



COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM



**When Collective Impact Has an Impact: A Cross-Site Study of
25 Collective Impact Initiatives**

May 15, 2018



Welcome from the Collective Impact Forum

- Today's webinar is 90 minutes
- We want to hear from you! Keep close to your computer to answer polls and ask questions
- This webinar is being recording and the slides will be available after the event. Stay tuned for an email announcement letting you know when the webinar is up in the Forum library.
- Send technical questions to tracy.timmons-gray@collectiveimpactforum.org



Jennifer Juster

**Executive Director
Collective Impact
Forum, FSG**



About the Collective Impact Study



Finding Implementation-Oriented Webinars



ABOUT US

PROFILE DIRECTORY

BLOG

LOGIN



WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT

GETTING STARTED

INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY

RESOURCES

EVENTS

JOBS

[Introduction to Collective Impact](#)

[Getting Started in Collective Impact](#)

[Launching Collective Impact Toolkits and Guides](#)

[Community Engagement & Equity](#)

[From the Blog](#)

Introduction to Collective Impact

Collective Impact Article

The scale and complexity of the U.S. public education system has thwarted attempted reforms for decades. Major funders, such as the Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Pew Charitable...

Collective Impact Principles of Practice

What does it take for a collective impact initiative to succeed and reach population-level change? The field is familiar with the five conditions of collective impact, but what are the...

When Collective Impact has an Impact: A Cross-Site Study of 25 Collective Impact Initiatives

The research study "When Collective Impact Has an Impact: A Cross-Site Study of 25 Collective Impact Initiatives," conducted by a research team from the organizations ORS Impact and the...

Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work Article

Update: The Spanish-language version of this article, "Encauzamiento del cambio: cómo lograr que el impacto colectivo funcione," is now added to this page for download. An in-depth look at...

The Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact

This article is adapted from its original publication in July 2012 as a four-part blog series in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, www.ssireview.org/blog. Effective backbone support is...



WHEN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

A CROSS-SITE STUDY OF 25 COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES

HAS AN IMPACT

Terri Akey, ORS Impact

Lauren Gase, Spark Policy Institute

Sarah Stachowiak, ORS Impact



POLL QUESTION



Question: How familiar are you with the study and its findings?

- I've read the report
- I've read the executive summary
- I've read a blog about it
- I'm aware of the study but haven't read anything yet
- This will be a great introduction to it and the findings!



INTRODUCING THE STUDY



COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS



- **Common agenda:** coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it.
- **Mutually reinforcing activities:** coordinating collective efforts to maximize the end result.
- **Continuous communication:** building trust and relationships among all participants
- **Shared measurement:** agreeing to track progress in the same way, which allows for continuous improvement.
- **Backbone:** having a team dedicated to orchestrating the work of the group

Reference: <http://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>



An independent fieldwide study was commissioned to help answer a few fundamental questions:

THE IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

PRIMARY QUESTIONS

- 1 To what extent and under what conditions does the collective impact approach contribute to population level outcomes?
- 2 What systems changes have contributed to the population level outcomes being achieved?
- 3 What are the other positive or negative impacts, intended or unintended, on the community and system?
- 4 What evidence is there that the collective impact effort has contributed to these systems and population changes?
- 5 What evidence is there that the population changes would not have been achieved if the collective impact approach hadn't been used?

STUDY SAMPLE



STUDY SITES

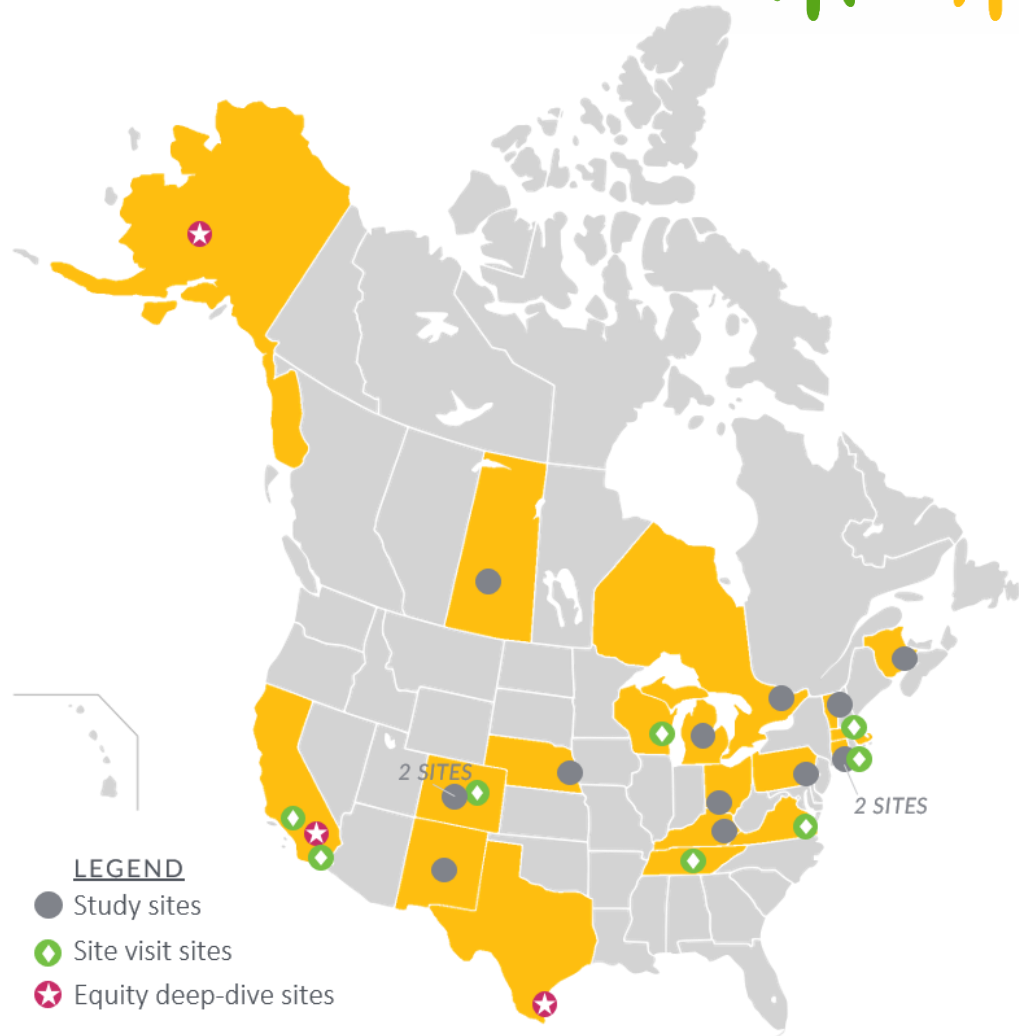
- Colorado (2)
- Connecticut (2)
- Kentucky (1)
- Michigan (1)
- Nebraska (1)
- New Brunswick, Canada (1)
- New Mexico (1)
- Ohio (1)
- Ontario, Canada (1)
- Pennsylvania (1)
- Saskatchewan, Canada (1)
- Vermont (1)

SITE VISIT SITES

- California (2)
- Colorado (1)
- Connecticut (1)
- Massachusetts (1)
- Tennessee (1)
- Virginia (1)
- Wisconsin (1)

EQUITY DEEP-DIVE SITES

- Alaska (1)
- California (1)
- Texas (1)



LEGEND

- Study sites
- ◆ Site visit sites
- ★ Equity deep-dive sites



➤ DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- Two in-depth interviews and document review (*25 sites*)
- Site visits that included three different stakeholder dialogues (*8 sites*)
- Focus group around equity practices and outcomes (*3 sites*)

➤ ANALYTICAL METHODS

- Rubrics to assess collective impact implementation, equity actions and outcomes, systems changes, and population changes
- Process tracing to understand the extent to which collective impact contributed to change
- Thematic analysis

➤ OVERSIGHT

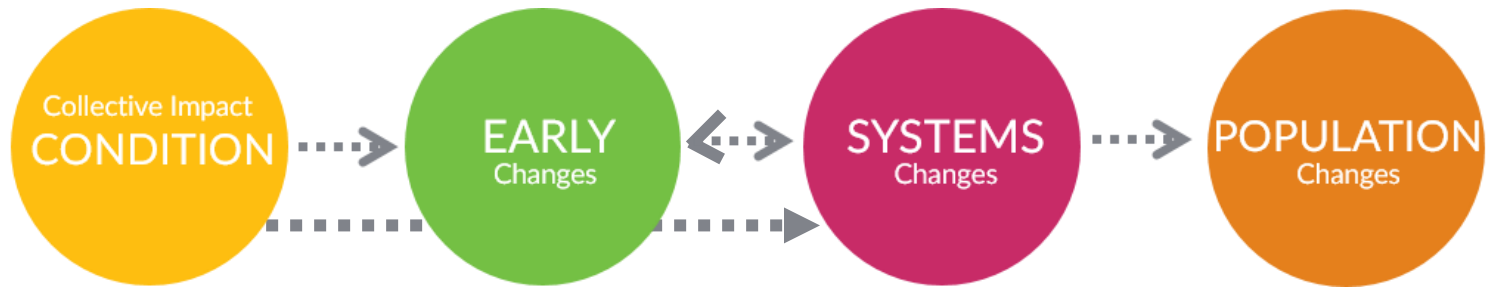
- Advisory Committee informing sample, study design, presentation of findings
- Steering Committee informing detailed design decisions along the way



EXPLORING THE **STUDY FINDINGS**



TYPES OF CHANGES EXPLORED & IDENTIFIED



POLL QUESTION

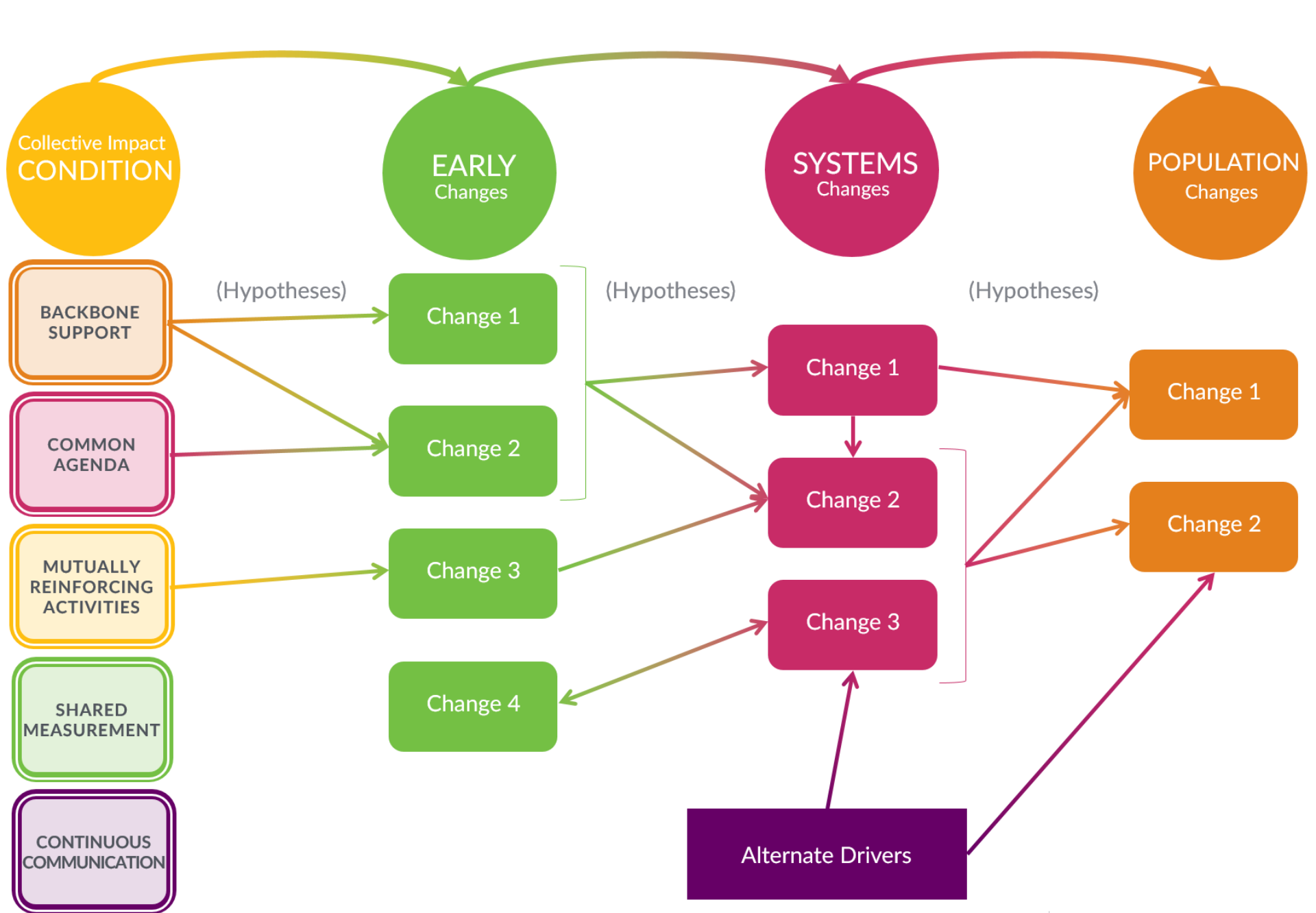


Question: In my work, I find it **easiest** to measure and use:

- Early changes
- Systems changes
- Population-level changes
- Data on implementation
- None of it is easy!

Question: In my work, I find it **hardest** to measure and use:

- Early changes
- Systems changes
- Population-level changes
- Data on implementation
- None of it is hard!

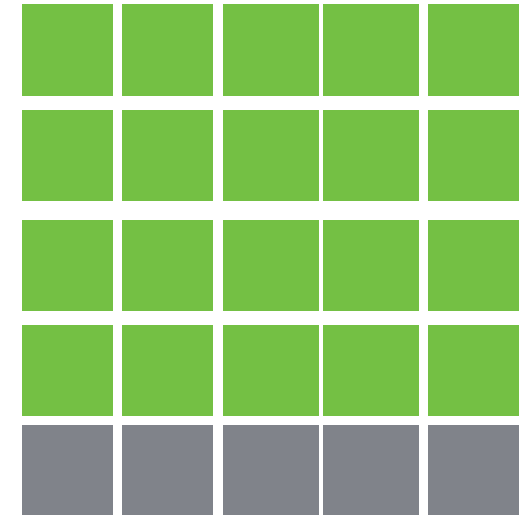




Overall, 20 of the 25 sites showed evidence of **population change**. 

Population change occurred in a variety of focus areas including:

- Education (graduation rates)
- Health (obesity)
- Homelessness (veterans)
- Economic (jobs)
- Environmental (wetlands)
- Food (access to local food)
- Justice (youth and justice system)

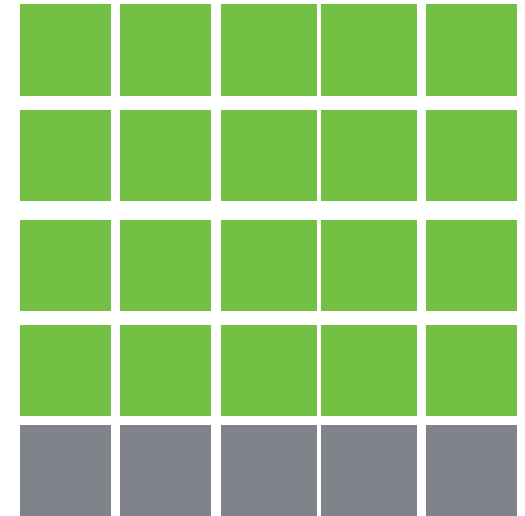





Overall, 20 of the 25 sites showed evidence of **population change**. 

Population change occurred in a variety of focus areas including:

- Education (graduation rates)
- Health (obesity)
- Homelessness (veterans)
- Economic (jobs)
- Environmental (wetlands)
- Food (access to local food)
- Justice (youth and justice system)



Sites without population change: had shorter tenures, less strong implementation of collective impact (especially Common Agenda), and challenges measuring impact. 

Study Highlights



For all 8 site visit sites, collective impact **undoubtedly contributed** to the desired population change.



For all 8 site visit sites, collective impact **undoubtedly contributed** to the desired population change.



Systems changes sites deemed critical to achieve population change among the 8 site visit sites included:

- New or expanded **programs/services or practice improvements** (7 sites)
- Improvements resulting from **policy change** (5)
- Collectively **leveraging resources** (5)



For all 8 site visit sites, collective impact **undoubtedly contributed** to the desired population change.

..... There were some differences across initiatives with different types of contribution.

3 Sites with unique contribution stories

5 Sites with contribution stories that were necessary but not unique



Three site visit sites had compelling evidence that the collective impact approach had a **strong contribution** to population changes, with low plausibility of an alternative explanation for how that change could have otherwise occurred.

In each case, the study had strong evidence:

- That population level change had occurred
- Linking the collective impact conditions and strategies to the change
- That there was no plausible alternative way to explain how the population level change happened



Five site visit sites' data provided compelling evidence that collective impact had been a necessary element of the population change story, but that collective impact alone was insufficient for explaining the population change achieved.

These five sites had strong evidence:

- That population level change had occurred
- Linking the collective impact conditions and strategies to the change

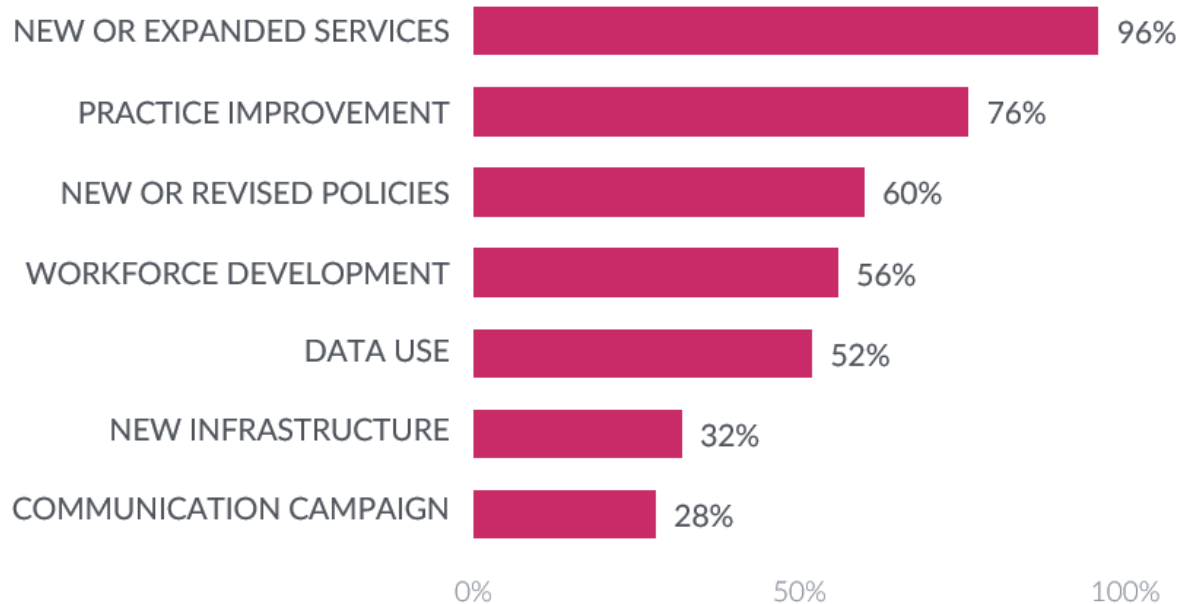
BUT unlike the other three sites:

- Drivers external to the initiatives made the unique contribution of collective impact less clear

➤ The collective impact initiatives *contributed and were necessary*, but other significant factors also contributed population level change.

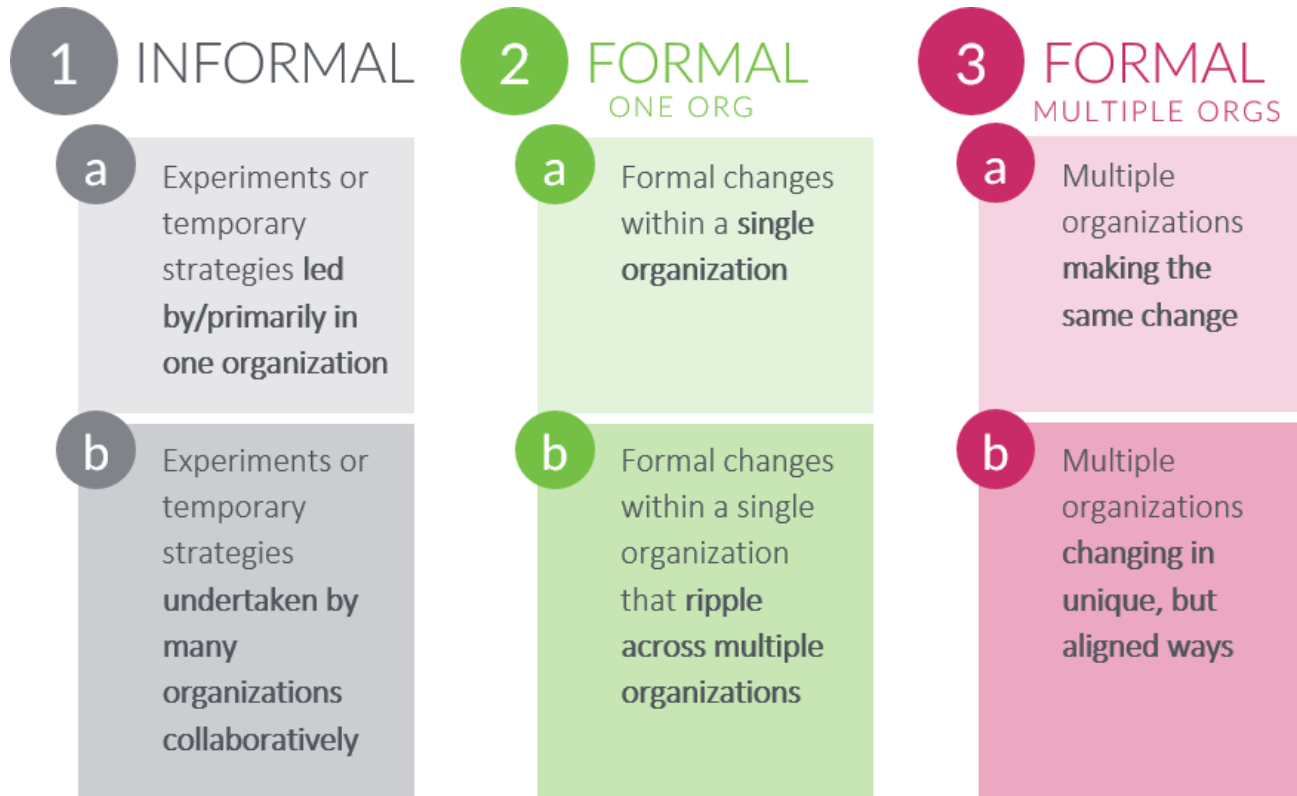
UNDERSTANDING CONTRIBUTION &
OUTCOMES OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

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





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



POLL QUESTION



Question: Which type of systems changes are you currently seeking?

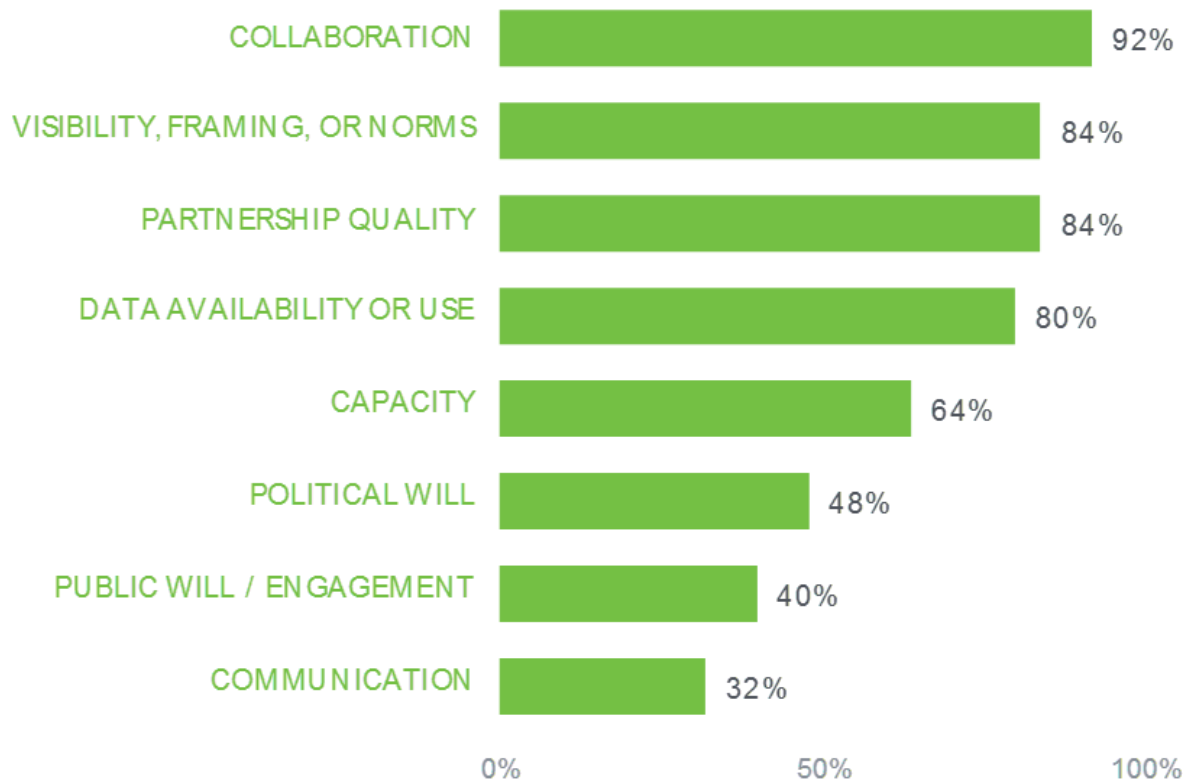
Check all that apply:

- Informal changes in a single organization
- Informal changes across multiple organizations
- Formal changes in one organization
- Formal changes of the same type across many organizations
- Formal changes of different, complementary types across many organizations

UNDERSTANDING CONTRIBUTION & OUTCOMES OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



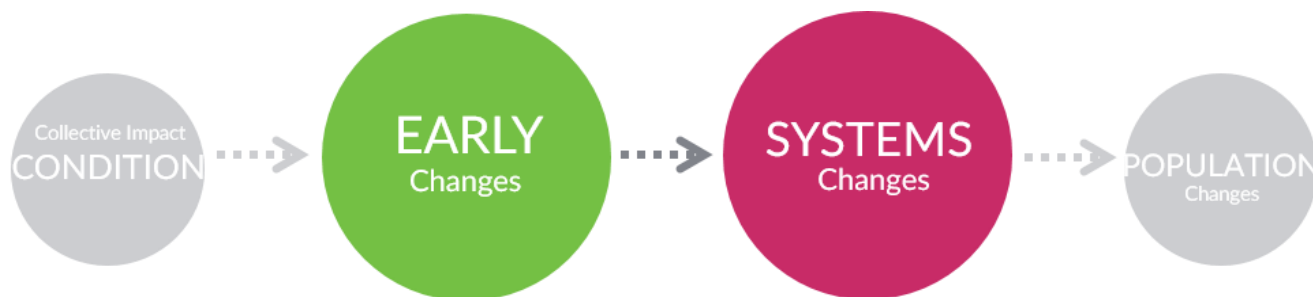
Early changes largely focused on creating trust and building commitment.





There are strong relationships between initiative efforts and prioritized systems changes among site visit sites.

- Early changes tied to systems changes focused more on deepening and expanding relationships, and deepening commitment and engagement across partners.



POLL QUESTION



Question: To what degree do the findings about early changes resonate with your experience:

- A lot
- Some
- A little
- Not at all



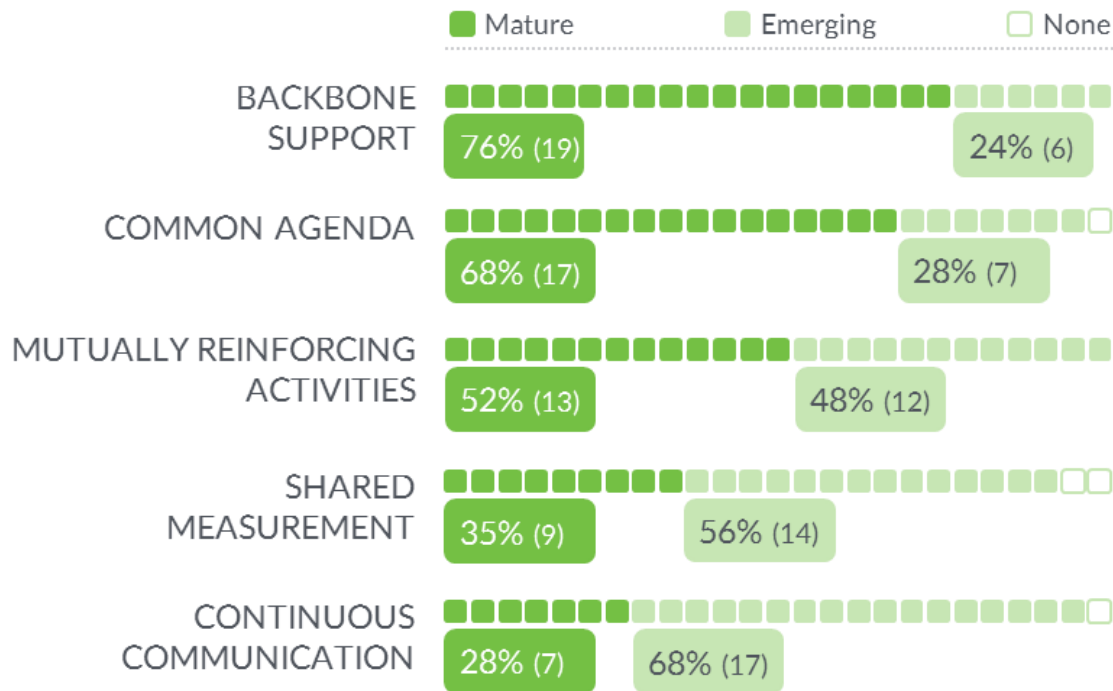
REFLECTIONS & QUESTIONS



THE DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



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.



THE DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



What makes a strong backbone?

- One or more orgs with committed staff designated to perform backbone functions
- Well-functioning leadership structure established, responsible for governance & decision-making
- Backbone infrastructure coordinates & supports core initiative activities
- Backbone staff have appropriate skills & credibility to perform backbone functions

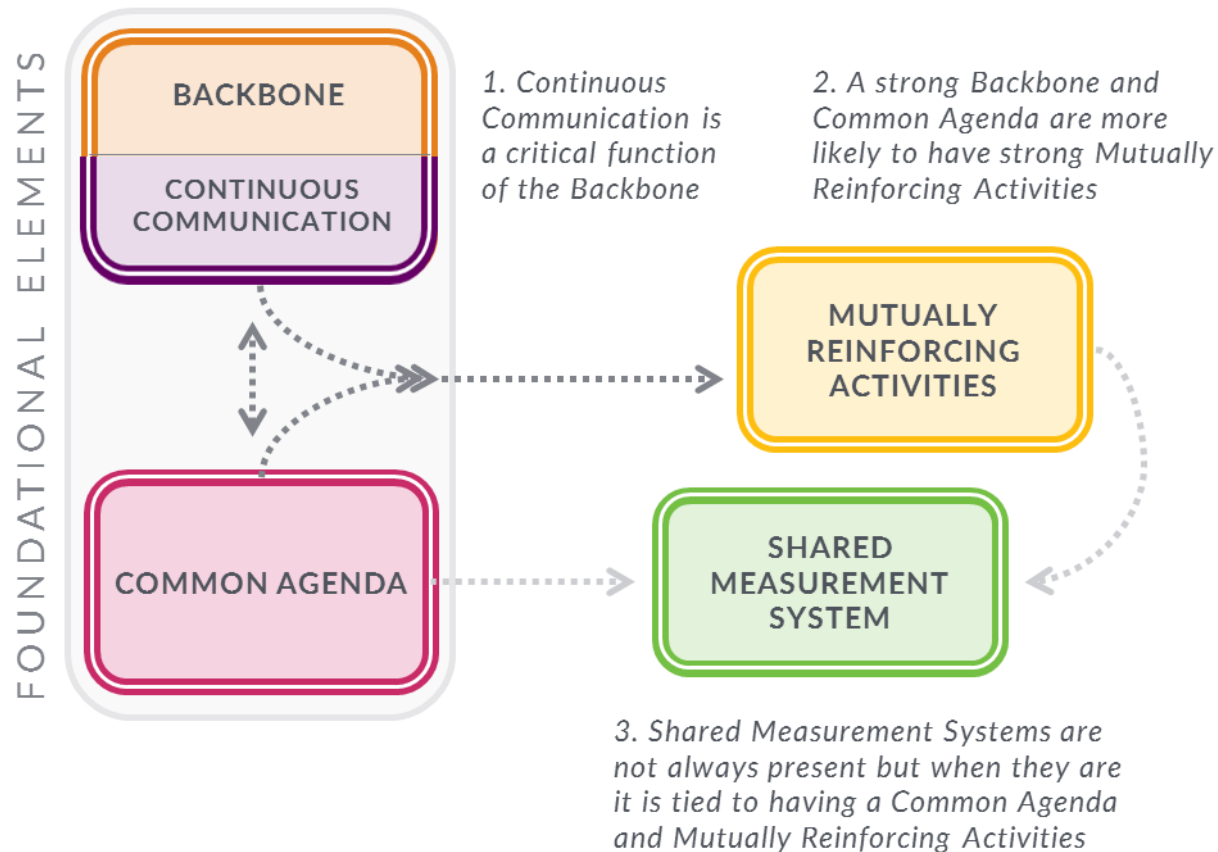
What makes a strong common agenda?

- Identifiable overarching goals & vision for initiative within clearly defined, bounded/actionable problem space
- Partners have common understanding of problem
- Partners have clearly articulated approach/set of high-level strategies to solve problem
- Partners have high level of buy-in to shared vision for change, agreed-upon goals & approaches



- **Backbone and common agenda:** drivers of systems and population change
- **Shared measurement**
 - Sites were challenged by data availability, types of indicators examined, and culture of data use
 - When present, important resource for facilitating and measuring change
- **Communication** challenges center around finding effective opportunities for internal and external engagement and feedback

THE DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



POLL QUESTIONS



Question: Which of the following collective impact conditions has been the **most challenging for you to implement?**

- Common agenda
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous communication
- Shared measurement
- Backbone

Question: Which of the following collective impact conditions has been the **most impactful in driving change?**

- Common agenda
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous communication
- Shared measurement
- Backbone



REFLECTIONS & QUESTIONS





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.*

POLL QUESTION



Question: To what degree are you currently working on equity as part of your collective impact work?

- What's equity?
- Our work naturally addresses equity; we have an implicit focus
- We're getting started and in early days
- We are experimenting and trying some new things to promote equity
- We have had a focus for awhile now and making progress
- We'll always be on the journey, but we have explicit goals, strategies and ways we build equity into our work



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

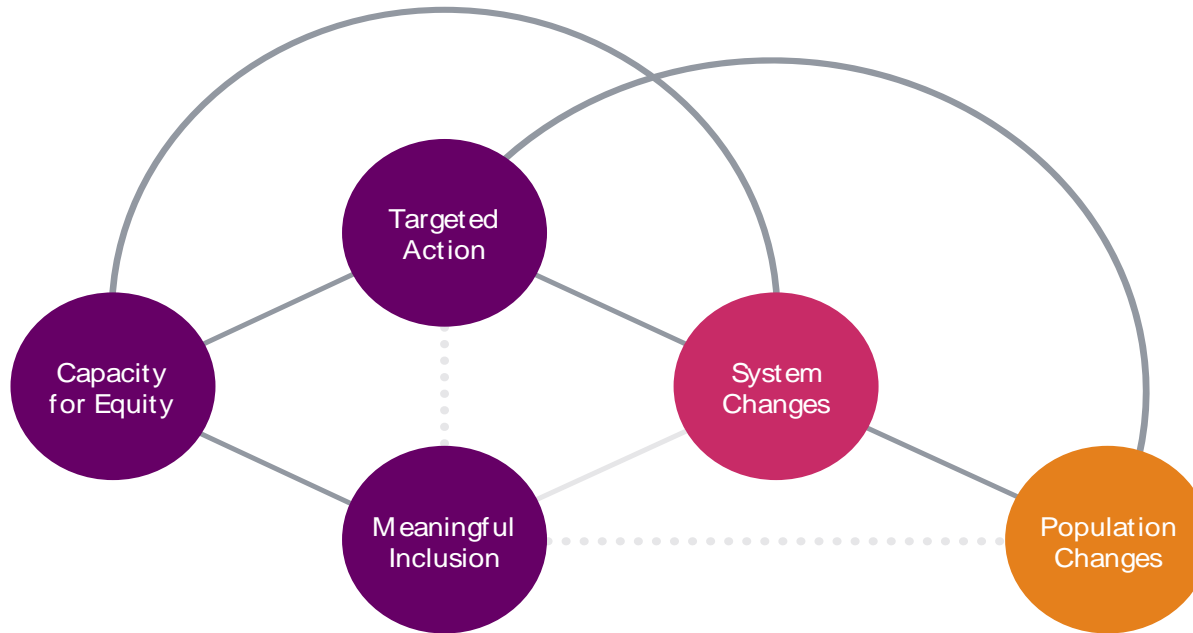
Equity-focused actions

- 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

EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

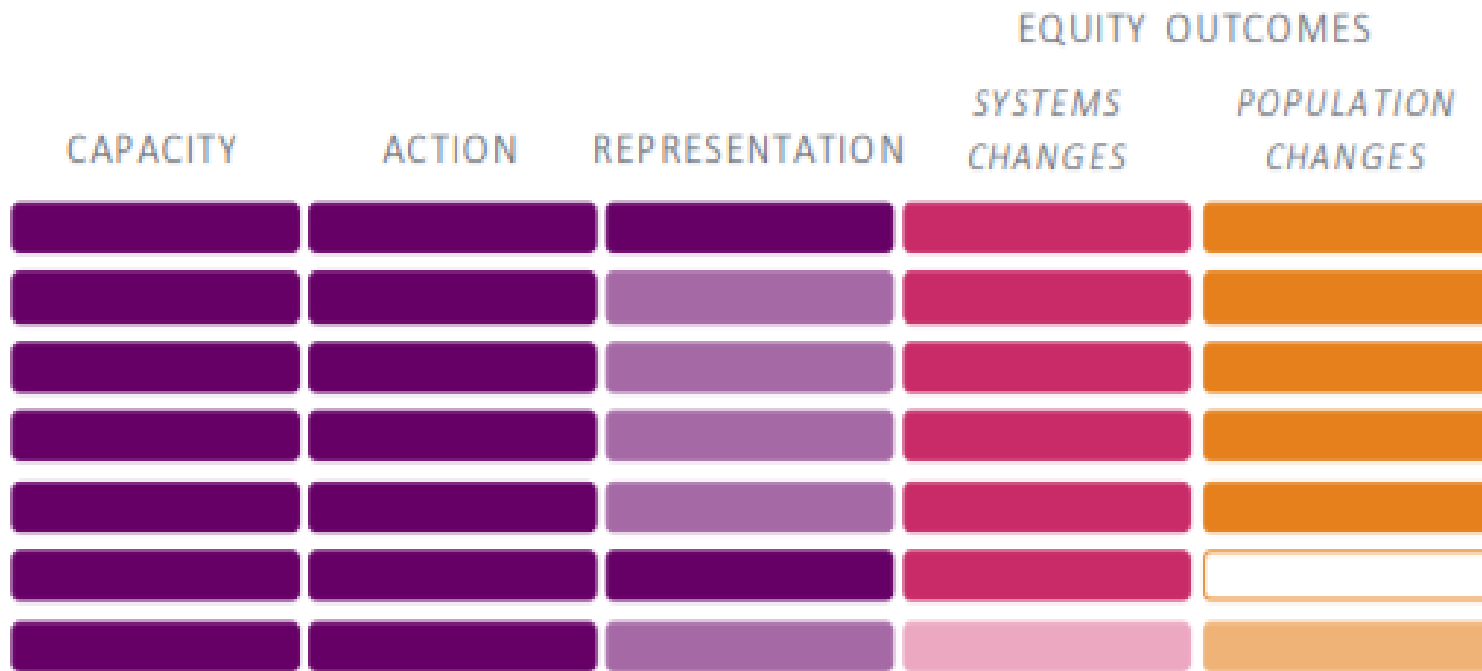


- Correlation > 0.50 and $p < 0.001$
- Correlation < 0.50 and $p < 0.05$
- ... No Significant Relationship

EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



Seven sites with stronger equity intent/actions had more equity-focused systems and population changes





Commitment



Strong evidence 



 

No evidence 

Equity Impact

  Clear evidence

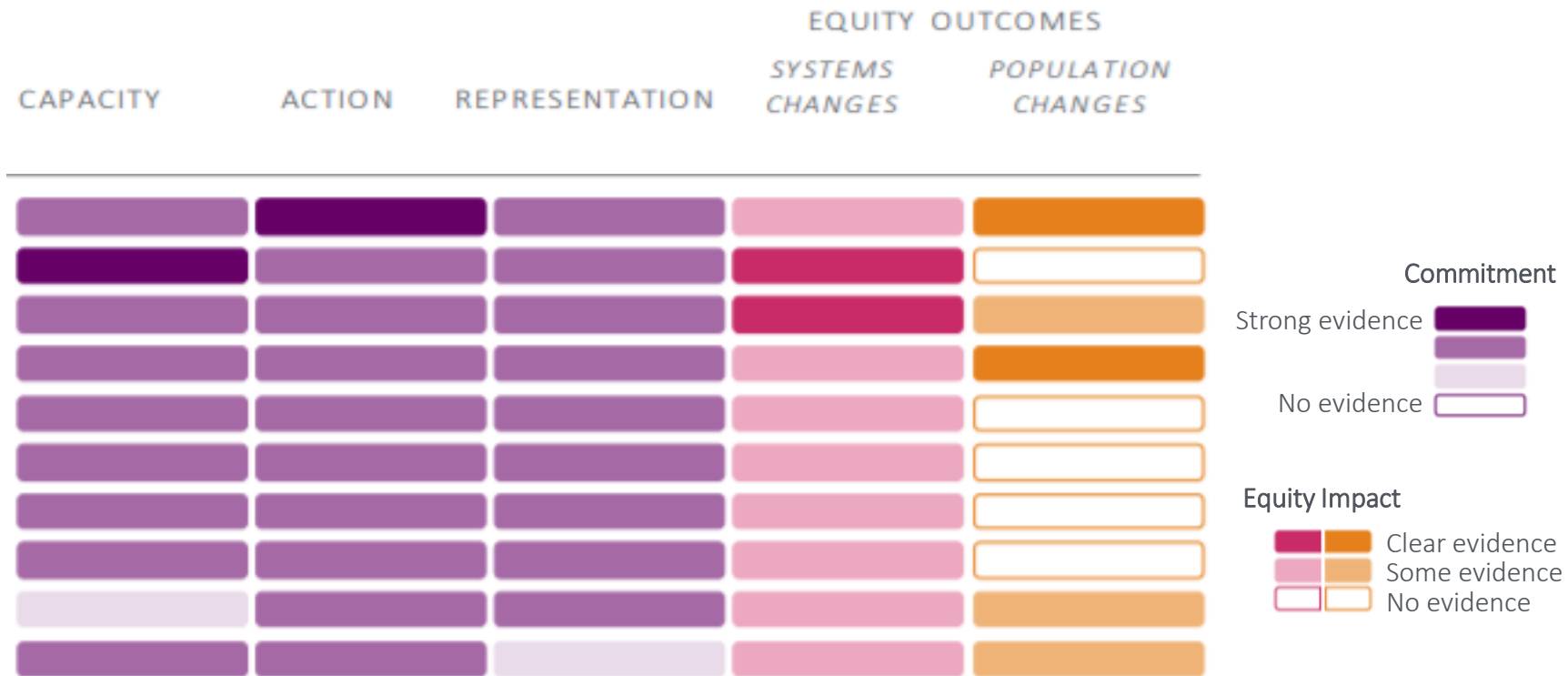
  Some evidence

  No evidence

EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



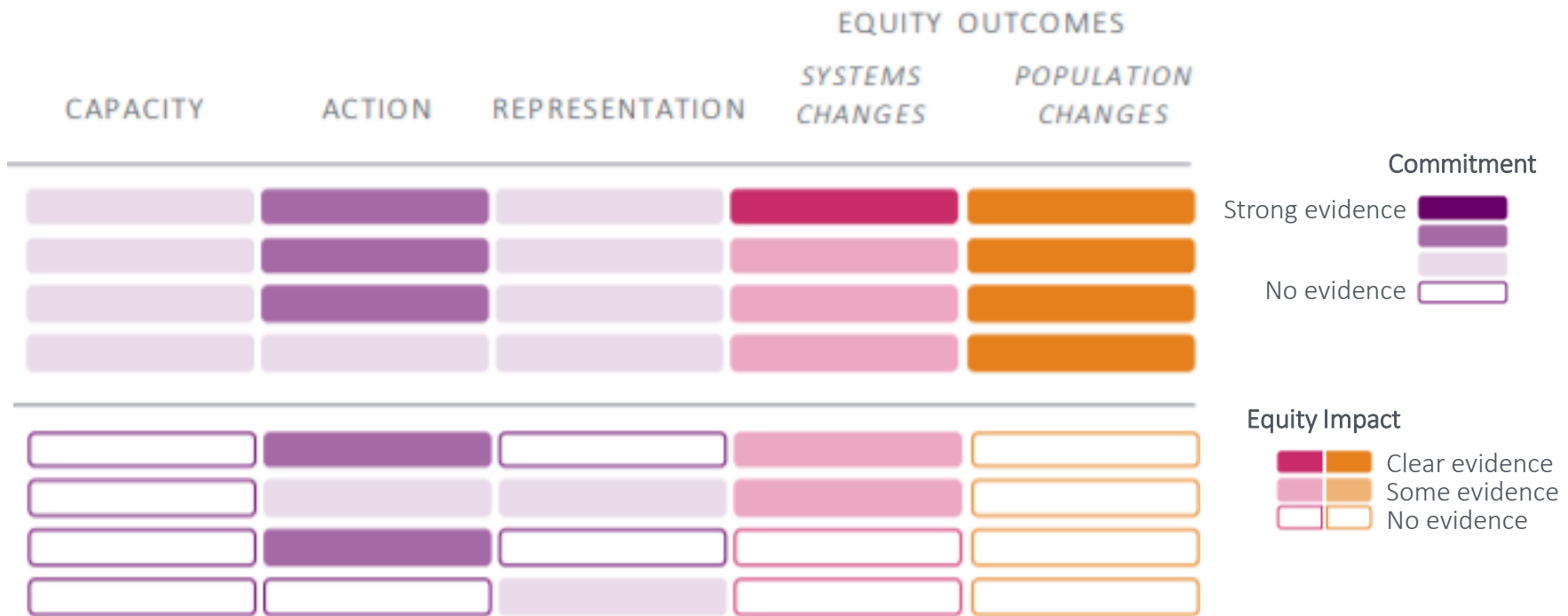
Ten sites had emerging equity intent and actions, and were beginning to see changes in equity-focused systems and population outcomes



EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



Initiatives with limited equity intent and focus typically did not see results that advanced equity, with a few exceptions.



POLL QUESTION



Question: Reflecting on elements of the rubric, in what areas do you have the most challenges in your work? [select all]

- Building equity capacity
- Taking equity actions
- Having meaningful representation
- Achieving equity outcomes in systems
- Achieving equity in population-level changes



REFLECTIONS & QUESTIONS





IMPLICATIONS



IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTORS



Laying a Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the target population• Be patient—lay a strong foundation via the backbone and common agenda
Long-Term Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess your capacity and take time to build it
Iterative Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize your actions—there is no “right” answer, but rather many different changes that are worth trying
Advancing Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help to define the problem to include equity• Focus on action WHILE building capacity and representation
Consider the Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be context aware and intentional about the role or position the initiative may take in the broader environment—remember, it may be more effective to support than to lead

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS



Laying a Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess the potential for success—is the initiative being participatory in foundational steps—selecting the backbone and common agenda• Improve the process—be a strong voice for slowing down the process to do it right
Long-Term Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be patient, but also maintain the sense of urgency—lasting solutions won't come quickly, but losing the urgency can also stall the work—help with this balance
Iterative Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be a data user, not just a recipient of the information—encourage all stakeholders to have a role in learning from and taking action in response to data and experiential learning
Advancing Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support action to advance equity WHILE building the initiative's capacity and representation
Consider the Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create awareness of existing work that the initiative can compliment and support—help the initiative avoid competing with or consuming other efforts



REFLECTIONS & QUESTIONS





Join the Collective Impact Forum – A Free Online Community for Collective Impact Practitioners, Partners, and Funders



[ABOUT US](#)

[PROFILE DIRECTORY](#)

[BLOG](#)

[LOGIN](#)



[WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT](#)

[GETTING STARTED](#)

[FEATURED STORIES](#)

[COMMUNITY](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[NEWS & EVENTS](#)

Welcome to the **COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM**

This is the place for those practicing collective impact to find the tools, resources, and advice they need. It's a network of individuals coming together to share experience and knowledge to accelerate the effectiveness and adoption of collective impact.

[LEARN ABOUT THE COMMUNITY](#)

Visit Our Community

Select your role to visit the collective impact community most relevant to you.



[FUNDER OF INITIATIVES](#)



[BACKBONE ORGANIZATION](#)



[PARTNER ORGANIZATION](#)

Sign up at

www.collectiveimpactforum.org



JENNIFER SPLANSKY JUSTER
Executive Director

jennifer.juster@collectiveimpactforum.org

123 Mission Street, Floor 8
San Francisco, CA 94105
D 415.689.3871 C 415.786.1978
collectiveimpactforum.org