What systems changes have contributed to the population level outcomes being achieved?

What evidence is there that the collective impact effort has contributed to these systems changes?

**Definition of Systems Change in this Study**

Changes to core institutions within the initiative’s geographic area—such as schools, human service systems, local government, private sector entities, and community-based organizations.

**Key Findings: Systems Change**

Changes in services and practices are the most common systems changes achieved across sites (n=25); formalized systems changes were also predominant in site visit sites.

- **NEW OR EXPANDED SERVICES**: 96%
- **PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT**: 76%
- **NEW OR REVISED POLICIES**: 60%
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**: 56%
- **DATA USE**: 52%
- **NEW INFRASTRUCTURE**: 32%
- **COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN**: 28%

Population changes generally stemmed from changes in services and improved practices and policies.
A larger pattern emerged in the types of systems changes that are common across study sites.

**EXAMPLES**

1. **INFORMAL**
   - Vermont Farm to Plate’s match-making forum and training programs designed to help local food producers understand how they can contract with large food service providers in the state.

2. **FORMAL ONE ORG**
   - Ottawa Growing Up Great influenced one of their biggest funders, who incorporated the initiative’s Three Pillar framework into their assessment tool for selecting who they fund.

3. **FORMAL MULTIPLE ORGS**
   - Project U-Turn developed an Opportunity Network that repurposed dollars to develop diverse educational options, thus engaging alternative education programs across 15 different schools in the network.

**SYSTEMS CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

Systems change is iterative; build the infrastructure to support iteration.

*Systems change is iterative and not fully predictable,* with a wide variety of kinds of systems changes playing valuable roles toward population changes;

*thus...*

Achieving impact in collective impact depends on feedback loops created through a strong shared measurement system and accompanying data and evaluation.

To what extent and under what conditions does the collective impact approach contribute to population level outcomes?

**FIVE COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS**

- **COMMON AGENDA**
- **SHARED MEASUREMENT**
- **MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES**
- **CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION**
- **BACKBONE SUPPORT**

**KEY FINDINGS: CONDITIONS**

Study sites generally evidenced stronger implementation of the Backbone Support and Common Agenda conditions and emerging or no implementation of the Shared Measurement and Continuous Communication conditions.
Evidence suggests a refined understanding of the interplay between the five conditions of collective impact.

Collective Impact is a long-term proposition; take the time to lay a strong foundation.

Recognize that it is worth the time upfront to define the problem and target population clearly.

Don’t rush to get the five conditions in place, but rather invest thoughtfully in the two that are most foundational upfront: backbone and common agenda.

- **BACKBONE**: Credible, skilled, and ready who can built trust, convene the right people, and apply technical skills. A backbone who can support others to lead and build networks, rather than take over the role of leading change.

- **COMMON AGENDA**: A strong agenda developed using an inclusive, effective process—engaging many different types of stakeholders, from those affected by the problem to policymakers.

Equity is fairness achieved through systematically assessing disparities in opportunities and outcomes caused by structures and systems and by addressing these disparities through meaningful inclusion and representation of affected communities and individuals, targeted actions, and changes in institutional structures and systems to remove barriers and increase pathways to success.

In addition to the five Collective Impact Conditions, many collective impact initiatives deploy eight additional principles of practice, which are increasingly recognized as important to achieving population change.

**KEY PRINCIPLES**

**Definition of Equity in this Study**

*When looking at how initiatives approach equity in their work, about a third had equity capacity/intent and focused actions, but many struggled with meaningful inclusion.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity to engage in equity action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3 of sites (8) have strong equity capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 of sites have emerging equity capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity focused actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often seen in a mix of data and communications strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few sites focused on root causes of inequities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation and meaningful inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two sites with strong grassroots organizing approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most sites struggled with this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initiatives with strong and emerging equity focus showed promise in their equity outcomes; those with no focus typically did not see results that advanced equity, with a few exceptions.

The relationship between equity intentions and equity outcomes is not direct and seen the same across sites.

- Sometimes strong equity intent (as seen in capacity and inclusion) leads to equity impact—sometimes it does not
- Sometimes a lack of equity intent or weak equity intent can still lead to outcomes that advance equity—problem definition, context, or strengths of the actions taken help this to happen

Equity is achieved through different routes; be aware, intentional, and adaptable.