



Systems Change & Structural Transformation

Systems change and structural transformation are both essential approaches to addressing social issues and creating a more just society. Structural transformation involves comprehensive and transformative change at a societal level, while systems change focuses on specific institutions or governing structures to bring about more equitable outcomes. The two approaches can complement each other and, together, contribute to broader social progress. Below is more detail about how the Foundation understands these concepts:

Systems Change

Many social issues are deeply rooted in **outmoded ways that social, economic, and political systems like institutions and governments operate that are either one-size fits all, racialized, rigid or excessively punitive**. So, to make lasting and impactful systems change for equity, it is necessary to understand how these unjust and outdated systems show up locally, regionally and beyond in order to address them.

Making societal change through 'systems' refers to a deliberate and strategic effort to transform the structures, policies, practices, and cultures within institutions and governing entities to achieve specific goals or address complex societal challenges.

Engaging in systems change means developing collaborative strategies that challenge unjust structures and advocating for institutional changes that promote social justice and equity. In order to drive sustainable and long-lasting change, it involves working with various stakeholders, sectors and constituencies. It also entails measuring and evaluating the impact of these efforts to ensure they align with the community's goals or intended impact and lead to positive outcomes for the communities most impacted by the unjust system(s).

Structural Transformation

Structural transformation focuses on altering the fundamental elements of society, such as cultural norms, power dynamics, and institutional practices that contribute to social problems and perpetuate disparities. This type of societal change entails recognizing and **addressing the implicit biases, power imbalances, language usage and entrenched barriers that hinder progress**. It involves challenging existing social structures (both implicit and explicit) that maintain inequality and working towards creating more inclusive and equitable civilization.

The Leever Foundation believes that structural transformation for matters like racial equity cannot be dismantled through discrete systems change alone; it needs to be coupled with work to transform cultural norms about race and the intersection of race with other marginalized identities in order to create lasting change for communities.