Grant Application Summary

A changemaker, according to Ashoka (Brennan, 2018), is "one who desires change in the world, and by gathering knowledge and resources, makes that change happen." Based on almost four decades of work in the field, Ashoka has synthesized a "…depth of knowledge and expertise, accumulated experience, and collective insights from the Fellows' work that enables a broader flowering of effective social change" (Apple, 2004). These insights have led Ashoka to identify four skills essential to being a changemaker: conscious empathy, collaborative teamwork, shared leadership, and practicing changemaking (Waterloo Global Science Initiative, 2013).

According to Ashoka, Conscious Empathy is "the ability to be aware of and understand our own, other individuals' and groups' perspectives, and to use that understanding to recognize patterns over time and guide one's actions to contribute to the good of all"; Collaborative Teamwork is "The ability to contribute to and thrive in a fluid ecosystem of teams that mobilizes around a problem or opportunity"; Shared Leadership is "Shifting a leader's role to ensure that every player is an initiator and sees the big picture"; and, Practicing Changemaking which is "The process of creating a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals." Central to Ashoka's work is the clear understanding that, "…we need to build the specific skillset of every individual to be able to function in a world of constant change, … and where every individual has the ability to identify social problems and create positive change" (Waterloo Global Science Initiative, 2013).

Educators at all levels of education from kindergarten to postsecondary are called to embed social innovation skills and mindsets into curricula. We are currently living in a global context of rapid change that, when compared with other eras, is unprecedented. According to Dobbs et al. (2015), "Compared with the Industrial Revolution, we estimate that… change is happening ten times faster and at 300 times the scale, or roughly 3,000 times the impact." At the same time, researchers have noted a significant decline in the ability of students to empathize with others. Konrath (in 28, para. 3) notes that "College kids today are about 40 percent lower in empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago, as measured by standard tests of this personality trait." This, coupled with contemporary uncertainty, has signaled "the urgency for educational institutions to provide younger generations with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that they will need to become lifelong learners, to understand issues of global interdependence and to be active global citizens" (Council of Ministers of Education, n.d.). Notably, being responsive in this way, educational systems will assist students in meeting the varying needs of local and global social and economic economies.

Ashoka's key competencies align with work in educational reform over the last decade (Bailik et al., 2015; Council of Ministers of Education, n.d.; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Government of Ontario, 2016; Government of Ontario, 2009; Parratt et al., 2016; Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), 2018; University of Michigan, 2010). Bailik et al. (2015) note that, "facing the challenges of the 21st century requires a deliberate effort to cultivate in students personal growth and the ability to fulfill social and community responsibilities as global citizens." The extant literature confirms that employers increasingly value these skills as well (Council of Ministers of Education, n.d; Government of Ontario, 2016; University of Michigan, 2010; Royal Bank of Canada (RBC),

2018). The answer to the current rapid need for innovation and transformation has been reflected by the shifting of educational policy to refocus from strictly curriculum related to vocation and disciplinary learning to incorporate those skills considered essential.

As such, 21st century shifts in education will need to "emphasize and develop these competencies in explicit and intentional ways through deliberate changes in curriculum design and pedagogical practice. The goal of these changes is to prepare students to solve messy, complex problems – including problems we don't yet know about – associated with living in a competitive, globally connected, and technologically intensive world" (Government of Ontario, 2016). A sentiment reflected clearly by a call made in the recently released Skills Next 2020 report (Gyarmati et al.): "There is a growing demand not only for technological skills, but also 'soft skill,' such as resilience, emotional stability, flexibility and adaptability. And if skills and competencies are the new workplace 'currency,' we need shared approaches to understand how to define, evaluate and develop them."

It is our hope that the information, resources, supports and suggestions incorporated in this living, growing Pressbook (PB) will help you in your changemaking educational work.

Our Changemaking Research Circle (CRC) is instrumental in providing us with feedback and guidance in the development of our model. We thank CRC for your continued dedication and support in this very important work as we strive for "an everyone a changemaker" world (Ashoka).

We are especially grateful to CRC for conversations that reminded us about the need to shift how we think about measurement from a linear, conventional model to a more cyclical, self-directed model. The Manifesting as a Changemaker Model and Toolkit are meant to be and exist as iterative processes, circular in nature as we all often revisit our skill development as empaths, collaborators and leaders in the practice of changemaking.

Interested in sharing resources or contributing to this research, please reach out to cmtoolkit@georgiancollege.ca

Thank you for all you do to help grow students as changemakers!

References:

Apple, M. (2004). Ideology and Curriculum. New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.

Bailik, M., Bogan, M., Fadel, C., & Horvathova, M. (2015, Feb.). Character education for the 21st century: What should students learn? Center for Curriculum Redesign (CCR). Retrieved from https://curriculumredesign.org/wp-content/uploads/CCR-CharacterEducation_FINAL_27Feb2015.pdf

Brennan, J. (2018). Upswell. Retrieved from What the heck is a changemaker: https://upswell.org/2018/02/16/what-the-heck-is-a-changemaker/#:~:text=Ashoka%20defines%20a%20changemaker%20as,can%20see%20the%20patterns%20around

Council of Ministers of Education. (n.d.). Over 50 years of Pan-Canadian leadership in education: Global competencies. Retrieved from https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global_Competencies.html

Dobbs, R., Manyika, J., & Woetzel, J. (2015, April). The four global forces breaking all the trends. In No Ordinary Disruption: The Four Global Forces Breaking All the Trends. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-four-global-forces-breaking-all-the-trends

Fullan, M., & Langworthy, M. (2014). A rich seam: How new pedagogies find deep learning. Always Learning. Retrieved from http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/3897.Rich_Seam_web.pdf

Government of Ontario. (2016, Spring edition). 21st Century competencies: Foundation document for discussion. Retrieved from http://www.edugains.ca/resources21CL/About21stCentury/21CL_21stCenturyCompetencies.pdf

Government of Ontario. (2009). Essential employability skills. Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Gyarmati, D., Lane, J., and Murray, S. (2020, Nov.). Skills next: Competency frameworks and Canada's essential skills. Retrieved from https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Competency-Frameworks-PPF-Nov2020-EN.pdf

Parratt, J. A., Fahy, K. M., Hutchinson, M., Lohmann, G., Hastie, C. R., Chaseling, M., & O'Brien, K. (2016). Expert validation of a teamwork assessment rubric: A modified Delphi study. Nurse Education Today, 36(Complete), 77–85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2015.07.023

Royal Bank of Canada. (RBC). (2018). Humans wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption. https://www.rbc.com/dms/enterprise/futurelaunch/humans-wanted-how-canadian-youth-can-thrive-in-the-age-of-disruption.html.

University of Michigan. (2010, May 27). Empathy: College students don't have as much as they used to. Michigan News. Retrieved from https://news.umich.edu/empathy-college-students-don-t-have-as-much-as-they-used-to/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%20found%20the%20biggest%20drop,tests%20of%20this%20personality%20trait.%E2%80%9D

Waterloo Global Science Initiative. (2013). Retrieved from Equinox Blueprint Learning 2030: https://wgsi.org/learning2030/