



WHEN
COLLECTIVE IMPACT
 A CROSS-SITE STUDY OF 25 COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES **HAS AN IMPACT**

SYSTEMS CHANGE

PRIMARY QUESTIONS

- 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

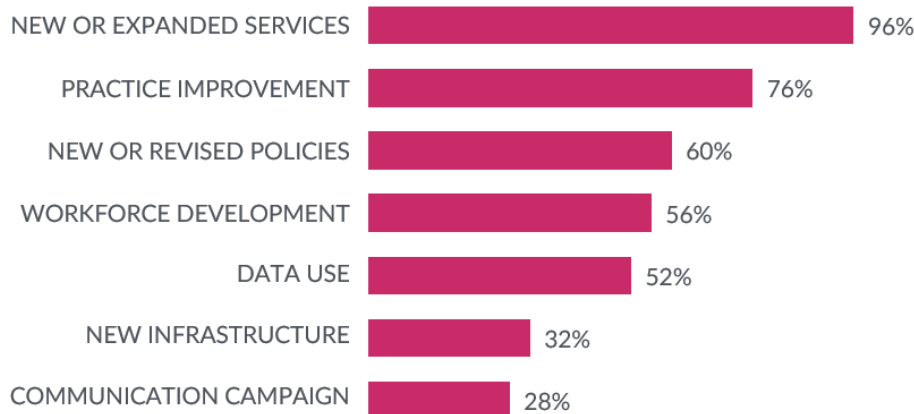
Changes to core institutions within the initiative’s geographic area—such as schools, human service systems, local government, private sector entities, and community-based organizations.

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.

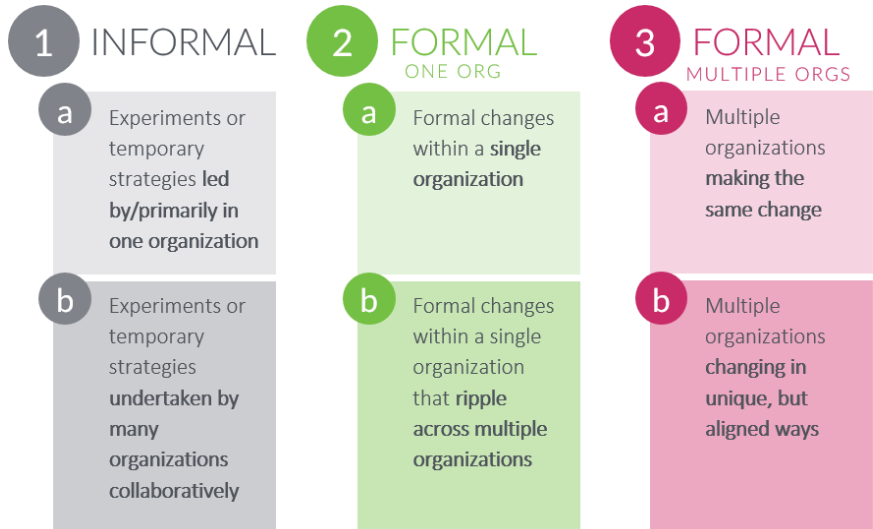


Population changes generally stemmed from changes in services and improved practices and policies



KEY FINDINGS: SYSTEMS CHANGE

A larger pattern emerged in the types of systems changes that are common across study sites.



A variety of types of systems changes can advance study sites' work over time.

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.





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CONDITIONS

PRIMARY QUESTION

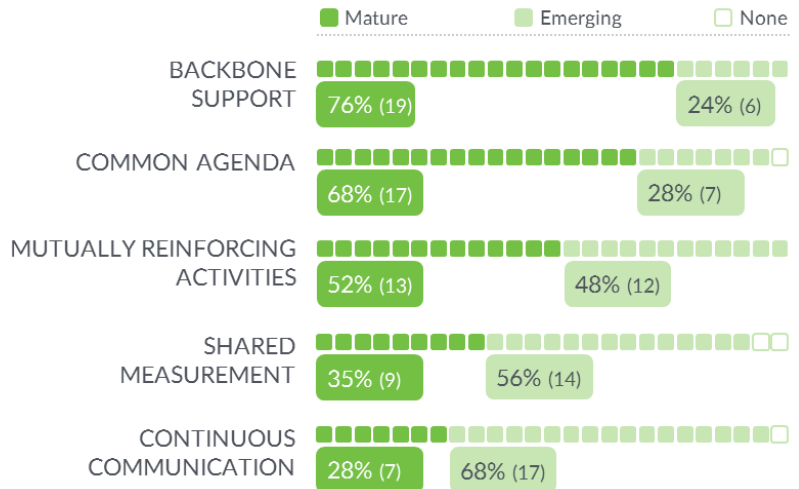
▶ To what extent and under what conditions does the collective impact approach contribute to population level outcomes?

FIVE COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS

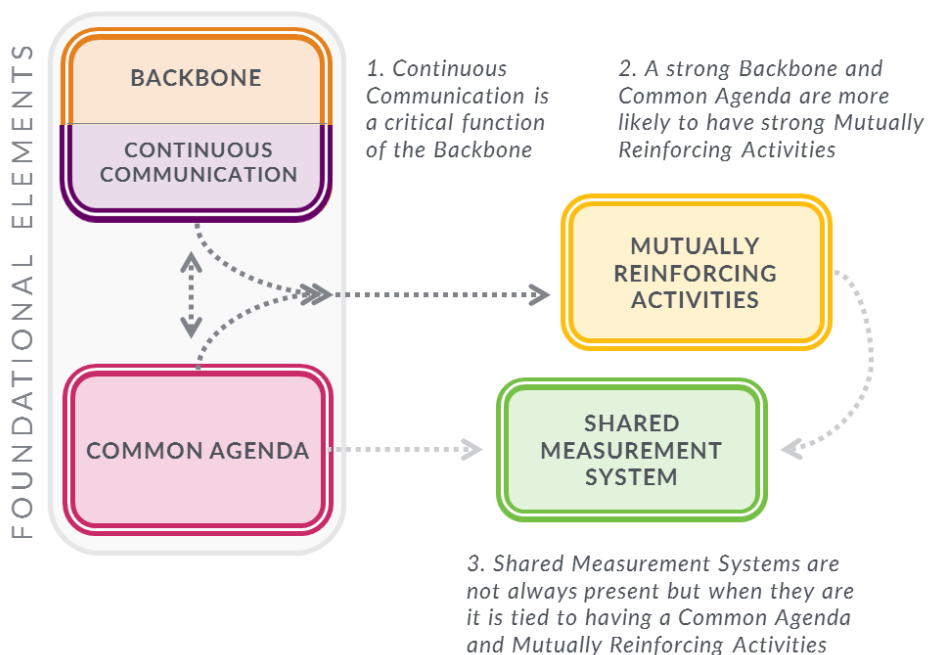


KEY FINDINGS: CONDITIONS

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.



CI CONDITIONS IMPLICATIONS

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.





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EQUITY

KEY PRINCIPLES

F 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.

Definition of Equity
 in this Study

*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.*

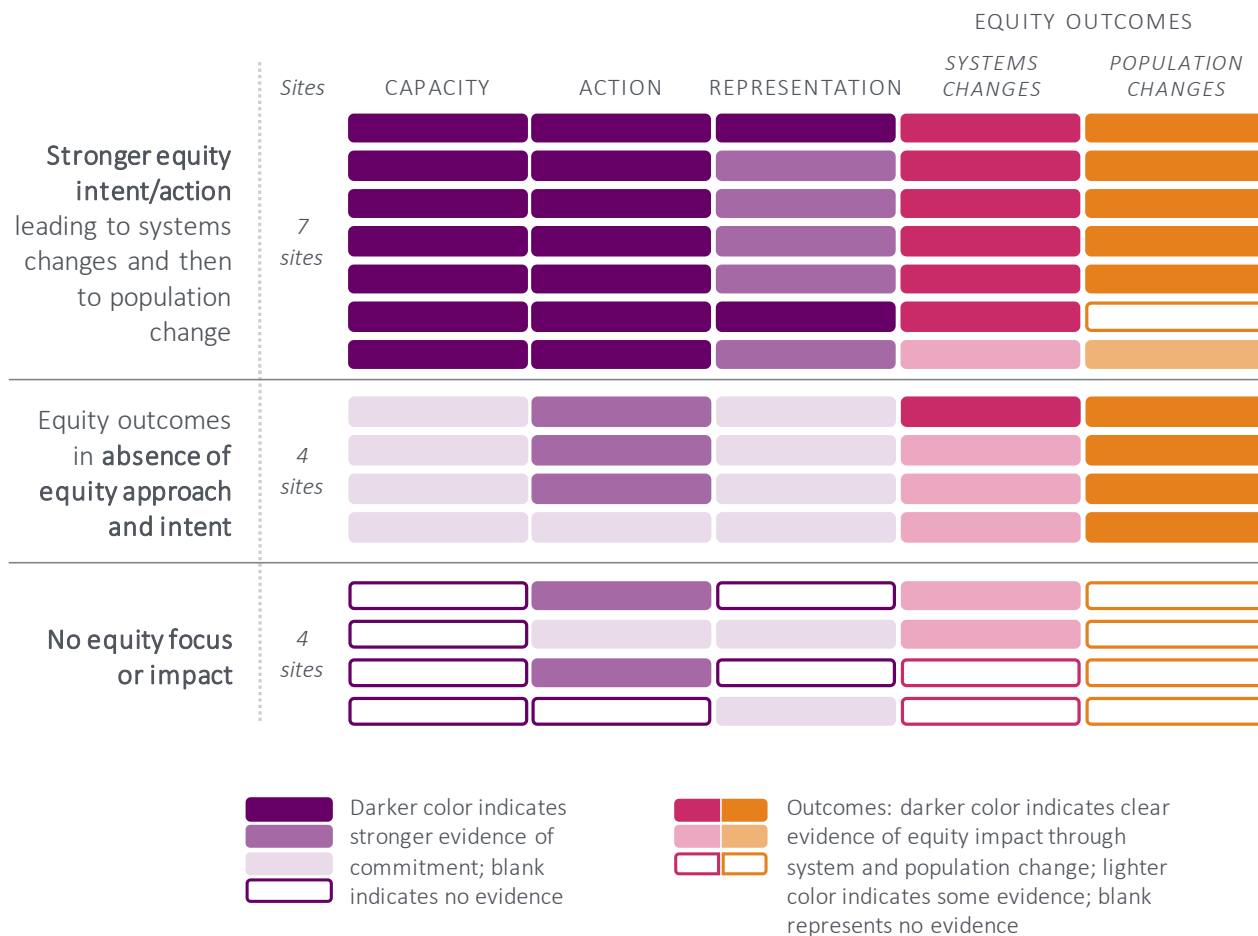
KEY FINDINGS EQUITY

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.**

Capacity to engage in equity action	1/3 of sites (8) have strong equity capacity 1/3 of sites have emerging equity capacity
Equity focused actions	Often seen in a mix of data and communications strategies Few sites focused on root causes of inequities
Representation and meaningful inclusion	Two sites with strong grassroots organizing approaches Most sites struggled with this

KEY FINDINGS EQUITY

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.



EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

