Field Building

Successful field-building initiatives coordinate the efforts of multiple organizations around a common goal and create the conditions necessary for sustained, systemic, community change. They have five key components:

1. Principles of Practice
2. Shared Identity & Branding
3. Knowledge Base & Capacity Supports
4. Leadership and Grassroots Activation
5. Funding and Supporting Policy

Why Principles?

**Insufficient solution** - Scaling individual organizations is insufficient to solve complex, evolving social problems. *Without* field-building, we are at much greater risk of being incremental, episodic and not scaling & sustaining true population-level systemic change.

**What works** - Achieving population-level change requires intentional coordination across a field’s actors – “**building the field**” – to elevate and sustain its collective practice. One vital strategy is to build a **field** of place-based partnerships (PBP), anchored in **principles** of high-quality, proven impact.

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**Emerging Phase**
- Impact scattered and sporadic; small fraction of problem resolution

**Forming Phase**
- Impact more consistent; infrastructure, collaboration and coordination accelerate progress

**Evolving / Sustaining Phase**
- Impacts accelerating; fields can achieve and sustain impact at scale

Source: The Bridgespan Group, “**Field-Building for Population-Level Change**”, 2020, incl. McAfee, Haggerty
How Principles Can Drive the Field

- Principles accelerate movements
- Principles provide shared identity
- Principles provide aligned vision of what “good” looks like

Principles improve outcomes

Source: Kyle Gardner, KG Impact Advisors consultancy
What are the place-based principles?

The underlying and collective assumptions, attitudes, and mindsets about how systems work and achieve sustained impact.

The markers that indicate that both the critical components are in place and they collectively come together in a community to accelerate change.

The way data is used to set goals, assess progress, and continuously improve, focusing in great part on racial equity.

Skills, behaviors, and traits that individuals, teams, and communities working to achieve results must learn and exemplify to drive improvement.

Outcomes Framework

Core Capacities

Values & Beliefs

Characteristics & Conditions
Discussion Questions

1. As you reflect on the approach to principles—what resonates, what’s missing, and how might we prioritize?

2. How do you imagine operationalizing these principles in your current or future work?

3. What are other important elements of field building that should be considered to accelerate progress?
Thank You