

How Values-driven Organizations Create Healthier Communities:

Experiences from The Kaiser Permanente Community Fund

Everyone should be able to live a healthy life.

To realize this vision, Kaiser Permanente Northwest and Northwest Health Foundation partnered to establish the Kaiser Permanente Community Fund (KPCF) as a way to create conditions for health where it starts – in our communities, long before people have to see a doctor.

The Fund focused on the big picture of health, and how to go beyond individuals to influence the systems and policies that affect whole communities. Known as social determinants or root causes of health, these conditions for health – such as housing, employment, transportation, food, education - largely determine a person's opportunity for health.

The Fund also articulated a set of guiding values that became cornerstones of the grantmaking process, shaping outreach, screening criteria, application questions, and the review process. *Learn more about the history of the Fund:* <http://northwesthealth.org/kpcf>.



Systems Change



Community-Driven Solutions



Collaborative Partnerships



Social and Racial Equity

Kaiser Permanente Community Fund by the numbers

2004

Fund established

146

Number of organizations funded

207

Number of projects funded

\$32 million

The amount the Fund invested in Oregon and Southwest Washington

129

System changes accelerated by the Fund's investments, including:

64

new state and local policies, such as paid sick leave for workers and diverting public funds from prison expansion to community programs

29

new organizational practices, such as restorative justice instead of suspension in public schools and increased inspections to keep homes safe for renters

32

changes in neighborhood places, such as non-profit groceries, more bus stops, and multicultural business incubators

Learn more about all of the systems changes accelerated by the Fund: <http://northwesthealth.org/kpcf>.

KPCF Guiding Values

Systems Change

The ability to live a healthy life is more than any individual can ensure by themselves. The Fund supported organizations to influence policies, practices, and places that hold people back from health and instead create new opportunities in ways that are more impactful and far-reaching than what any one person can do on their own.

Collaborative Partnerships

Relationships are critical to community change. The Fund supported organizations to bring people together and harness all of the skills, perspectives, and passion present in a community to collectively improve conditions for health.



Community-Driven Solutions

People know what holds their communities back and have good ideas about how to remove the barriers they face. The Fund supported organizations to partner with those most impacted by unfair conditions, harness their talents, and act on their ideas as co-drivers of change.

Social and Racial Equity

Good health is not distributed evenly across society. Communities that have historically experienced injustice now face the biggest barriers to health. The Fund supported organizations to dismantle these barriers in systemic and community-wide ways.

What we hoped to learn

Although the Fund's partners believed in the inherent power of these guiding values, they were also curious how funded organizations applied the values to create conditions for health throughout the communities in which they worked. The Fund's partners were especially interested to learn whether and how the values of equity, community-driven solutions and collaborative partnerships were used to drive systems change. Insight for Action conducted a study of 20 funded organizations that successfully contributed to 50 system changes (see page 12 for methodological details). These 20 organizations received an average of two KPCF grants for an average of \$320,000. From these 20 funded organizations, we found answers to the following questions.

Why and how do they prioritize systems change?

What benefit does a commitment to the values of equity, community-driven solutions, and collaborative partnerships create for making system changes?

How can funders better support those doing systems change work?

Why funded organizations prioritize systems change

From the funded organizations, we learned: **Systems change is a way to create a more equitable society.**

The **20** funded organizations collectively advocated for **50** system changes across **7** systems. All system changes aimed to rectify inequities throughout education, employment, housing, food, transportation, criminal justice, and health service systems that are experienced by people who are paid low incomes, people of color, women, and youth.

number of system changes

3	3	3	6	9	10	16
FOOD	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	CRIMINAL JUSTICE	HEALTH SERVICES	EMPLOYMENT	EDUCATION
INTENDED RESULTS OF EQUITY-FOCUSED SYSTEM CHANGES						
Access to affordable and healthy food for people in low income neighborhoods	Affordable and safe housing for low income residents	Transportation options for people living in low-income and racially diverse neighborhoods so they can get to places where they work, live and play more easily	Divert individuals convicted of non-violent crimes from prison to community-based social services that keep families together, and save tax payer dollars spent on prisons while maintaining public safety	Access and quality of health services for everyone regardless of income, citizenship status, and gender	Living wage opportunities for people who are paid low incomes, women, and people of color	Access to high quality educational opportunities for people living in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty

“...if you focus on services, as important as they are, you’re not going to be able to service our way out of this cycle of poverty. It’s really going to be a fundamental shift of resources and the benefits and burdens of the capitalistic system that we live in.” -KPCF-funded organization

“The nature of culture-specific work is systems change in itself because you’re challenging the status quo. You’re challenging how humans of color are getting treated and how they access services.” -KPCF-funded organization

EXAMPLE OF SYSTEM CHANGES INFLUENCED BY KPCF-FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

 <p>Janus youth programs</p>	 <p>Catholic Community Services</p>	 <p>The Rosewood Initiative</p>	 <p>PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY & JUSTICE</p>	 <p>W/S/C</p>	 <p>HACIENDA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.</p>	 <p>Children's Institute</p>
Opened the Village Market corner store and expanded community gardens in New Columbia, a mixed-income community in North Portland	Constructed an apartment complex with on-site wraparound services for single, pregnant and parenting teens and families at risk of losing children to foster care in Salem	Successfully advocated for local transit authority TriMet to establish a new, north-south bus line (#74) on 162nd Avenue between SE Powell Blvd and NE Airport Way in east Multnomah County	Successfully advocated for Oregon prison reform bills HB 3194: Justice Reinvestment Act (2013) HB 3503: Family Sentencing Alternative (2015) HB 3078: Safety and Savings Act (2017)	Successfully advocated for HB 3391: The Reproductive Health Equity Act (2017) that established comprehensive coverage for a full spectrum of reproductive health services – including family planning, abortion and postpartum care	Built the Portland Mercado, Portland's first Latinx public market and commissary kitchen in outer Southeast Portland	Established EarlyWorks at Earl Boyles Elementary in David Douglas School District – that houses a state of the art preschool, offers summer programs and developmental delay screening and referrals

How funded organizations create systems change

From the funded organizations, we learned that: **Applying the Fund's three values of an equity mindset, community-driven solutions, and community partnerships accelerate equity-focused system changes.**

All 20 funded organizations wove these values throughout three cycles of equity-focused system change making: building power, sustaining power, and accelerating incremental changes. When planning their work, they led with an equity mindset, ensured those experiencing inequities were co-drivers of change, and partnered with diverse organizations.

Equity-Focused System Change Making

BUILD POWER

KPCF-funded organizations apply the three values to build a powerful base



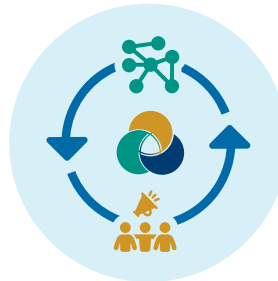
BUILD PARTNERSHIPS
with diverse organizations

Elevate those experiencing inequity as **CO-LEADERS**

Lead with an **EQUITY** mindset

SUSTAIN POWER

Fueling the bandwidth for long-term advocacy requires applying the three values



Leverage resources of **diverse partners**

Support those **experiencing inequities to voice solutions** to system gatekeepers

ACCELERATE CHANGE

Systems change is a gradual process forged by incremental changes over time; the three values together result in equity-focused system change



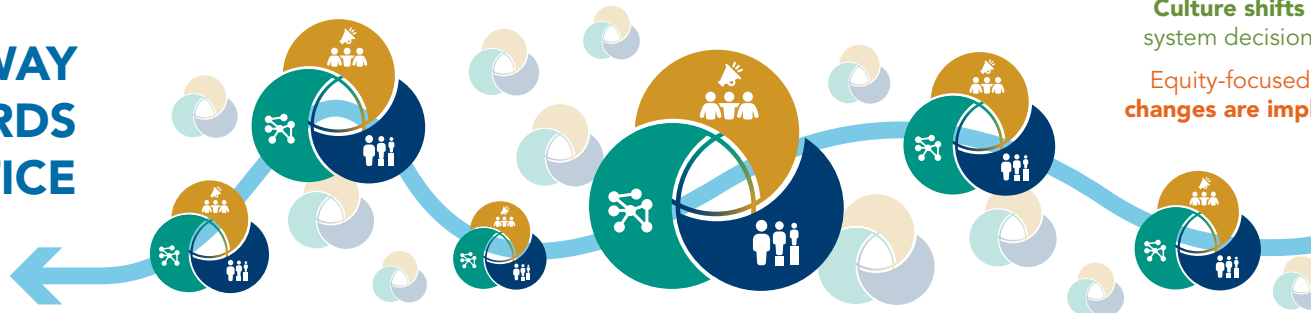
System gatekeepers **view solutions as legitimate**

Equity-focused system **changes are adopted**

Culture shifts among system decision-makers

Equity-focused system **changes are implemented**

PATHWAY TOWARDS JUSTICE



Why leading with an EQUITY mindset can drive systems change

From the funded organizations, we learned that: **An equity mindset shines a spotlight on conditions that cause inequities and those most impacted by them.**

How KPCF-funded organizations lead with an equity mindset

Organizations are on different journeys in their commitment to equity. Some organizations were founded specifically to remedy social injustices or advocate for communities facing the biggest barriers. For these organizations, equity is woven into their DNA. Other organizations embrace an equity mindset over time. Although the role of equity varies by organization, all KPCF-funded organizations weave equity principles and practices into their efforts to promote community-driven solutions and collaborative partnerships.



“ I think history necessitates that we approach systems change work with an equity lens, because when our systems themselves were developed and created on all of these inequities, there’s no other way to do it.” -KPCF-funded organization

“ We have to be laser focused on racial and social equity because otherwise, we would not truly be understanding what’s going on in our communities. Why are people being gentrified? Why are our students having a hard time graduating, being expelled and over disciplined? Why are so many of our youth and house less people targeted on transit by the police? The answers to all of these questions comes from this history that we know exists.” -KPCF-funded organization

“ [If] you’re focusing on that population and you don’t have an equity lens, I don’t know what you would be focusing on. We would not be responsive to the people that we’re working with and for whom we see the need for services and supports, that systemically there’s not equal opportunity.” -KPCF-funded organization

Why embracing **COMMUNITY DRIVEN SOLUTIONS** can drive system changes



From the funded organizations, we learned that: **People who experience inequities must become co-leaders for change** because they deeply understand what they need to live a healthy life. They live in inequitable conditions and experience every day the barriers that hold them back. System gatekeepers – those with decision-making authority – are more inclined to adopt and implement system changes that rectify inequities when they hear directly from the people most impacted.

People experiencing inequities know the barriers that hold them back and what is needed to give them a fair shot.

“ Our team might advocate for [a] policy and have the best of intentions but until we actually ground ... that in lived experiences, there’s no way of actually knowing whether what we’re advancing is ...perpetuating some of the systems of oppression or inequities that exist...”
-KPCF-funded organization

“ ...if we are going to have systems change, it has to ...meet a need and [be] ...long term about removing barriers way down the road. I think the only folks who have that perspective ...are the people who have lived it - who have either kept hitting up against the same barriers or have figured out a work around. Those are the folks who are just going to have the most success at it.” -KPCF-funded organization

When people experiencing inequities co-create solutions, they become staunch advocates for that change.

“ ...when you are able to allow folks to be able to tell their stories, to define what solutions mean to them, that allows them to feel a deeper connection to the work that wouldn’t have necessarily happened.” -KPCF-funded organization

“ I think leading the change also provides lots of opportunities for leadership development and entry points for people to get involved and more engaged, [and] to stay engaged over time so that you’re not just working on building a community center together, then that’s done and it’s over. But you have engaged community members to become leaders to accomplish something together, then they continue to accomplish things together over time.” -KPCF-funded organization

When people experiencing inequities share their stories, gatekeepers view proposed solutions as more legitimate.

“ We would go try to talk to school administrators and they’d be like, ‘Who is this person? This adult trying to talk to us about YouthPass.’ It’s very different when a group of students from your school request a meeting with the administrator of the school and says like – ‘we would like to sit down with you in private and have a conversation about how the school can review or change its budget.’ How many high school students sit down with the principal and say let’s talk about the budget of the school?” -KPCF-funded organization

“ ... the legislators want to hear the people. [They are] more influenced when people that are from the community tell their stories, then it’s more genuine. I think when they’re making these policy decisions and changes or passing bills, they actually think of Teresa or Christy or whoever, they actually can see them. As opposed to us coming in, writing this beautiful story, they can actually see a real person with their child and they can say, ‘This is real.’ I think a lot of times [legislators] are detached from the real world and they don’t see real people struggling or dealing with racism or whatever because they’re in this little ivory tower kind of thing.” -KPCF-funded organization

How KPCF-funded organizations equip PEOPLE EXPERIENCING INEQUITIES to be the CO-LEADERS of change



It takes time and effort to create inclusive environments where those experiencing inequities feel welcomed at the table and have the skills to lead, especially when communities are just starting the system change making process.

Tactic for building co-leadership

Funded partner example

Build trust between organizations and those impacted

Momentum Alliance engages and builds trust with diverse youth and young people through storytelling, arts and relationship building.

“It’s so important to really build that trust in order for them to feel motivated or encouraged to do something about whatever they’re passionate about.” -KPCF-funded organization

Raise political consciousness

Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality uses community organizing strategies – such as popular education – to raise the political consciousness about how the “isms” (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.) limit opportunities to thrive.

“It is extremely liberating to be a person who has dealt with poverty and racism to finally hear someone say, ‘That wasn’t your fault, that growing up poor and getting targeted was not your fault.’ It’s actually a system that exists around you. That perpetuates and keeps a certain few people in control and in power. You hear that for the first time, you don’t even believe it.” -KPCF-funded organization

Develop leadership skills

APANO supports immigrant parents to build their advocacy and organizing skills through a variety of tools including leadership classes, so that parents can pursue advocacy.

“It’s kind of the opposite of that ‘teach a man to fish’ analogy. We have to build a pond before we can even get people the ability to fish.” -KPCF-funded organization

The quotes came from a variety of organizations, not just the ones profiled on this page.

How KPCF-funded organizations equip PEOPLE EXPERIENCING INEQUITIES to be the CO-LEADERS of change



Tactic for building co-leadership

Funded partner example

Establish structures for community voice

Hacienda CDC established the Asamblea to co-design and raise money for the Portland Mercado and oversee its operation. Many members are Latino entrepreneurs who now own businesses at the Mercado.

“I think that we are more of a tool for the community to have a voice, rather than the key itself. The community is the key, and we’re just there to help facilitate that movement.”

- KPCF-funded organization

Hire staff from the community

Village Gardens (JANUS Youth) fills positions at Village Market when possible from the neighborhood. They also employ youth, mostly from the North Portland area, on the farm and in their farmers market.

“We have a lot of staff that either live in the neighborhood now or have in the past... it’s their community and they’re the ones that are really like, they know the situation and they know people... they are neighbors, respected leaders in the community...It wouldn’t make sense to have someone working at the front desk that didn’t live or know this neighborhood really well.”

- KPCF-funded organization

Facilitate story-telling

The Rosewood Initiative prioritizes conversations and storytelling over one-way community engagement methods such as surveys. Rosewood staff work with residents in order to share their stories – through testimony or at engagement events hosted in the Rosewood space – with decision makers.

“She [a parent] comes and testifies on how her life changed... ‘Those stories, I mean here I have these four parents [present] and afterwards I got superintendents and principals coming up to me it’s like, “Oh my goodness, I just can’t believe this, how did you do this.” Now I finally understood that without [the parents] talking they wouldn’t be doing that. The power of your customer is really bigger than we really realize.”

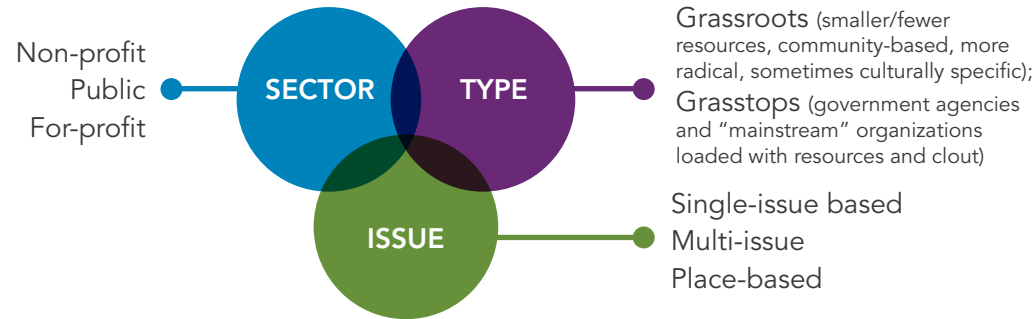
- KPCF-funded organization

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Why nurturing COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS can drive system changes

From the 20 funded organizations, we learned that: **Building collaborative partnerships among diverse organizations is a necessity for creating the bandwidth needed to change systems.** System gatekeepers are more inclined to adopt and implement equity-focused system changes when they hear from many diverse people and organizations.

Organizational partners represent a diverse typology



When diverse organizations find commonality, they become more committed to “filling each other’s gaps” by leveraging their resources – staffing, money, technical expertise, space – to expand the bandwidth needed to fuel long-term advocacy.

“...because why would we have all the answers or be able to do all the things, right? We want to rely on everyone else’s strengths and connections and relationships...because we clearly can’t do it all and we’re not the right messengers for it all.”

- KPCF-funded organization

“...all that kind of knowledge is [the] stuff that we ... rely on our partners for ...traditionally like ... a mainstream organization that has that technical expertise and ... for our movement it’s important for us to be able to develop that content expertise. [It’s] more than just..., ‘We’re stronger together’ but also the real actual skills.”

- KPCF-funded organization

When diverse organizations – especially mainstream organizations - echo each other and use their clout, gatekeepers are more likely to listen to advocates and support proposed solutions.

“... we get pigeonholed as too radical or as hard to work with. We have good relationships with mainstream organizations who can deliver the message for us. It’s like we’re fine being the radical left to set the table if we can get other people to advance what we’re trying to do. Having a mainstream partner really legitimates some of the things ... Decision makers should listen to us because we’re right on a lot of stuff but they don’t. They want the verification from a trusted source...”

- KPCF-funded organization

“The goal is, “How do we get them to focus on early childhood in the public sector?” We had a group of really high-level business and civic leaders who were committed to that because of the research, and evidence. I call that more of a clout strategy ... people who are well-placed, people who have access to elites.”

- KPCF-funded organization

How KPCF-funded organizations build collaborative PARTNERSHIPS among DIVERSE ORGANIZATIONS



It takes time and effort to nurture meaningful collaborative partnerships among diverse organizations.

Tactic for building co-leadership

Funded partner example

Identify and build relationships with champions

Partnership for Safety and Justice builds good working relationships with both legislative champions for criminal justice reform and District Attorneys who are critical to implementation of reforms.

“ Now like having [industry champion] come and talk about the importance of a respectful workplace. No matter how passionate I am, it lands differently coming from a guy who is in leadership and construction, and I’m just so excited to have him and to have the superintendent be the ones being the voice for this change because it happens so much more quickly. As much as we maybe don’t want that to be the case, it needs to come from a guy’s voice, it does, and they’re not leaving us behind. They’re coming back to us.”
- KPCF-funded organization

Lead with equity in collaborative spaces

Western States and We are BRAVE partners provided leadership to the Pro-Choice Coalition of Oregon (PCCO) – laying the groundwork over two years to center equity in reproductive health policy in the state of Oregon, and shift decision making structures within the PCCO.

“ At a service-provider meeting: “For seven people in a row, I had to interrupt and say, ‘Do you have that in Spanish?’ I was interrupting every single time. By the seventh or eighth person, they answered me ... ‘Yes, we have Spanish and English’ or ‘no, we don’t have it in Spanish, but we are going to start that next fall’ or whatever...It took half of the room before they started answering the obvious elephant in the room question. Again, you had 16 programs, did you have 50% of those programs in Spanish? No. Not even close. Not even 25% were in Spanish.”
- KPCF-funded organization

Build solidarity and trust among partners

Future Generations Collaborative employs a consensus-driven model that values each partner organization’s unique perspective, building trust among partners.

“ For the first two years...most of our work was really around just ‘No - you can trust me, really! There was never a moment when somebody’s priority or somebody’s thing was more important than somebody’s else’s.”
- KPCF-funded organization

Find the intersection among diverse issues

While **OPAL** is primarily an environmental justice organization, they work to build relationships with organizations focused on things like immigration or housing, recognizing all of these issues as part of the larger movement for social justice.

“ We organize on [many] fronts - but we have our ‘piece’ - and then we trust our partners to .. take on their pieces as well, but because it is intersectional. We have to be partnered with those folks and let them know that like this transportation issue - it actually affects you as an immigrant, it actually affects you as a renter’s rights advocate, it actually affects your safety. All of these people coming together is how we can really have strength in numbers and show up in a big way when its necessary to.”
- KPCF-funded organization

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How FUNDERS can support those doing equity-focused systems change

From the funded partners, we learned: **Successful systems change takes time; it is not a three-year project nor a “one-time won and done.”** In order to successfully advocate for equity-focused system changes, KPCF-funded organizations recommend funders change their current funding approaches in three ways.



1

Allocate more resources to organizations whose values align with equity-focused system change – such as culturally specific, community organizing and grassroots groups.

If funders **allocate** more resources to organizations whose values align with equity-focused system change, then change agents can better...

- ↳ Include those most impacted as leaders of change through community organizing and leadership development
- ↳ Nurture successful partnerships with diverse organizations through hiring coordination staff and sharing grant dollars

2

Place fewer restrictions on funding, allowing organizations to use funds to grow capacity and try new approaches.

If funders place fewer **restrictions** on funding, then change agents can...

- ↳ Keep the lights on AND
- ↳ Spend more time advocating for systems change and less time “jumping through hoops” to meet funder requests
- ↳ Be more adaptable to community needs

3

Commit to long-term funding.

If funders commit to **long-term** funding, then change agents can...

- ↳ Ensure community members most impacted continue to serve as leaders
- ↳ Sustain the bandwidth needed to successfully create the incremental changes that move us toward a just society

Methodology

Insight for Action conducted the study from August – December 2018.

Participating Organizations

To be included, organizations must have contributed to at least one system change in the last five years. The following 20 organizations met these criteria and were included in the study.

- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
- Black Parent Initiative
- Catholic Family Services
- Cowlitz Community Network
- Family Forward (Fair Shot Coalition)
- Hacienda CDC
- Hispanic Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Janus Youth (Village Gardens)
- Latino Network
- Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon (MESO)
- Momentum Alliance
- Multnomah County (Future Generations Collaborative)
- OPAL Environmental Justice
- Open School
- Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.
- Partnership for Safety and Justice
- Rosewood Initiative
- Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality
- The Children's Institute
- Western States Center

Data Sources

Two sources of data were used to understand how the 20 funded organizations employed the Fund's values to accelerate systems change.



Documents: We systematically reviewed organizations' grant reports and websites.



Interviews: We conducted at least one, 1.5 hour in-person interview with each funded organization. Each interview was transcribed.

Analysis

A qualitative thematic analysis approach was used to identify key findings.

- To describe how funded organizations applied the Fund's values, we drafted 20 detailed organizational profiles that described system changes and tactics used to lead with equity, ensure those experiencing equities are co-drivers of change, and partnering with diverse organizations. These organizational profiles were created by reviewing documents and interview transcripts.
- To describe why the Fund's values were important to systems change, we coded the interview transcripts using Dedoose – a web-based qualitative software analysis program.