



## ***Investing in Flourishing: Creating a Market that Values Well Being***

You get what you pay for. In America we mostly pay for responding to illness and social failure, rather than prevention or thriving. You can't buy a "Youth Flourishing Bond." If that changed, Americans would be better off, and we would produce enormous public and private savings. Ensuring that all can flourish is essential not only to our values but also to our future economy and national security. However, a growing percentage of our population is living shorter lives with less opportunity to thrive and contribute. While we know how to help kids and their families flourish, our health and social services systems are not designed to pay for that outcome, and don't comprehensively support the vital conditions for thriving. This failure is hardwiring problems for health and well-being, creating enormous medical and social expenses, now and in the future. The tidal wave of chronic illnesses we are facing starts in childhood.

The Federal Reserve Bank of NY calls the current state a "missing market," a type of financial market failure. To address this failure, the FRBNY has sponsored our Design Team<sup>1</sup> to create a solution. This is the Investing In Flourishing initiative for youth and their families, starting before birth. By attracting commercial investment in flourishing outcomes, we aim to flip America's funding paradigm from today's funding of response to illness and social failure. In addition to improving lives, this should create significant public and private financial return (ROI), far more than the new investment.

One pathway? Cities today create public/private partnerships to fund multi-use stadium complexes with multi-source financing paid for by multiple revenue streams (tickets, concessions, sky boxes), all coordinated by a central authority. We imagine a similar entity: providing multi-sector flourishing services, investor financed, and repaid from savings produced over time for many organizations in sectors from health to education to corrections to employers. To achieve this goal, the IIF model addresses (1) the current fragmentation of services and actions where every program or community action stands on its own, with little to no funding for central collaboration, (2) "wrong pocket" and demand for short term ROI when investing upstream, and overall (3) the lack of payment for flourishing outcomes.

Action to promote flourishing must be grounded in local control and led by people with lived experience. Effective cross-sector collaboration, data sharing, and finance are the essential "scaffolding." This will not be a single investment with one level of risk/return. It will require coordinated, parallel investments in specific youth and families ("attributable lives") with community actions in the same neighborhoods, supported by local and state governments. Many others have focused on youth well-being; uniquely, we are creating a financial model to comprehensively fund the vital conditions producing flourishing.

Our plan is to support multiple community deployments of the shared model we develop through which this investment strategy is tested, refined, and demonstrated, and then scaled into a national investment market. We will partner with people and organizations to develop the supporting systems critical for overall success. We are now seeking resources to fund leading communities and the support systems they need. Partner with us!

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<sup>1</sup> The "Investing in Flourishing" Design Team is led by FRBNY Visiting Scholar Tyler Norris, MDiv., and Leslie Walker, MD, and composed of 180+ leaders from finance, communities, and professions relevant to youth flourishing. The views expressed here are those of independent members of the Design Team, not the FRBNY. Comments are encouraged. For more information: [connect@investinginflourishing.org](mailto:connect@investinginflourishing.org)

