl@louisville.edu. We would love to hear your ideas and talk to you about how to assemble these teams.

Community-focused LWC teams tend to be cross-sector in nature, with members coming from different non-profits, government agencies, neighborhoods, churches, or other institutions. If needed, the CPL can help find people who are intrinsically motivated about issues, turn vague ideas about issues into concrete projects, identify or develop measures to address the issues about which you are concerned, and accelerate development of your people, your organization, and your community. Please do not hesitate to contact us to talk about these possibilities.

How to Sponsor a Team

If you are interested in sponsoring a team, or know of someone who might be interested, please contact us at cpl@louisville.edu. We need individuals and organizations who can sponsor teams!

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing that sponsorship makes a concrete, measurable difference in the world and helps LWC team members learn positive leadership, we provide other benefits for sponsors as well. Examples of additional benefits include receiving impact reports, input into the type and direction of projects pursued, input into team composition, free admission to CPL events, and naming rights. The additional benefits that people receive depend on the kind of team sponsored and the level of sponsorship offered.