

2023 Report: Forging Impact

Camber Collective

February 20, 2024



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www.cambercollective.com

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the entire Camber Collective team for their assiduous and focused work in 2023. Special thanks to the members of the Equity Action Group, whose diligent work helped advance Equitable Project Design from a back-of-napkin sketch to a robust and actionable framework.

About Camber Collective

Camber Collective is a strategy consultancy with offices in Seattle, San Francisco, Washington DC, and Paris. Camber provides services at the intersection of social and behavioral insights, strategy, and coalition building to help organizations identify where and how they can work for the greatest impact.

Our work is anchored within five sectoral areas: US Health, Global Health, Climate, Gender Equality, and Shared Prosperity (which includes Democracy). As a firm, we possess deep experience in advanced segmentation and voice of the beneficiary research; system mapping and landscaping; quantitative and qualitative analytics to define strategic choices; designing and supporting stakeholder engagement strategies; and facilitating strategy development, organizational and investment planning, and change management. Camber works with major philanthropic institutions, bilateral and multilateral institutions, government agencies, NGOs and community development organizations, think tanks, venture philanthropy and individual philanthropists, and impact-oriented private sector organizations.

Visit us at <https://cambercollective.com>.

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Introduction: Camber's 2023 Impact Report

2023 was a year of growth, impact, and learnings at Camber. We're excited to share this report as we look back on our work with clients and partner organizations around the world.

Our mission is to drive impact and develop talent in an economically sustainable model. In 2023, our first as a B-Corporation, we doubled the size of our organization with amazing new talent and seeded the social sector with Camber alumni taking on new roles in organizations driving equitable outcomes in health, prosperity, and climate. We worked closely with our clients and partner organizations to influence and amplify impact. This Impact Report highlights a select set of projects across our priority sectors and issues, and we welcome your feedback and input on how we can continue to improve our work and partnerships.

As we look to the future, we can all do more to drive equitable outcomes, processes, and policies. Camber is proud to launch Equitable Project Design and our Gender Equality Sector. Equitable Project Design integrates equity into every aspect of our work, from project scoping and design to methods and deliverables. Our Gender Equality Sector represents a formalization of over a decade of our work tackling the barriers to equality for women, girls, and sex and gender minorities.

Camber is a consultancy for an equitable and regenerative world. We are grateful for your partnership as we continue to grow, learn, and influence impactful programs globally and locally.

Wishing you an impactful and growth filled 2024.



Brian Leslie
CEO and Co-Founder



Equitable Project Design Origin Story

The concept of Equitable Project Design was instigated from a puzzle: how could Camber Collective authentically elevate the voices, ideas, and power of those whom we mean to serve? A little over 10 years ago, one of our founding Partners, Hope Neighbor, worked with the Hewlett Foundation to design an effort to understand how women and families in Niger make decisions about, and access, family planning services and products. We worked with local partners, surveyed and interviewed women, providers, and local stakeholders. This first of its kind project led to a segmentation analysis and design of new programs to enable local community health workers and the Ministry of Health to better meet the needs of people and communities.

Our approaches and methods have evolved as we progressed on our equity journey. We saw an opportunity, and indeed, a necessity to instill localization and co-creation, elevating the constituents and communities most impacted as key thought partners and participants in strategy formation.

As professionals driven to advance the greater public good globally and locally across health, shared prosperity, gender equality, and climate, we wanted to push ourselves to a deeper, more authentic, and sustainable practice centering the equity [promise](#) that we had adopted as an organizing principle in 2021.

What was our role, as change-agents, or at least indirect purveyors of social impact, in integrating equity into our project delivery? What cultural relativisms were we overlooking? How could we, as the advisers and “helpers”, continue to lift up the voices and ideas of those we mean to serve in how we researched and analyzed, conceptualized and designed, and supported execution of social impact programs?

Pondering answers to these existential considerations evolved into a series of team-wide conversations about our evolving approach to client engagements and delivery. What were our *aspirations and values* around racial, gender, and social equity, really? And how could we effectively assess, catalogue, normalize, incorporate, and amplify these in our project design, delivery, and dissemination? And if we succeeded at all



that, how might it support both processes and outcomes that are more collaborative, trust-based, and non-extractive?

Whatever conveyances lay ahead for Camber, we determined, would be underlain by a commitment to continuing our growth and learning in anti-racist and equitable practices, and our collective agreement to address the injustice and systemic oppression deeply ingrained across societies. Our stance would need to incorporate ongoing, focused learning, and pinpoint a few key guideposts and deliverables. And as our efforts cannot succeed in isolation, we would have to identify ways to both guide and learn from our clients, project delivery partners, and community stakeholders along this journey toward elevated equity. We also knew that as consultants, we needed an organizing framework with supporting methods and tools, and we gave our framework a name: **Equitable Project Design**.

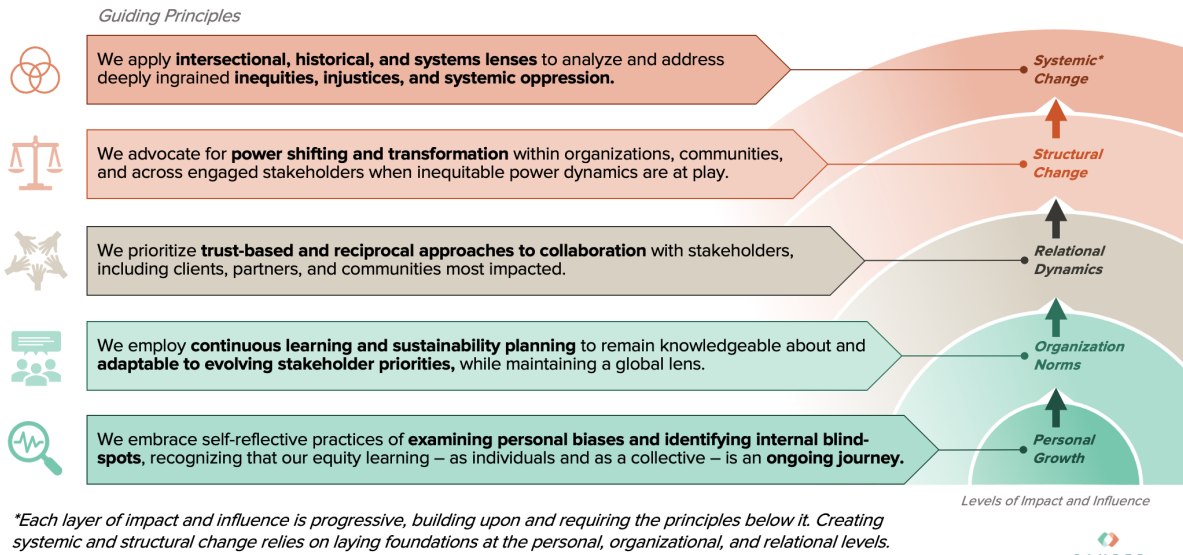
Refining and Defining Our Concept

Equitable Project Design (EPD) has its basis in the concept of [Liberatory Project Design](#), a concept of the National Equity Project which seeks to apply an equity-focused lens to traditional Design Thinking principles. In contrast to the mission of product designers, social movement organizations, or community-based organizations working towards direct service goals, we embraced the opportunity to refine the lens to more closely adhere with our purview and impact theses as a strategic advisory firm.

Emanating outward, from the existentially essential level of personal bias, mindset, and growth, all the way to systemic change, our theory of impact around Equitable Project Design has five concentric spheres of activation:



Camber's Equitable Project Design principles guide our approach to creating transformative impact through our interconnected levels of influence



Visual Design of Camber Collective EPD Framework

As visionary as this concept is, we enshrined a realistic mindset into EPD from the start. As we said in our November, 2022 [article](#):

As in all facets of the world and life, a 100% purity attainment goal is unrealistic. Not all clients and contexts will align with Equitable Design principles in uniform ways, and the journey is also iterative. To keep us anchored in our own values and vision of social impact and systemic change, we are establishing a team playbook of considerations across the entire project cycle that will help us execute the work with honesty, confidence, and equitable influence.

With determination, we envision that employing this lens and approach will allow the firm to grow and evolve to a place where all team members will have the tools and competency to guide our teams and clients through issues of equity that affect their organizations, industries, and stakeholders. Ultimately, we aspire that our equity lens becomes a key aspect of our brand promise as well as a touchstone for client confidence and trust, centered on values alignment.





Team Candids from May 2023 Regional Convenings



EPD MVP: Key Tenets of Equitable Project Design

Our full EPD Framework includes over 100 questions and considerations. Here are some of the baseline, most universal ones:

Understanding the equity context and project parameters

1. Do we understand the context and equity issues at play within their field or those faced by their constituents? What do we want to change? Who can help us? Who/what stands in the way?
2. How much can we really influence, where/when do we agree to ease up? How does this flow fit into our overarching or long-term theory of influence and impact?
3. What do we know about where the client is in their equity journey? How will we push them or how might they push us?

Preempting potential equity "blindspots"

1. How are we aware of and ensuring we do not perpetuate white saviorism and the white, colonial, or male gaze in this project? How can we proactively discuss, codify, and navigate scope boundaries so we avoid becoming "white saviors"—even if we are asked (directly or indirectly) to play that role?
2. How will we avoid forcing or assuming a Global North (Western/US/EU) mentality into the project? What local power systems, brokers, influencers, and situations must we learn?

Navigating power dynamics

1. What balance can we strike between "capacity building" (which implies we know everything already) and "collaborative convening and co-design" (which is less assumptive)?
2. Who holds power and should/can cede some? Who holds power and is not in the room, and how can we bring them in?

Continuous learning and sustainability planning

1. To what extent can we ensure the work, and our learnings, are most accessible to the field, including communities who will most benefit? (publications, budgets, conferences, etc.)
2. What tactics, resources, and connections can we put in place to ensure that the relationships and levers we build do not shut down forever once our project is complete? What's the "sustainability" plan for the project and the partnership?
3. What will we learn/measure/report out to the team at the end of the project that furthers our learning and growth in equity, and how?



Looking Back at 2023: EPD Year One

A year and a half after our initial conversations, we can celebrate some of the many important marks we've made along this journey, with tangible organizational tools and resources that anchor this continued work:

- We have built curated set of equity considerations by project phase, over 130 questions and markers we can incorporate into the full project lifecycle, from scoping to delivery to closeout
- We have built and revised our internal project tools with a focused embedding of equity considerations into our work
- We have begun building a library of resources, frameworks, and learnings for all of our client serving sectors that incorporate equitable principles overall, and by sector
- Having socialized the framework and elements with the team, we are now applying EPD into our own internal ways of working: learning, celebrating, building belonging, and leadership at all levels

Having a definitional framework has provided an anchor and organizing principle to scale the implementation and impact. This trajectory was already evident in a 2022 [blog post](#) in which we said:

As we build out this values alignment in our practice and demonstrate a deeper focus on equity and sustainability, we are even finding that new partners who were skeptical of the consulting sector writ large are eager to engage with our services. We are gratified to see this development, for we do believe that, by integrating equity into our theories of influence and client work, Camber Collective can help disrupt and dismantle the collective history of racist, exclusive, extractive, and colonial practices in the humanitarian and philanthropic sectors.

This report highlights some of the project work and sector impact that we are pleased to have driven in 2023. In addition to the client work, of which just a few illustrative examples are included, we also have leveraged this framework for how we define and position our internal progress and brand promise. Some of our major considerations include:



Internally: As a Growing and Developing Team

- How can we use EPD resources to elevate and act on equity-related considerations in a meaningful, non-performative manner at high leverage points throughout the life cycle of our projects?
- What means exist to apply intersectional, historical, and systems lenses to analyze and address deeply ingrained inequities, injustices, and systemic oppression, with a particular commitment to being an anti-racist practice?
- What measures can we implement to continually examine personal biases and identifying internal blind-spots, recognizing that our equity learning – both as individuals and as a collective – is an ongoing journey?

Externally: With Clients, Partners & Communities

- What priorities can we set around trust-based and non-extractive approaches in engagement and collaboration with stakeholders?
- How can we, from our position, advocate for a power shifting transformation within organizations, communities, and across stakeholders?
- In what ways could we continue to leverage iterative monitoring and learning and reflective practices to remain adaptable to evolving stakeholder needs?

Please peruse some of the highlights from 2023 that incorporate Equitable Project Design principles.



Gender Equity: Building To Understand and Act: The Women’s Health Innovation Opportunity Map

Thirty years ago, the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993 was passed, changing the trajectory of women’s health research in the US by requiring NIH (National Institutes of Health)-funded clinical research to include women and underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities. In the last three decades, women have seen major advancements in health, including greater, more efficacious family planning methods¹ and global reductions in maternal mortality.²



And yet, too many women still die or live in poor health due to social and structural inequities, often exacerbated by crises such as conflict, climate change, and COVID-19.³ In the US, women’s reproductive rights were transformed overnight by the Supreme Court’s 2022 overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, with dissenting Justices stating that “young women today will come of age with fewer rights than their mothers and grandmothers.”⁴



Against this backdrop, 2023 was a milestone year for the women's health research community. In early 2023, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women's Health engaged Camber Collective to help bring together a partnership of women's health experts, innovators, and advocates that, over nine months, produced the inaugural [Women's Health Innovation Opportunity Map](#). This report, launched in October at the Grand Challenges Annual Meeting in Dakar Senegal, highlights 50 high-impact opportunities to advance innovation for the health of women globally.



A core principle shared by BMGF, NIH, and Camber was to ensure an [inclusive and collaborative approach](#) to develop the Opportunity Map. To that end, Camber helped design and facilitate an approach by which over 250 stakeholders—known as the Innovation Equity Forum (IEF)—[collectively generated, evaluated, and prioritized opportunities](#). BMGF, NIH, and Camber worked to ensure diverse perspectives were not only represented but [elevated](#) within the IEF: members spanned over 50 countries and a variety of sectors, age groups, races, and ethnicities, and IEF leadership positions were [held equally by members from low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries](#). To promote equitable engagement among members worldwide, Camber designed [creative collaboration methods like virtual white boarding, asynchronous](#)



drafting and feedback, and a hybrid convening with in-person and virtual participants. Throughout, Camber, BMGF, and NIH took a highly iterative approach by sharing interim results alongside a variety of input-gathering activities so that members saw their feedback reflected.



The Opportunity Map study has already made significant impact in the field of women's health research.

Since publication, the Opportunity Map—alongside landmark studies that demonstrate the economic and societal value of women's health research⁵—has been widely referenced, including in a ground-breaking report by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with McKinsey Health

Institute that calls for greater investment in women's health.⁶

The momentum to coalesce global leaders, researchers, and communities around the importance of women's health continues to increase: the World Economic Forum recently launched the Global Alliance for Women's Health, and the Biden Administration established the first-ever White House Initiative on Women's Health Research.





As funders, innovators, and community advocates partner to operationalize the Opportunity Map over the coming years, we anticipate three key outcomes that will continue to move the needle on women's health equity:

1. Improved equitable inclusion, participation, and funding of women across the R&D continuum.
2. Increased investment in women's health innovation that addresses critical needs for diverse groups of women and leads to a high return on investment, including financial returns and health and social benefits.
3. Strengthened partnership and alignment of key stakeholders to create a more robust, well-funded, and equitable women's health R&D ecosystem.



US Health: Including Fathers in Family Care: WA Fatherhood Council

From 2023-2024, Camber supported the WA Fatherhood Council in its development of the WA Fatherhood Study. The Council is a collaborative of WA state agency providers, community partners, funders, advocacy, academics, and most importantly fathers with lived experiences. Camber and the Council conduct a nine-month “WA Fatherhood: State of the State” study that includes a landscape of current policies, funding, programs and experiences of fathers and fatherhood figures in Washington state, with a focus on identifying gaps and needs to inform strategic planning and policy recommendations.



Many people *assume* that because fathers are men/male-presenting adults, they do not face systemic or structural barriers and challenges that require equity considerations. **The opposite is true.** Our society has systemically created barriers and challenges that often ignore the needs of fathers and undervalue the importance of fatherhood. It was important to involve fathers and those with lived experiences every step of the way because many times “we didn’t know what we didn’t know.”

The vast majority of state agency leaders, staff, and providers, especially those working in early childhood and family supports, were women. Similarly, women also represented the front-line service providers in health care (social workers/community health worker, pre-/post-natal, pregnancy providers etc.), childcare, and social services.

In order to understand how fathers access services, move through the systems, and how they perceive bias and exclusion, we had to be open to **listening to their stories**. The WA Fatherhood Study covered a breadth



of topical areas including Basic Needs (e.g., food, housing, financial support), Health (physical, mental, behavioral), Education, Employment, Family Supports, Safety, Legal, and Justice systems. Camber focused on the state and local systems, and in partnership with a University of Washington team focused on the experiences of dads by conducting a statewide “Dads Survey” and conducting a [series of listening sessions with providers and lived experience individuals](#). We learned that oftentimes there are important intersections between race/ethnicity, income level, justice involvement/history, and relationship/custody status, and other factors that impact how fathers experience exclusion and limited access to services.

Our belief, using a [Targeted Universalism](#) framework, is that all fathers should have an equal opportunity to be a positive and supportive presence to their children and co-parents. With that goal in mind, there are fatherhood segments that experience disproportionately more barriers and challenges, access fewer services and resources, and experience worse outcomes. What proved challenging was the data collection and analysis approach in the Study. In order to understand the fatherhood experience, we needed [disaggregated data by gender and parental status](#). Most programs report the gender split, and also whether a household unit is a family with children. However, few programs capture at the individual level whether an adult receiving services is a mother or father. Agency partners and program leads discovered the importance of asking adults whether they have (minor) children in their household, and/or if they have shared custody of a (minor) child. By understanding how fathers are currently receiving services or not receiving services as compared to the general population, we can see whether there are systemic or structural barriers.

In many of the family support programs (e.g., home visiting, food & cash assistance, and early learning programs), it is mostly mothers accessing services on behalf of the family or enrolling the child. In traditional family unit, the father would receive benefits as a part of the household. However, non-traditional families (e.g., shared custody, non-cohabitating) are often not equally supported, and it’s usually the father who receives fewer benefits. The systems involved in serving families have not fully grasped the variation and



nuances of non-traditional families, and how to support them in an equitable way that doesn't pit father against mothers in the division or prorating of resources.

Our goal in the Study was **disrupt a resource scarcity mentality** that pits fathers against mothers. This shifting can be difficult because with any publicly funded program, there are limited resources, and inevitably, there are perceptions that by serving fathers more, you may be taking away from mothers. We facilitated **monthly co-design sessions** with the Council in order to navigate these nuanced and often politically charged conversations, many of whom were parents (fathers and mothers) themselves and understanding the dynamics and challenges associated with non-traditional family structures, shared custody arrangements, and co-parenting plans. In some cases, we developed a deeper understanding of the issues and came up with opportunities and strategies for the future.

In other cases, we only scratched the surface of the issues by **naming the types of data metrics – inputs and activities, disaggregated by parental status, that we want to see tracked and reported.** By understanding how fathers are accessing, or not accessing certain programs like food and cash assistance, transitional housing/shelters, child support order modifications, family supports and parenting classes, and postpartum and mental health services, we will begin to better formulate strategies on how to serve a father's unique and often unmet needs.



Adopting an abundance model, we took care not to pit fathers against mothers in the program design.



US Health: Broadening Access to Crucial Health Care



In 2022, Camber began working alongside City of Hope to envision a robust model for supportive care services that provides comprehensive whole-person care for patients undergoing cancer treatment such as physical, practical, emotional and psychological, social, educational, and spiritual supports. We had the

opportunity to build on that work in 2023, collaborating with the client to strategize how to potentially leverage technology to extend the supportive care services model beyond the City of Hope ecosystem.

One of the key objectives of the project revolved around expanding supportive care access to underserved populations who face systemic socioeconomic, racial, or geographic barriers to care and often suffer inequitable and subpar health outcomes as a result. Such inequitable outcomes serve to compound the myriad injustices that typically characterize the under-resourced members of our society.

As a first step in exploring how to expand access to City of Hope’s supportive care model to all those in need, especially the underserved, Camber launched an extensive primary research campaign revolving around three key activities—convening an Advisory Board comprising supportive care subject matter experts; fielding a survey of cancer patients; and conducting focus groups with cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers. While the strategic insights gleaned from the Advisory Board meetings, we facilitated were invaluable, it was imperative to **balance the insights garnered from those who operate from a place of authority with those affected by cancer as patients and caregivers who often do not have a guaranteed seat at the table.**



Camber thus placed great emphasis on ensuring that the content, structure, and delivery of the survey and focus groups was [considerate of the circumstances of cancer patients, survivors](#), and caregivers as well as [designed to generate a deep understanding of a diverse set of needs](#). Given the sensitive nature of our primary research topic—living the cancer journey, from diagnosis to hopeful remission—we collaborated closely with the client to craft survey and focus group questions using [appropriate and respectful language that provided the space for authentic sharing](#). To include the voices of non-English speakers, we worked alongside City of Hope to [translate](#) questions into Spanish; though Camber is cognizant that cancer is not limited solely to Spanish and English speakers, these two languages combined are spoken at home by ~90% of Americans. Finally, we sought to ensure that survey and [focus group participants were representative of the US cancer population, especially with regards to their geographic, financial, and racial/ethnic backgrounds](#).

Camber leveraged everything we learned from the survey and focus group participants to better understand the different barriers preventing people from benefiting from supportive care services as well as which services should be prioritized. We utilized this nuanced understanding to develop the overarching model for a digital supportive care services tool expressly [designed to mitigate access barriers](#) and provide those services deemed most in need and/or most impactful by our primary research participants.

Our recent work with City of Hope reinforced the importance of employing an intentional approach to understanding and addressing health inequities that not only elevates the voice of those most impacted, but also is [cognizant of the historical and social roots of those inequities](#)—and the Camber US Health team is excited to continue to further build out and refine this approach through our 2024 project work.



Global Health: Task Force for Global Health Campaign Effectiveness Coalition

In 2023, Camber engaged with the Task Force for Global Health (TFGH) Health Campaign Effectiveness (HCE) Coalition. Camber played a key role in supporting the co-development of their Collaborative Action Strategy which is a strategy that seeks to guide partners toward a future state where health programs collaborate effectively with each other and with corresponding health services to maximize the impact of campaigns on health outcomes, and ultimately aims to catalyze stronger, more resilient country-led health systems in the long-term. This strategy adopts systems lenses and aims, among other things, to work on inequities by streamlining campaigns and maximizing resource use benefiting populations.



The study was co-developed in 2023 by 48 global, regional, and country-level experts

representing major campaign funders, implementors, and country leadership (grouped into Task Teams). Camber played a pivotal

role in advocating for the inclusion of representatives from countries in the Global South within these task teams and in reaching out and including them. This effort aimed to ensure equitable representation and amplify diverse voices in shaping the strategy. The work of these task teams was iterative and collaborative, with specific focus around developing trust and giving legitimate voice to all stakeholders.



The TFGH and Task Teams developed and adopted an [expanded definition of campaign effectiveness](#). Traditionally, campaign effectiveness is measured through coverage with indicators that primarily measure targets, prevention, detection, treatment, and results/outcomes. Given the desire for an expanded definition beyond coverage, it can also be understood as a combination of additional parameters, including: [efficiency, equity, availability, access, service quality \(including timeliness\), clinical outcomes, resilience and responsiveness, community awareness and community acceptance and engagement](#).

As part of this work, Camber contributed to defining indicators assessing an expanded campaign effectiveness definition. We proposed a [comprehensive list of suggested indicators](#) designed to guide countries in developing Monitoring, Evaluating, Learning, and Adaptation strategies across campaigns. Drawing from implementation research, international best practices, and feedback from stakeholders at global, regional, and country levels, this list aims to enhance the measurement framework's [consistency and clarity](#). By offering adaptable guidance, countries can tailor these indicators to their specific contexts, ensuring a more [accurate and relevant evaluation](#) of health campaign outcomes.

To circumvent this potential issue, we suggested an [equity indicator](#)—"Disaggregation of access and coverage data through socioeconomic, gender, geographic, and ethnic factors"—to [measure the degree of fairness](#) in the ultimate distribution of the campaign intervention. Similarly, for [access](#), Camber proposed indicators such as the “mean distance to services for the target population” or “cost of getting the treatment for the target population” to measure the [ability \(physical, financial, cultural\)](#) of the target population to utilize the health services provided. These indicators not only enrich the evaluation process but also [prioritize equity considerations within campaign assessments](#).

As the project transitions into the “planning and execution phase” of the CAS, we have been tasked with [assessing the current HCE Coalition Governance Operating Model](#) through interviews and surveys, followed by recommended updates, to reflect the evolving stakeholders' priorities. We specifically considered [how to integrate community and equity considerations into the governance diagnosis and framework](#), trying to ensure that [decision-making power is distributed appropriately](#) among stakeholders. During diagnosis and implementation, power shifting towards countries and beneficiaries as well as continuous learning and



adaptability were clear priorities with specific mechanisms recommended. This is a work in progress, and Camber’s goal is to help refine a governance structure that not only supports effective decision-making but also fosters inclusivity, ownership and sustainability.

Camber is excited to continue to work with the HCE Coalition and help support focus country leadership in reviewing, customizing, and implementing the CAS to their specific contexts and needs. In that context, 2024 plans include building a [Country Ownership and Partner Transition Plan](#) to help transition work to country ownership of the CAS, fostering sustainability and resilience of the project.



Climate: Building Bridges Across Intersections



Climate change is more than just an environmental concern; it's an amplifier of existing societal structures and disparities.

— Dr. Chidibere X. Ikejamba and Ella Geisner. Read more [here](#)

“Camber Collective played a pivotal role in global climate discourse, notably at the African Climate Summit in Kenya, COP28 in Dubai, and the New York Climate Week. We not only showcased our sector's achievements but also actively contributed to panel discussions that **emphasized the critical intersections of climate change with agriculture in Africa, gender equality, economic development, and migration.**

These engagements underscored our commitment to **integrating comprehensive strategies** that address both environmental sustainability and social equity, reinforcing our dedication to spearheading community-led innovative solutions for

climate action and sustainable development across the globe.

As our Climate Sector lead, Dr. Chidibere X. Ikejamba says above and also here: “Climate change is more than just an environmental concern; it's an **amplifier of existing societal structures and disparities.** Within the geographic context of Africa, the confluence of gender and climate has profound implications for vulnerability, resilience, and empowerment. Women's vital roles in agriculture, artisanal mining, and market sectors expose them directly to the whims of an unpredictable climate, magnifying vulnerabilities. The very framework of climate action must center a gender-inclusive lens, wherein women are not only the beneficiaries of climate policy, but its architects—driving innovation and holistic solutions.”



Shared Prosperity: Finding Prosperity for More: What Contributes to Lifetime Income?

In 2023, Camber Collective and the Economic Mobility & Opportunity team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) partnered to publish and disseminate a first-of-its-kind meta-analysis of life experiences that contribute to lifetime income—and the different ways in which Americans perceive the impact of these life experiences.

In the United States and in absolute intergenerational terms, economic mobility has been declining for decades. While plenty of research has been conducted to understand the different causes and manifestations of this decline, few have looked at the [relative importance of diverse experiences along the life path](#), nor [integrated the beliefs and experiences of people across the country](#) at such scale. Applying these prisms availed an opportunity to fill the evidence gaps; bring data to inform investments, programs, and policies; and begin to challenge common misbeliefs around the largely systemic drivers of economic prospects.

The study identifies the relative economic impact of 28 different life experiences from birth through adulthood, drawing upon a meta-analysis of peer-reviewed academic literature, program evaluations, expert consultations, and a first-of-its kind survey of 4000 Americans to provide important lived experience insights. We are excited to expand upon, and disseminate, our findings throughout 2024 as part of Camber's new research series *Mobility Experiences: A Research Series on Pathways to Economic Mobility*. Key insights will be made available to technical user groups such as funders, local decision-makers, and direct service delivery organizations at the community level, alongside a broader push to embed findings within the general public discourse via media and website dissemination.

When we [center people in research](#), our insights are consistently richer—supplementing the 'what' with the 'why' and the 'how'. The *Mobility Experiences* research not only strengthens the evidence base of what is already shown to contribute to economic mobility, it also highlights opportunities for further investigation to strengthen evidence on the impact of life experiences we known to be critical, but for which evidence is





currently less abundant. Moreover, this research helps to start shed light on the biases and inequities of traditional academic methods where the experiences of marginalized communities are often erased in data.

As a firm, we are hopeful this report activates greater, and more effective, investment toward research and integrated interventions that eliminate barriers and enhance access to important experiences across the life course for more Americans. We look forward to providing follow-on support to organizations who express interest in applying these findings, via more sustained technical assistance.



Priorities for Further Expansion

Building upon not only these project outcomes, but our EPD approaches that were “hiding in plain sight,” we recognize a few key deliverables that will help us scale and broaden this approach. On page 7, we share our in-progress “EPD MVP” (minimally viable product) universal guidelines for our projects, determining, when possible, how to incorporate key equitable practices (many of which we had been employing for quite some time) such as:

- Application of historical/colonial context
- Centering the voice of the affected, and compensating our local experts for their participation
- Applying cross-sectoral/intersectional framing
- Employing equitable sampling and data analysis
- Continually relying on storytelling and visual narrative (as you will read in this report)

This report serves both as a sample lookback to some of our progress in EPD work, but it also helps pave the way that we wish to continue evolving the practice. It is our hope that our ongoing and future work will leverage EPD to [encourage innovation, equity, co-creation, and norm-shifting](#). We want Equitable Project outcomes to become the norm.

As our firm becomes more deeply adept at authentically and systematically embedding and delivering equitable strategies and solutions for our clients, we can collectively galvanize equitable, transformative outcomes in constituent communities our clients serve. In so doing, Camber can meaningfully contribute to redressing the systemic injustices and oppressions that are so deeply ingrained in our society. This is our Grand Vision, and we are grateful to our clients, partners, associates, friends, and even strangers with critical voice, who help us continue to advance in this direction.



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⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/24/1102305878/supreme-court-abortion-roe-v-wade-decision-overturn>

⁵ Wham report WHAM report: https://thewhamreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TheWHAMReport_crosscutting-compressed.pdf

⁶ WEF report: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Closing_the_Women%E2%80%99s_Health_Gap_2024.pdf



