

Working Better Together.

REFLECTION POINT | ANNUAL REPORT 2022



What is Reflection Point?

Reflection Point uses facilitated discussions of powerful stories to build bridges, flip perspectives, and deepen shared understanding. Our facilitators guide small groups through reflection and dialogue.

Why stories? Stories offer a low risk platform to practice honest conversations and to build the skills of collective intelligence. A good story invites a group to gather and reflect about the ways they work together and how to co-create a healthy culture. It opens avenues for sharing and deepening the relationships that support inclusion, collaboration and innovation.



Letter to the Community.

Dear Partners, Participants, Facilitators, Supporters and Friends:

If the pandemic opened Pandora's Box, the last few years have made it seem bottomless.

The media is consumed with illness, war and political strife, while heralding the arrival of AI and its imminent takeover of our life and work. In the face of it all, individuals are isolated and burned out, overwhelmed and argumentative. And trust is at an all time low. According to Edelman's annual Trust Barometer, 64% of people believe we are incapable of having civil or constructive debates.

We're in the throes of what journalist David Brooks calls a "relational crisis." We have forgotten how to engage with each other. The problems we face are complex and thorny, not easily solved alone. They require us to understand diverse perspectives, rethink our assumptions and hear points of view that contradict our own. In short, they require strong and flexible social skills.

Building strong social skills is Reflection Point's superpower. We help people work (and live) better together by creating the space to strengthen collective intelligence.

It's not fluffy stuff. Collective intelligence is grounded in five specific, very social, skills:

- listening with humility
- asking good questions
- challenging our assumptions
- disagreeing with respect but without retribution
- widening the circle of empathy.

They seem simple, but they are not easy. In today's world, these skills are not nice-to-have, they're must-have. While people call them "soft" skills, in reality they are anything but soft. Hard to build and even harder to quantify, their impact is immeasurable.

By bringing people together – in workplaces and communities all over the world – Reflection Point creates

a unique conversational space to build collective intelligence: to open minds, explore diverse perspectives, surface trust and deepen shared understanding.

But here's the thing: it's understanding we need, not consensus. The insights to tackle the issues that challenge us reside at the intersection of our different experiences and expertise. We need to tap into our differences. We just can't let them divide us. By systematically learning and practicing these five skills, we harness the power of diverse perspectives to fuel collaboration, innovation, performance and growth.

Reflection Point uses powerful stories to level the playing field and explore challenging topics. They open the imagination, and welcome personal and collective reflection. Stories melt hierarchies and make room for all voices. A participant recently described the experience as "a looking glass encounter that introduces

different ideas and new ways of looking at life and people and work."

After all the evils flew out of Pandora's box, one thing remained: hope.

Today, our best hope is our ability to come together to address our toughest challenges. But we're out of practice. Reflection Point invites colleagues and neighbors to renew their curiosity and broaden their worldviews, to challenge their assumptions and to listen with humility and respect. This is the hope of a better future, one conversation at a time.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and your commitment to make real change happen. Thank you.

Best Wishes,


Ann Kowal Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER


Felix M. Brueck
BOARD CHAIR

“ It was great to talk about things away from our professional day-to-day work. I have gotten to know the people behind the “work personas.”

—REFLECTION POINT PARTICIPANT

The Hard Facts about Soft Skills

In the zeal to optimize for cutting edge technical skills, we have strayed far from the capabilities that shape healthy communities and drive more empathic workplaces. These are so-called “soft” skills, uniquely human superpowers that help us communicate, reason and learn, empathize, listen and consider.

As problems become bigger and more complex, we need soft skills to collaborate, innovate, and learn effectively. Soft skills help us make sense of a world marked by disagreement and blanketed in strife. And these skills reinforce our humanity, enabling us to work better together. Without them, we lose collaboration, civility and inclusion.

But let’s be clear: “soft” is a terrible moniker because it makes these skills seem easy, or dispensable. The truth is, there’s nothing easy about them. It’s much harder to get our heads around soft skills. We tend to think that hard skills are the must-haves and soft skills are the nice-to-haves. But the pace of technology has reversed this. The messy, magical things that make us human are the very things that will help us manage the challenges posed by new technologies and smart machines.

Business writer Tom Peters challenges us to think about the inherent paradox in our words with his premise, “hard is soft, and soft is hard.” Soft skills are tougher to define, harder to teach and learn, and require a much more customized approach. But the payoff is immense. Technical skills and expertise become obsolete much more rapidly, while soft skills grow with you throughout your entire career—relevant, transferable, and valuable.

Soft skills power...



Innovation

Innovation depends on our ability to create new ideas or design new offerings by connecting disparate things that have not previously been considered together. This requires critical soft skills: being open to other’s perspectives, reflecting honestly on the status quo to find the holes in our thinking, and staying even-keeled in the face of ambiguity.



Collaboration

Collaboration is the single biggest driver of human performance and it requires the interpersonal sensitivity that helps teams respond, adapt and act in the face of a challenge. Like any skill, it takes practice. The strongest teams work on the interpersonal skills that let them be at their best. We can’t develop these skills by ourselves—we must learn them together.

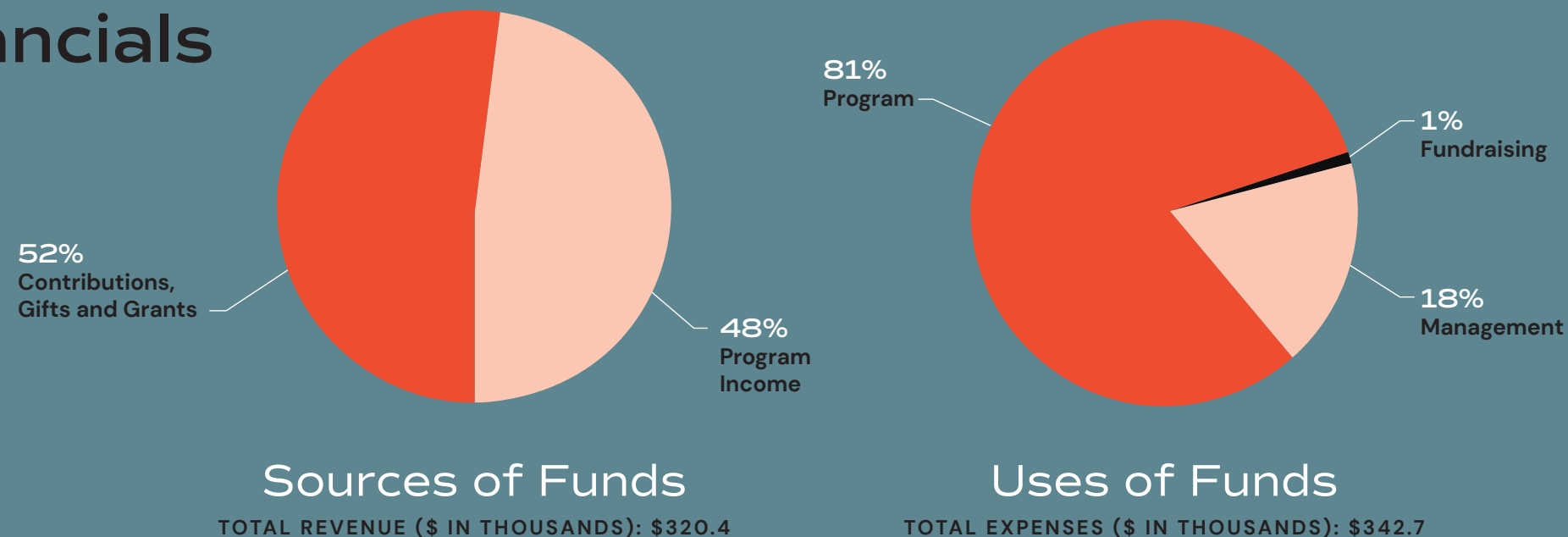


Learning

As the world changes at breakneck speed, we need to reflect on what we do, ask ourselves if there’s a better way and master skills we haven’t even conceived of yet. Learning requires creativity and a willingness to challenge our assumptions, to admit when we are wrong without feeling threatened or defensive.

FISCAL YEAR 2022

Financials



By the Numbers

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022 (AND SINCE INCEPTION), WE HAVE WORKED WITH:

14,705

Participants

117

Organizations

8

Languages

“Reflection Point is a perfect name for this type of dialogue. It’s an especially effective way to glimpse the life experiences of people who are unlike us, but also the same in many connected ways, which speaks to a universal resonance.

—REFLECTION POINT PARTICIPANT

LESSONS LEARNED

→ Culture requires flexibility.

The battles over where we work have continued to intensify, with flexibility being the number one attribute employees look for at work. But hybrid work makes culture intentional, not impossible. Deepening the skills of leaders to manage flexible teams, and empowering teams to find new ways to deepen their collective intelligence helps healthy cultures thrive.

→ Empathy matters.

A recent study showed that people with empathic bosses are 58% more likely to feel valued and respected at work. But leaders can’t do it alone. Collaboration, productivity and innovation suffer when isolated and burned out colleagues are mean to each other. Empathy is a skill that can (and must) be learned. The healthiest companies take empathy seriously at all levels, ensuring a safe and engaging workplace.

→ Connection supercharges teams.

Between the crush of work and the fear of recession, so many companies are cutting back on “extras.” But human connection is not an extra, it’s a critical tool to ensure collaboration, innovation, inclusion and productivity. Strengthening the skills of interpersonal connection helps us give each other the benefit of the doubt, deepens our relationships and empowers us to weather work and the future together.

Thank You.

You – our donors, partners, participants and facilitators – give life to Reflection Point. Your dedication to lifelong learning helps individuals, teams and communities. You are making learning inspiring and relevant. Together we are breaking down barriers and building collaborative and inclusive workplaces and communities.

“
I absolutely love this time together to talk and learn from each other. I find it so valuable, and appreciate the relationships I have started to form with folks that I don’t work with directly.

—REFLECTION POINT PARTICIPANT

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“

Reflection Point has
been among the most
important experiences
I've had in cultural
exchange at work.

—REFLECTION POINT PARTICIPANT



Reflection
Point

We help you work better together.

That Can Be Me, Inc.
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