Meyer Foundation

understanding equity, systemic racism, systems change, and more

a glimpse at the definitions behind equity and the components of meaningful change.

[definitions]

equity - the just, fair, inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity requires an acknowledgement of the historical and contemporary injustices that create or contribute to different, disproportionate, and unwanted outcomes for some members of society, and requires intentional action to dismantle those injustices.

racial equity - the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares in society. Racial equity is more than the establishment of fair treatment, and fundamentally requires that past inequities be resolved so that the current conditions, and not just the treatment of people, cannot be predicted by race.[1]

racial justice - the proactive creation and reinforcement of policies, processes, relationships, and power structures, as well as deeply-held values and norms to advance racial equity.

individual-level racism

internalized racism - the private racial beliefs held by individuals that shape and influence their self perceptions and how they show up in the world.

interpersonal racism - how we act upon our racial beliefs when we interact with others, for example, expressing explicit or implicit bias, bigotry, hate speech, or violence.

systemic-level racism

institutional racism - policies, practices, and processes within institutions and systems of power, for example, school systems that provide unequal opportunities for people of different races.

structural racism - a history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.[2]

systemic-level racism is historic and persistent.
it can be found at the root of many of our region's (and our nation's) greatest challenges.

this is why we need systemic change:
a fundamental change that addresses the root causes of racial inequities in policies, processes, relationships, power structures, and deeply-held values and norms.

In effect, systems change is about "shifting the conditions that are holding a problem in place. Conditions include: policies, practices, relationships, resource flows, power dynamics, and mental models."

- John Kania, FSG

At the Meyer Foundation, systems change is the fundamental path to achieve racial equity in education, employment, housing, and asset building. We believe the following components change systems:

- public policy advocacy
- leadership development toward power building
- increasing public and political will around, or to advance, racial equity
- developing constituents' capacity for advocacy
- efforts driven (or informed) by the people most affected
- efforts that build or engage partners and coalitions
- community organizing
- narrative change
- identifying points and systems of intervention
- efforts that create broad impact and macro-level change
- efforts that are intentional, not inadvertent

[1] Source: https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary
[2] Source: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf