Leading Change: Promoting the Voices of BC's Early Care and Learning Sector

Evaluation Findings - Final Report

March 21, 2024

Table of Contents
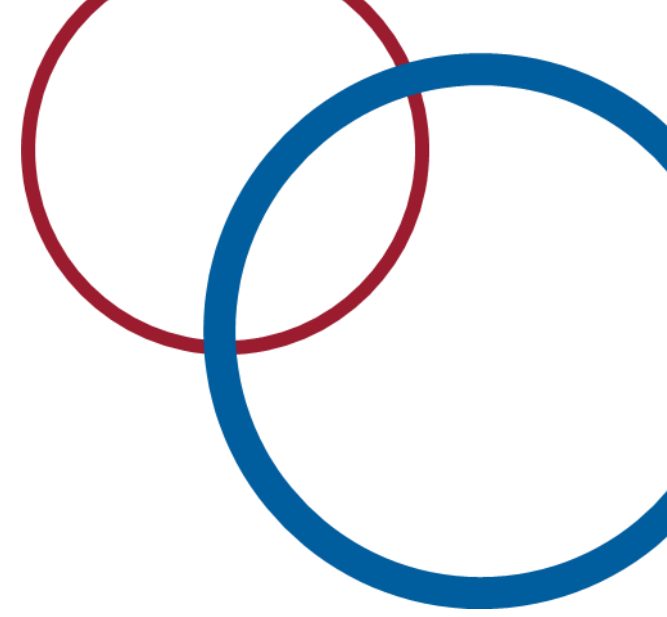
Introduction

Introduction

Leading Change

- Leading in a Changing Environment: Promoting the Voices of BC's Early Care and Learning Sector

- Developed by Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) and funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)

- Program designed to amplify the voices of BC's early care and learning (ECL) sector

- The Leading Change initiative is also supported and guided by various advisors, comprised of Métis Nation BC, ECEBC leadership alumni, and various community partners

ECE Recruitment

36
PROFESSIONALS

Program Length

18
MONTHS

Leading Change: Program Overview

The intention of the Leading Change initiative is to amplify the voices of BC's early care and learning (ECL) sector to ensure full participation of ECL professionals in local, provincial and federal decision making. This initiative builds on the premise that frontline ECL perspectives and knowledge are necessary in moving toward a system of early care and learning in BC that supports the ongoing economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirty-six (36) professionals were recruited from across the province, with a specific focus on recruitment of early childhood educators (ECEs) from groups underrepresented in leadership positions, to engage in **collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and systems focused planning**. Over an 18-month period (May 2022 – October 2023), participants engaged in a program to enhance their leadership skills, build confidence in their abilities, skills and knowledge, and create opportunities to share expertise with colleagues, decision makers, partners, community networks, and other organizations to focus on local child care solutions. The program culminated in a wrap up and celebration in early November 2023.

By the end of the program, participants aimed to use the learnings generated through Leading Change to implement localized, community led childcare solutions as part of local and regional pandemic recovery and response efforts.

SRDC undertook a developmental evaluation of the program, working collaboratively with ECEBC and the advisory committee to support planning and implementation of the initiative. The evaluation's primary goal was to capture how the program contributed to preparing ECEs to maximize their participation at multiple decision-making levels within the sector.

Project Objectives (1 of 2)

1. Empower ECEs to lead and inform systems change within the sector as part of local, provincial and federal pandemic response and recovery effort

2. Develop alternative ways of sharing knowledge and expertise that encompass the multiple ways of knowing within the sector (e.g., storytelling, oral histories, visual representations, etc.)

3. Create a network of passionate and engaged ECL changemakers who represent the diversity of the sector

4. Address burnout and low morale in the sector by lifting up ECL professionals, affirming their knowledge, skills and contributions, and "changing the narrative" within the sector

Influence ECL sector

Alternative ways of sharing knowledge

Strengthened collaborations & networks

Uplift ECEs

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Project Objectives (2 of 2)

5. Facilitate the development and implementation of community-led childcare solutions.

6. Encourage full participation of ECL professionals in all levels of decision making.

7. Facilitate engagement and connection between participants, decision makers, media and other stakeholders.

8. Remove barriers to participation for ECEs underrepresented in leadership positions through virtual learning to bring cohorts together and compensating participants for their time engaged in the project.

Leadership & confidence

Advocacy & activism

Renewed connections

Remove barriers to participation

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Project Intentions

Directly and indirectly, this initiative aims to effect change at three levels: 1) individual, 2) group, and 3) sector or policy.

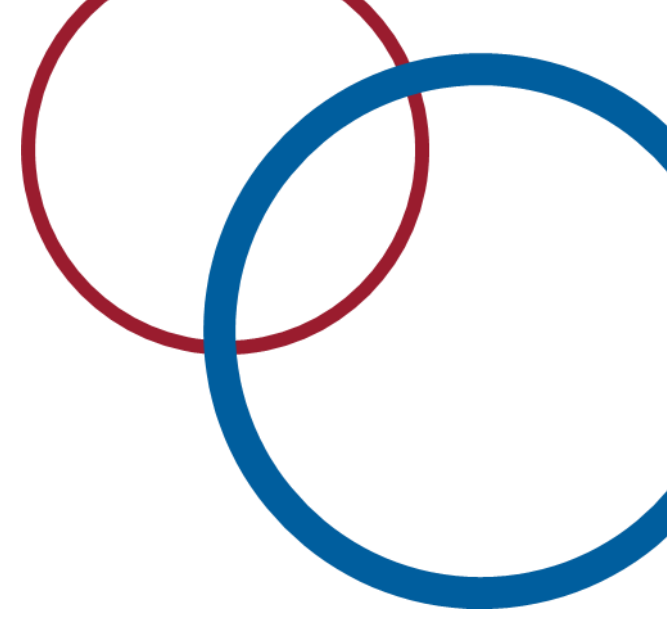|	
Individual-level change *(participants)*	↑ leadership and self-expression skills ↑ self-confidence in contributing their voices to help inform decision making around BC's changing childcare landscape ↑ sense of empowerment and well-being ↑ connection with peers - Renewed connection to their strengths, lived experience and wisdom
Group-level change *(cohort level)*	- Generation of community project ideas ↑ networks and partnerships, opening possibilities for change in the sector ↑ knowledge and opportunity to apply best/promising practices ↑ development and implementation of localized community led childcare solutions
Policy/ sector-level change *(cohort and broader sector)*	**Participants:** ↑ knowledge and application of strategies to influence change ↑ collaboration and strategic partnership capacity - Participants are better equipped to take action towards / influence systemic change **Sector:** ↑ awareness of importance of ECEs and role in influencing change ↑ localized, community led childcare solutions as part of local and regional pandemic recovery and response efforts

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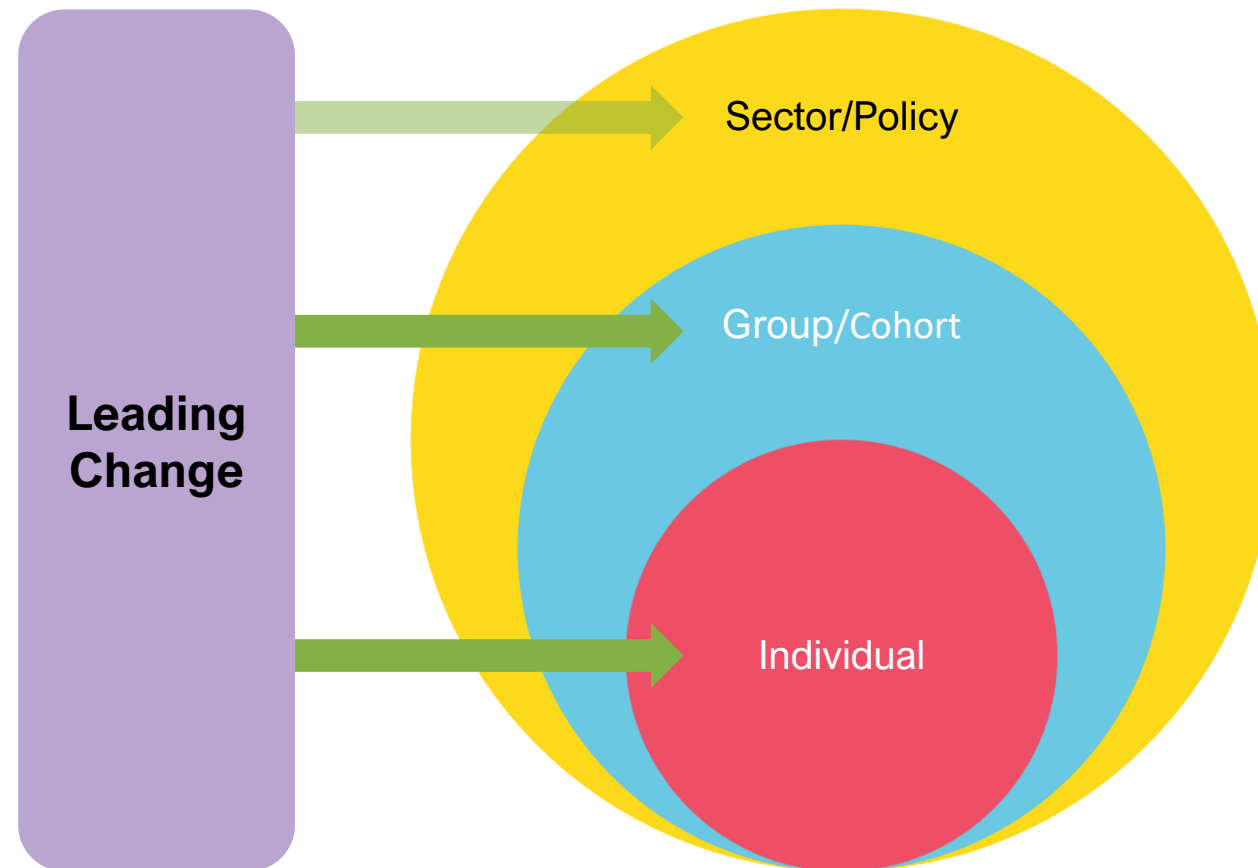SINCE DEPUIS 1991
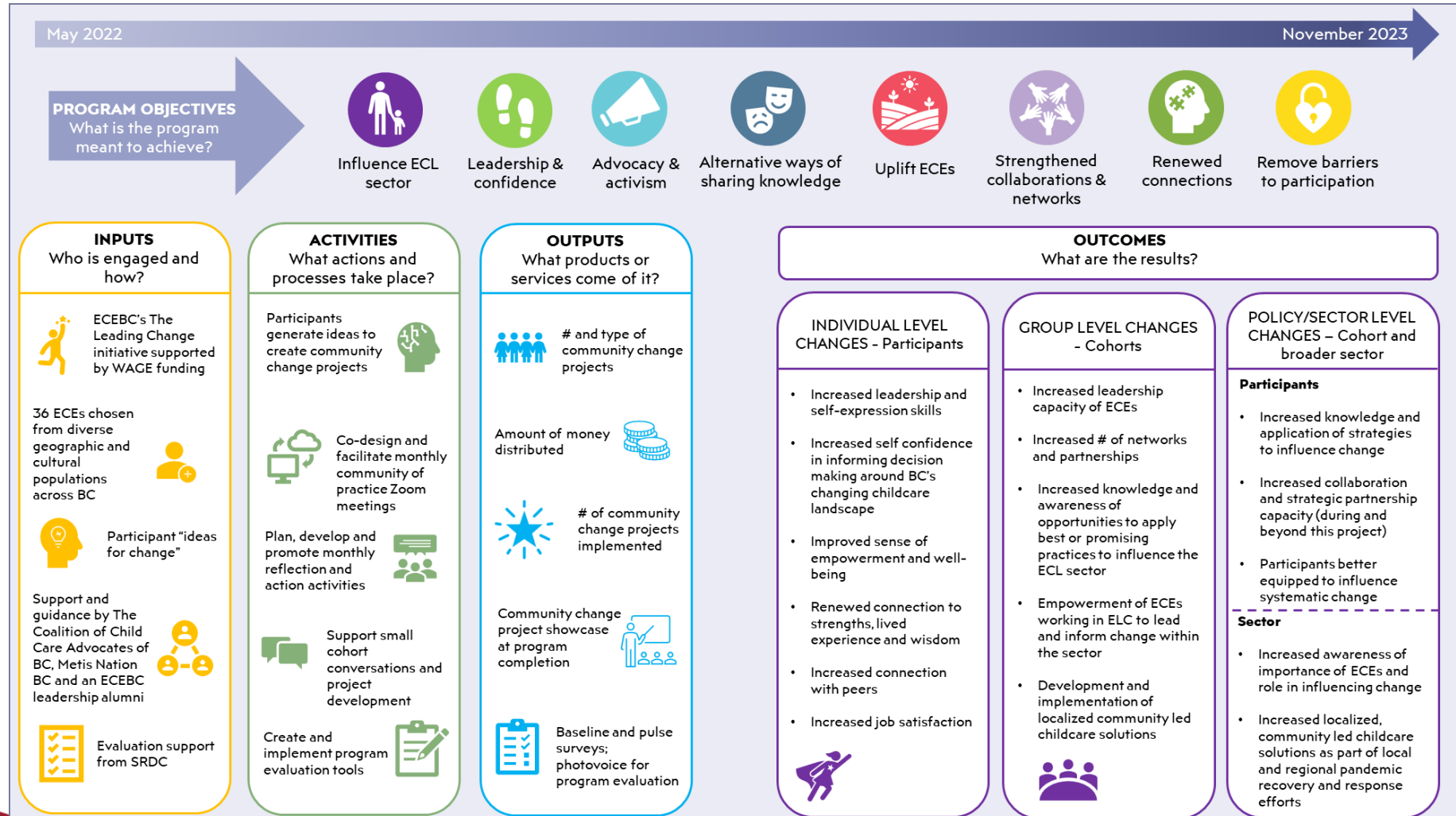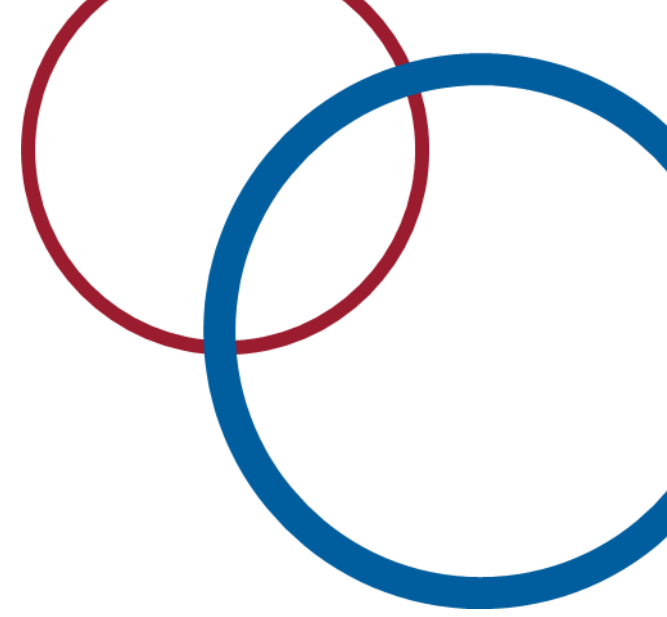INNOVATION • EXPERIMENTATION • EVALUATION

Program Model

Spheres of Influence

Leading Change is intended to effect change across three levels, with direct effects at the individual and group levels, visualized below.

Leading Change Logic Model

May 2022 → November 2023

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
What is the program meant to achieve?

- Influence ECL sector
- Leadership & confidence
- Advocacy & activism
- Alternative ways of sharing knowledge
- Uplift ECEs
- Strengthened collaborations & networks
- Renewed connections
- Remove barriers to participation

INPUTS
Who is engaged and how?

- ECEBC's The Leading Change initiative supported by WAGE funding
- 36 ECEs chosen from diverse geographic and cultural populations across BC
- Participant "ideas for change"
- Support and guidance by The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Metis Nation BC and an ECEBC leadership alumni
- Evaluation support from SRDC

ACTIVITIES
What actions and processes take place?

- Participants generate ideas to create community change projects
- Co-design and facilitate monthly community of practice Zoom meetings
- Plan, develop and promote monthly reflection and action activities
- Support small cohort conversations and project development
- Create and implement program evaluation tools

OUTPUTS
What products or services come of it?

- # and type of community change projects
- Amount of money distributed
- # of community change projects implemented
- Community change project showcase at program completion
- Baseline and pulse surveys; photovoice for program evaluation

OUTCOMES
What are the results?

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CHANGES - Participants

- Increased leadership and self-expression skills
- Increased self confidence in informing decision making around BC's changing childcare landscape
- Improved sense of empowerment and well-being
- Renewed connection to strengths, lived experience and wisdom
- Increased connection with peers
- Increased job satisfaction

GROUP LEVEL CHANGES - Cohorts

- Increased leadership capacity of ECEs
- Increased # of networks and partnerships
- Increased knowledge and awareness of opportunities to apply best or promising practices to influence the ECL sector
- Empowerment of ECEs working in ELC to lead and inform change within the sector
- Development and implementation of localized community led childcare solutions

POLICY/SECTOR LEVEL CHANGES – Cohort and broader sector

Participants

- Increased knowledge and application of strategies to influence change
- Increased collaboration and strategic partnership capacity (during and beyond this project)
- Participants better equipped to influence systematic change

Sector

- Increased awareness of importance of ECEs and role in influencing change
- Increased localized, community led childcare solutions as part of local and regional pandemic recovery and response efforts

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Methodology

Evaluation Overview & Data Collection Methods

Evaluation Purpose

To understand the impact of the Leading Change initiative → how and to what extent this program contributes towards influencing change in BC's ECL sector.

Data Collection Methods

Participant Surveys

Photovoice

Evaluation Questions

Design and implementation

1. To what extent has the Leading Change project met its objectives?

Outcomes and impact

2. What have been the outcomes and early impacts of this initiative?
   a. Did the initiative achieve the anticipated outcomes?
   b. What were the unintended outcomes (positive and negative), if any?

Overall value and fit

3. How has the Leading Change initiative contributed to preparing ECEs to influence change in the ECL sector in BC?

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Data Collection

- Data collection activities were conducted throughout the project, starting with an orientation session for all Leading Change participants in June 2022. During this time, participants were introduced to the evaluation team, provided an overview of the evaluation, and the opportunity to discuss the evaluation framework.

- Participants were also introduced to the Photovoice method and completed the baseline survey. More details of the Photovoice and survey data collection methods are presented on subsequent slides.

Surveys

- Surveys for this project were developed using items adapted from previous SRDC instruments and scales from the literature, such as the Leadership Self-Assessment tool.
- Items adapted from these instruments, along with some customized items were used for participant self assessment of general ECE skills, job satisfaction, psychological empowerment, leadership skills and wellness.
- Each survey took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete
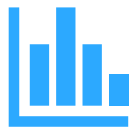
Baseline survey (T1)
June 2022

Pulse survey (T2)
November 2022

Pulse survey (T3)
May 2023

Final survey (T4)
November 2023

Photovoice & Facilitated Discussion

- Photovoice is a qualitative method developed in 1990s by Wang and Burris in China as part of a women's health project. It combines photography, critical dialogue and experiential knowledge.

- Photovoice was selected for this project because of its ability to provide insights into changes or experiences, including unintended or unexpected consequences, from the perspective of the participant.

Participants take photos that are meaningful to them.

Participants decide on the main message of the photos and add titles and descriptions.

Participants share photos and engage in dialogue about their experiences.

Photovoice & Facilitated Discussion

- Leading Change participants were introduced to Photovoice at the beginning of Leading Change and participated in a refresher workshop in September 2023

    - 16 participants submitted photos for Photovoice.

- During a two-day in person celebration at the end of the Leading Change project (November 2023), SRDC researchers facilitated three small group discussions.

- All participants, including those who did not submit photos, were invited to take part in the discussions.

- Photovoice participants reflected on their experiences with the program, their perspectives as ECEs and as leaders, and key messages to share with policymakers
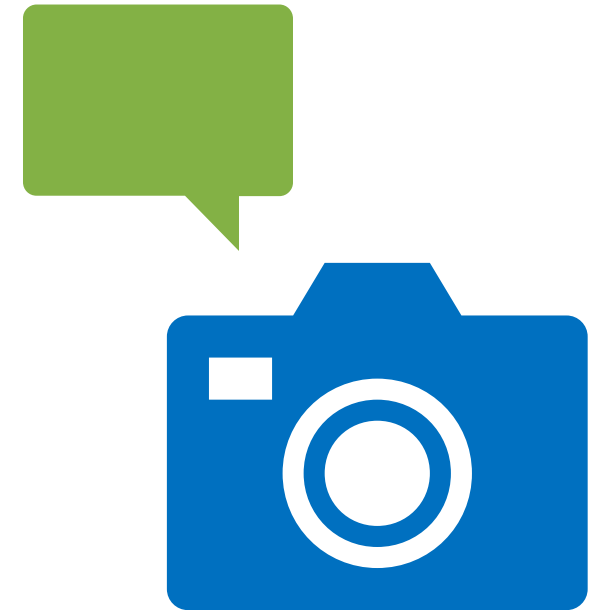
Data Collection Schedule

June 2022
- Orientation
- Baseline survey (T1)
- Introduction to Photovoice

May 2023
- Pulse survey (T3)

October 2023
- Photovoice activity

- Pulse survey (T2)

November 2022

- "Refresher" Photovoice workshop

September 2023

- Final survey (T4)
- Photovoice facilitated discussion

November 2023
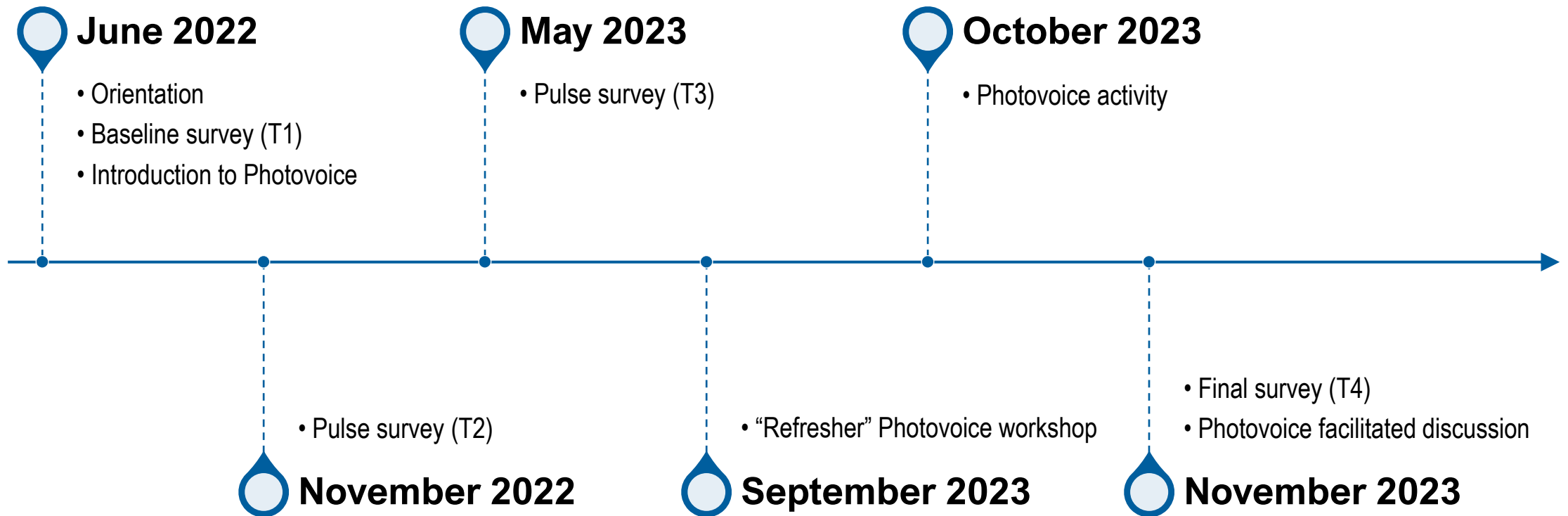
Limitations of the Evaluation

This evaluation had features and circumstances which pose limitations on the interpretation and extrapolation of its findings. Chief among these were:

- No counterfactual – Ideally, for a program measuring impact, we would have contrasted the experiences of participants in the Leading Change program with a similar cohort of ECEs who were not exposed to the program. As we did not have a counterfactual for this purpose, we utilized a pre-post design to determine individual level impacts. Evaluation findings in this report are primarily based on participant self assessment and reflections.

- Small sample size – Having a small sample (n=36) impacted our ability draw definite conclusions on certain aspects of the program, especially on sector or policy level outcomes. It also affected our ability to report on some demographics of interest. A qualitative method (photovoice) was included in the evaluation to provide more in-depth information and perspective.

- Budget - We were limited in our ability to assess for changes at the sector level, as typically these are longer term changes. More funding would allow for any follow-up or post-program data collection measures.
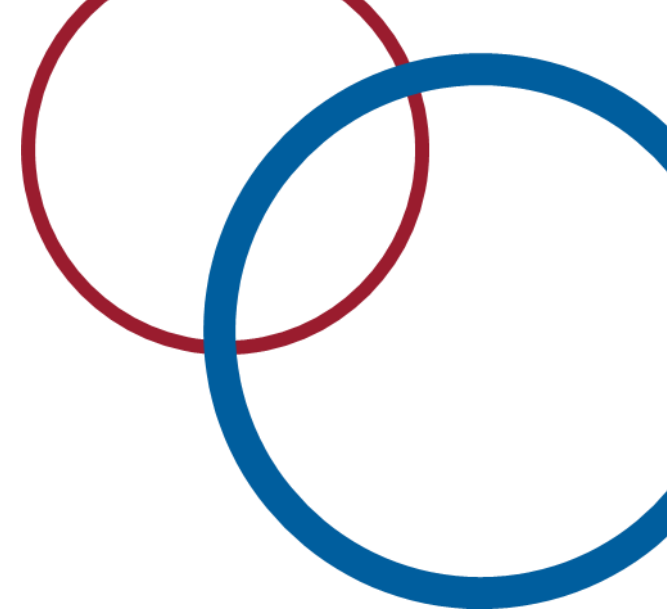
Findings:
Participant Demographics

Participant Selection Considerations

- In selecting participants for this project, ECEBC developed selection criteria with a view to engaging a diverse group of participants from across BC. These included:

  - A range of diverse geographic and cultural representation;
  - Holding space for the rights-based leadership of Indigenous ECE's;
  - A range of community change action project ideas;
  - A mix of workplaces and programming that reflect a broad Early Care and Learning sector; and
  - A mix of ECE experience

- Participation in the evaluation was voluntary, however a high proportion of participants willingly took part in the data collection activities. Participants who engaged in the evaluation could also choose whether to answer or skip any question. This included the demographic questions, which were used to review whether engagement of typically underrepresented groups occurred.

- 36 participants completed the baseline survey in June 2022. 31 completed the next survey (T2), 29 completed survey 3 (T3) and 25 participants completed the final survey (T4) in November of 2023 (69% of the initial sample). The following results are based on participants who completed at least the baseline and final surveys.

Survey Response Rates

Participant Demographics

- Overall, the 25 participants who completed both the baseline and final surveys had a collective 234 years of experience in the sector (ranging from <1 year to 30 years).

- Leading Change participants were from all over the province. The largest proportion, 32%, were from the Vancouver Island area followed by 24% in the Interior.

- According to BC stats, Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions were underrepresented, based on population density (38% and 24% of population, respectively). However, this may have been by design, with a focus on prioritizing participants that are typically underrepresented.

- 36% reported that they either lived or worked in a rural or remote area.

- Based on the robust representation from more rural and remote parts of the province, it appears that the Leading Change program was able to reduce or eliminate potential access barriers for participants who might typically experience barriers due to geography.

Participant Demographics cont'd

N=25

16% Fraser

24% Interior

12% Northern

16% Vancouver Coastal

32% Vancouver Island
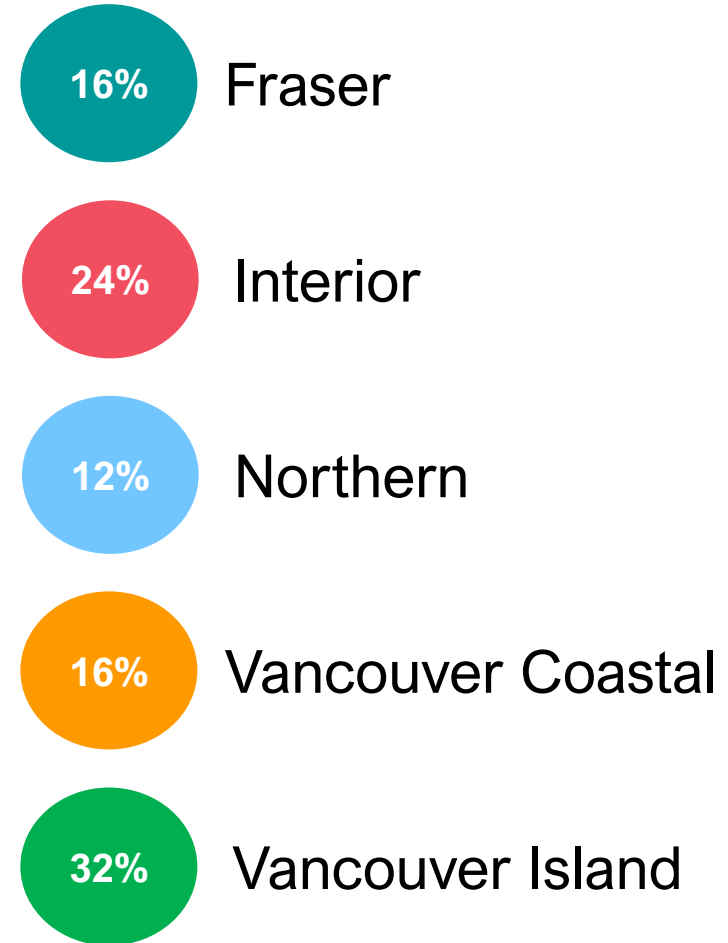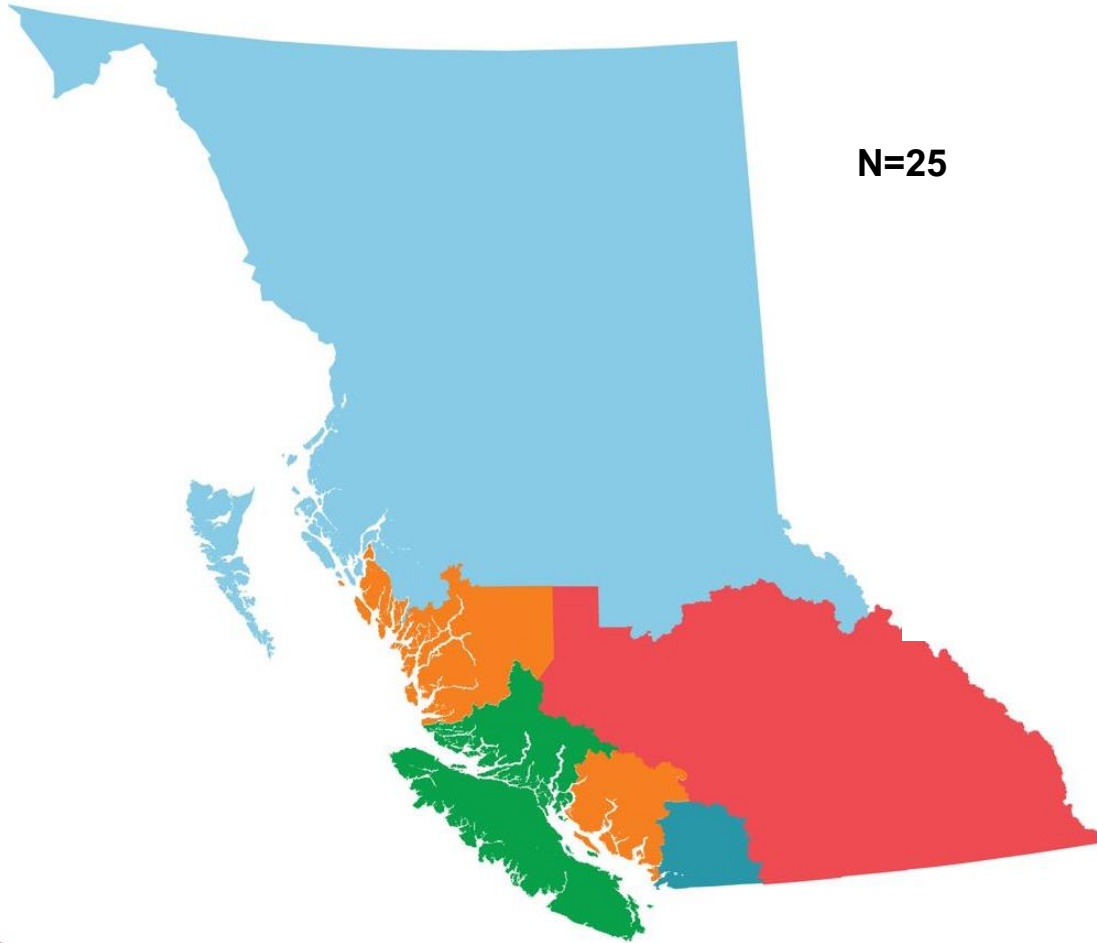
Image Source: First Nations Health Authority
(https://www.fnha.ca/about/regions)

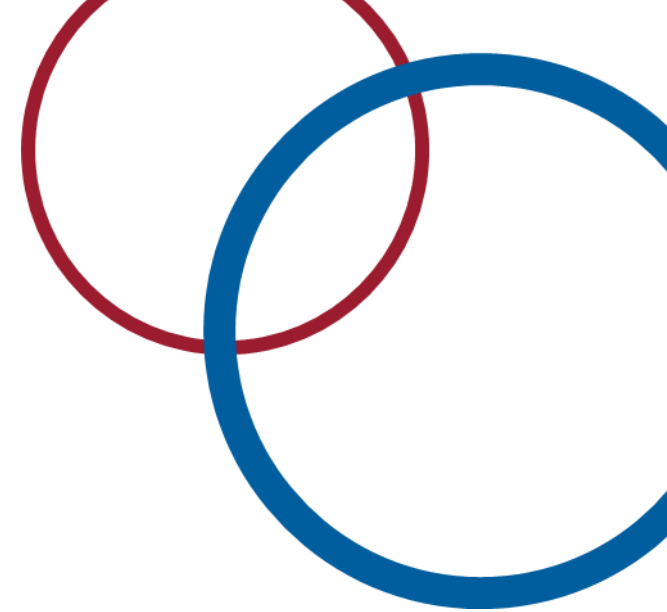# Participant Demographics cont'd

234

YRS

Collective years of experience across all participants

Rural/Remote Location

36%

Findings:
Design & Implementation

Design & Implementation

The findings in this section answer the question:

"***To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives***?"

Findings presented in this section include statistically significant outcomes from the survey data, illustrative examples from the qualitative data collection, and lessons learned that were shared from participants. Thus, while the findings described here are comprehensive, they are not exhaustive, as we do not report on outcomes in which no statistically significant change was detected.

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

1. Influence ECL Sector

Empower ECEs to lead and inform systems change within the sector as part of local, provincial and federal pandemic response and recovery effort.

2. Alternative Ways of Sharing Knowledge

Develop alternative ways of sharing knowledge and expertise that encompass the multiple ways of knowing within the sector.

3. Strengthened Collaborations and Networks

Create a network of passionate and engaged ECL changemakers who represent the diversity of the sector.

4. Uplift ECEs

Address burnout and low morale in the sector by lifting up ECL professionals, affirming their knowledge, skills and contributions, and "changing the narrative" within the sector.

5. Leadership & Confidence

Facilitate the development and implementation of community-led childcare solutions.

6. Advocacy and Activism

Encourage full participation of ECL professionals in all levels of decision making.

7. Renewed Connections

Facilitate engagement and connection between participants, decision makers, media and other stakeholders.

8. Remove Barriers

Remove barriers to participation for ECEs underrepresented in leadership positions through virtual learning to bring cohorts together and compensating participants for their time.
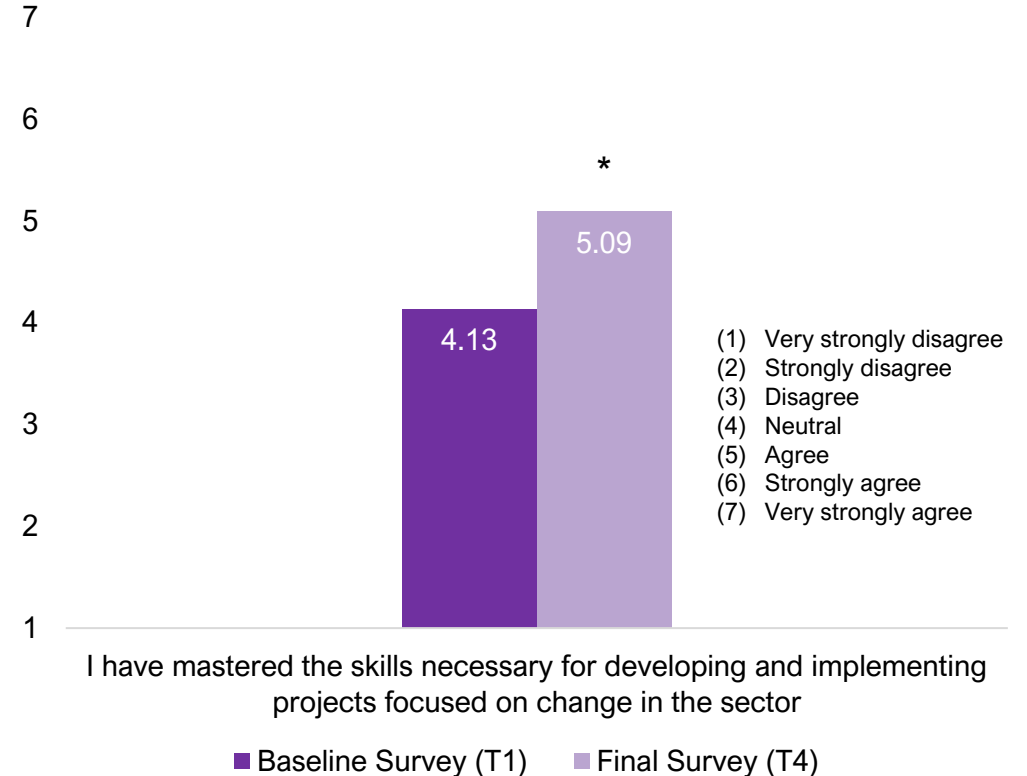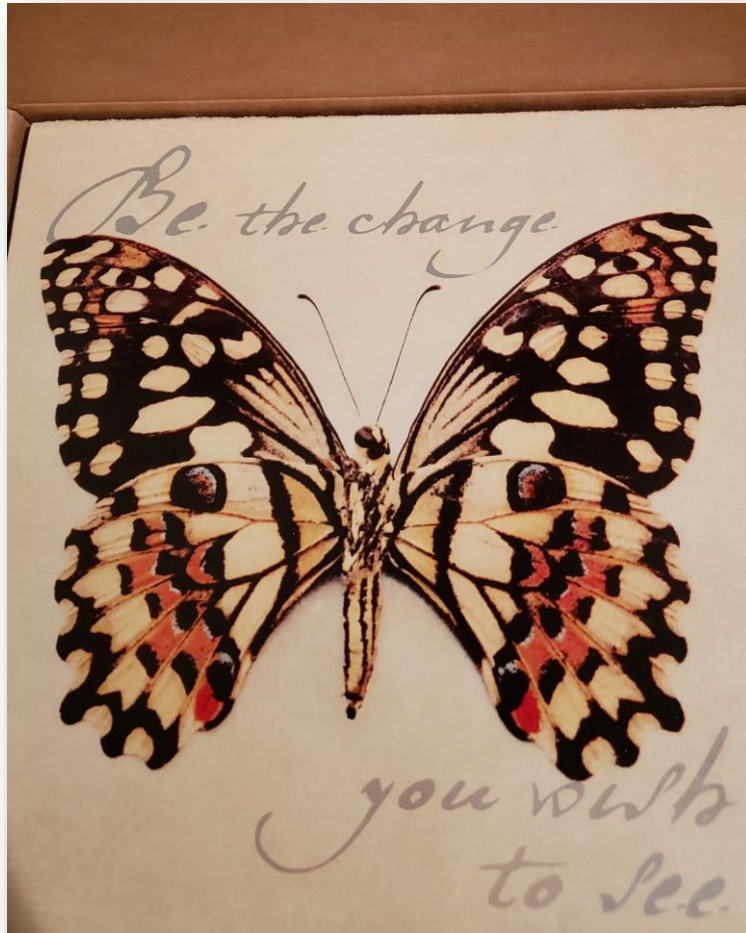
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To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

1. Influence ECL Sector

> Empower ECEs to lead and inform systems change within the sector as part of local, provincial and federal pandemic response and recovery effort.

This program supported ECEs to understand how policy can impact the sector and their day-to-day lives. This enhanced understanding of policy combined with the government's acknowledgement of the importance of ECL during the pandemic helped ECEs realize the importance of advocating for the changes they would like to see. Furthermore, Leading Change helped to increase participants' confidence in their ability to inform change and led to increased knowledge of the strategies to do so. It is through this increased confidence and knowledge that participants felt more empowered to lead or inform change within the sector.

"So, we can't just wait for [decision-makers] to come to us – they're not going to. We have to go to them with our problems. Otherwise, nothing will change."
- Leading Change Participant

*

4.13   5.09

(1) Very strongly disagree
(2) Strongly disagree
(3) Disagree
(4) Neutral
(5) Agree
(6) Strongly agree
(7) Very strongly agree

I have mastered the skills necessary for developing and implementing projects focused on change in the sector

■ Baseline Survey (T1)   ■ Final Survey (T4)

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

1. Influence ECL Sector

Empower ECEs to lead and inform systems change within the sector as part of local, provincial and federal pandemic response and recovery effort.

Be the Change You Wish to See:

"Being an Early Childhood Educator means being so many things to me, one of them being not just one who aspires to inspire, but one who actually does each and every day, in not only the work that they do, but also in the way that they are.

The leading change journey has built my capacity to grow as the pedagogical leader I hope all ECEs see themselves as. I hope our project has inspired others, just as they inspire us each and every day with the work that they are doing. We wanted our participants to see themselves as the important makers of change that our sector needs/wants more than ever.

We know there are many challenges in the sector, but may we continue to be the change that we need/want to see, in our collective and shared vision, for our image of ourselves as ECEs is important to our image of the children and families we work with, as they go hand in hand and are interconnected!"

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

2. Alternative Ways of Sharing Knowledge

Develop alternative ways of sharing knowledge and expertise that encompass the multiple ways of knowing within the sector.

Reflecting on their journey through this program, participants reported being more aware of the value of their own expertise. This in turn resulted in discussions about the wisdom and knowledge they could impart to others by sharing their lived experiences, as well as different ways of sharing that knowledge (e.g., storytelling, mentoring), and incorporating other perspectives and types of expertise, such as lived experience. Several community projects (e.g., Pathways of Truth, Supporting Indigenous ECE's, Re-connecting with your Roots) embraced the use of Indigenous knowledge or different cultural perspectives to inform systems change and its integration into ECE practices.

"Leading Change made me look within myself, finding my strengths, my vulnerability and find my story."
- Leading Change Participant

Community Project Themes

1. Storytelling
2. Indigenous Knowledge
3. Cultural Perspectives
4. Lived Experience
5. Mentoring

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

2. Alternative Ways of Sharing Knowledge

Develop alternative ways of sharing knowledge and expertise that encompass the multiple ways of knowing within the sector.

Play and Learn in Nature:

"Being an early childhood educator means having a big heart to nurture diverse young minds. My community is surrounded by woods and gardens, making it an ideal location for early childhood education. We can take the children into nature, allowing them to explore and play amidst diverse plants and rocks."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

This Photovoice submission describes alternative ways of sharing knowledge and expertise, such as exploring in nature and embracing the land as a teacher.

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

3. Strengthened Collaborations and Networks

Create a network of passionate and engaged ECL changemakers who represent the diversity of the sector.

Leading Change provided participants with opportunities to build peer relationships and collaborate on change projects. Given the small number of participants and limited demographic data, the *extent* of the program's representation of the sector's diversity cannot be fully determined. However, program recruitment focused on participation from across the province, in urban, rural and remote areas, and recruiting Indigenous participants. In addition, the participant-led community projects often focused on diverse groups such as Indigenous ECEs, Canadian Filipino ECEs, ECEs in rural/remote settings, and newcomer ECEs and families.

"We all come from different places and that's what has uplifted us - having those connections really helped. When you're feeling discouraged but having someone's voice, they might also be discouraged but together you can help each other to keep going with what to do. That was really powerful."
- Leading Change Participant
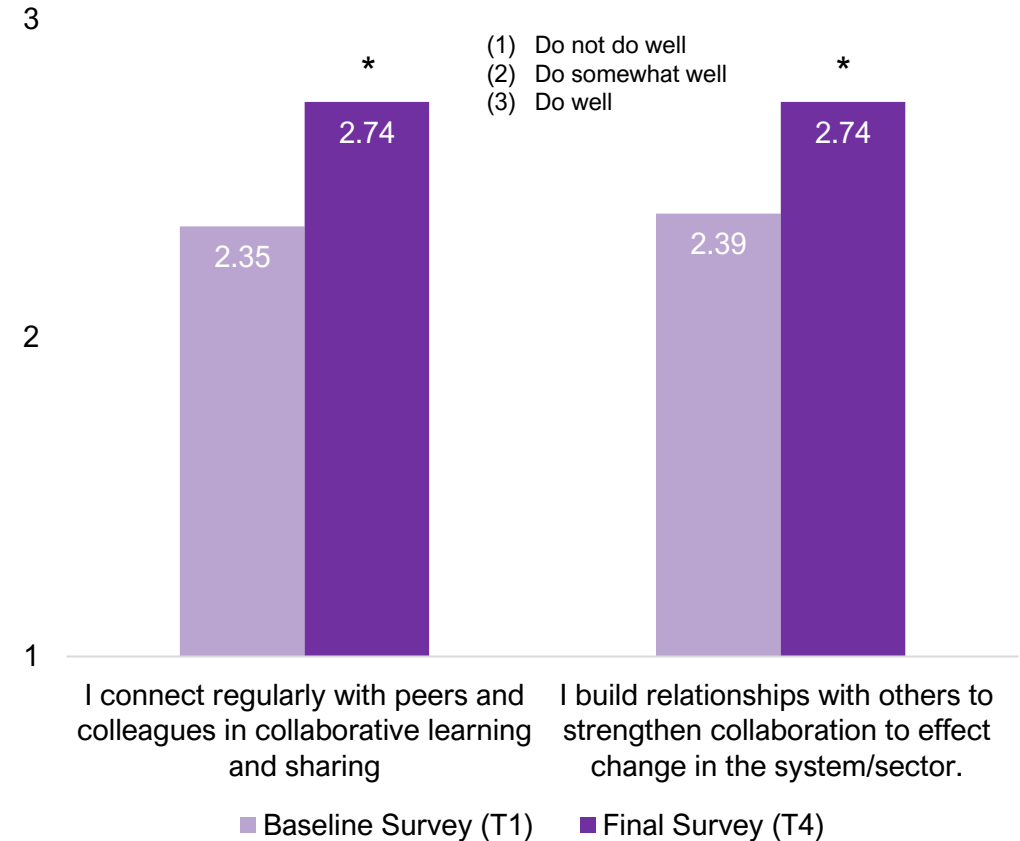
(1) Do not do well
(2) Do somewhat well
(3) Do well

Chart:
- I connect regularly with peers and colleagues in collaborative learning and sharing: Baseline Survey (T1) = 2.35, Final Survey (T4) = 2.74 *
- I build relationships with others to strengthen collaboration to effect change in the system/sector: Baseline Survey (T1) = 2.39, Final Survey (T4) = 2.74 *

■ Baseline Survey (T1) ■ Final Survey (T4)

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To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

3. Strengthened Collaborations and Networks

Create a network of passionate and engaged ECL changemakers who represent the diversity of the sector.

Drum Circle:

"This drum circle represents us - diverse educators with unique styles and perspectives. Like these drums, we shine brightest when we unite in harmony.

In teaching and caregiving, consistency is key, just as the right tempo is for the drums. Each of us plays a unique role, like different drums in the circle - some provide a solid base, others add diversity and flair, and one leads the way.

Listen and learn from each other, as the wisdom of the Elders guides us. Strength lies in unity, and by supporting each other, we set a rhythm for others to follow."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

4. Uplift ECEs

Address burnout and low morale in the sector by lifting up ECL professionals, affirming their knowledge, skills and contributions, and "changing the narrative" within the sector.

Several participants reported that participation in Leading Change led them to realize that they had to take care of themselves to avoid burnout, and that the program gave them some of the tools to do that. Participants were also uplifted by a renewed sense of connection to their strengths, lived experience, and wisdom, which in turn helped them to feel more confident and empowered. These feelings were reinforced by the opportunities to connect with their peers, which also served as a supportive network that regularly provided encouragement to colleagues.

"If it was not for applying and being accepted to Leading Change, I would have left the field. I needed an uplift. I needed a direction. I needed something to help me continue. And through this journey, I've collected so many people to join me now that I'm rejoicing. And so that is the fuel for the momentum."
- Leading Change Participant
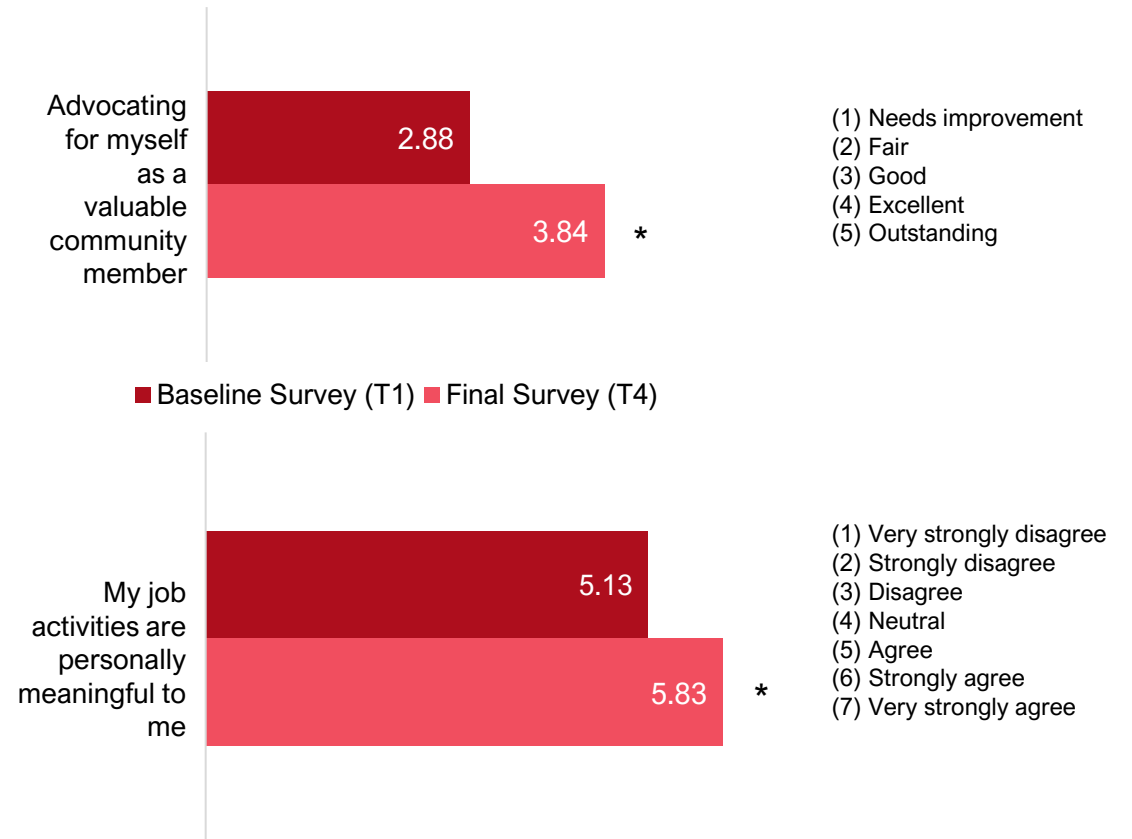
Advocating for myself as a valuable community member
- Baseline Survey (T1): 2.88
- Final Survey (T4): 3.84 *

(1) Needs improvement
(2) Fair
(3) Good
(4) Excellent
(5) Outstanding

■ Baseline Survey (T1) ■ Final Survey (T4)

My job activities are personally meaningful to me
- Baseline Survey (T1): 5.13
- Final Survey (T4): 5.83 *

(1) Very strongly disagree
(2) Strongly disagree
(3) Disagree
(4) Neutral
(5) Agree
(6) Strongly agree
(7) Very strongly agree

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

4. Uplift ECEs

Address burnout and low morale in the sector by lifting up ECL professionals, affirming their knowledge, skills and contributions, and "changing the narrative" within the sector.

Small but Powerful:

"A small tugboat can easily pull thousands of tons across a body of water. It can accomplish this despite its smaller size due to its huge engine and propeller.

The Leading Change program allowed me to feel like a tugboat. Through our project, we hope to be able to pull lots of immigrant childcare professionals (logs in the photo) toward a better future."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

5. Leadership & Confidence

Facilitate the development and implementation of community-led childcare solutions.

Survey results showed that participants reported increased confidence, leadership skills and a renewed connection to their strengths. Participants were able to draw on these skills in the development and implementation of their community projects. Examples include participants engaging with families and other community members to understand local childcare needs or implementing professional positions within organizations to enhance community collaboration. ECEs are already particularly well-placed for community engagement given their existing connections to the community – such as the relationships with families that ECEs see several times a week.

"But that is really amazing because now I can advocate for families. Now I can say, this is what the families need."
- Leading Change Participant
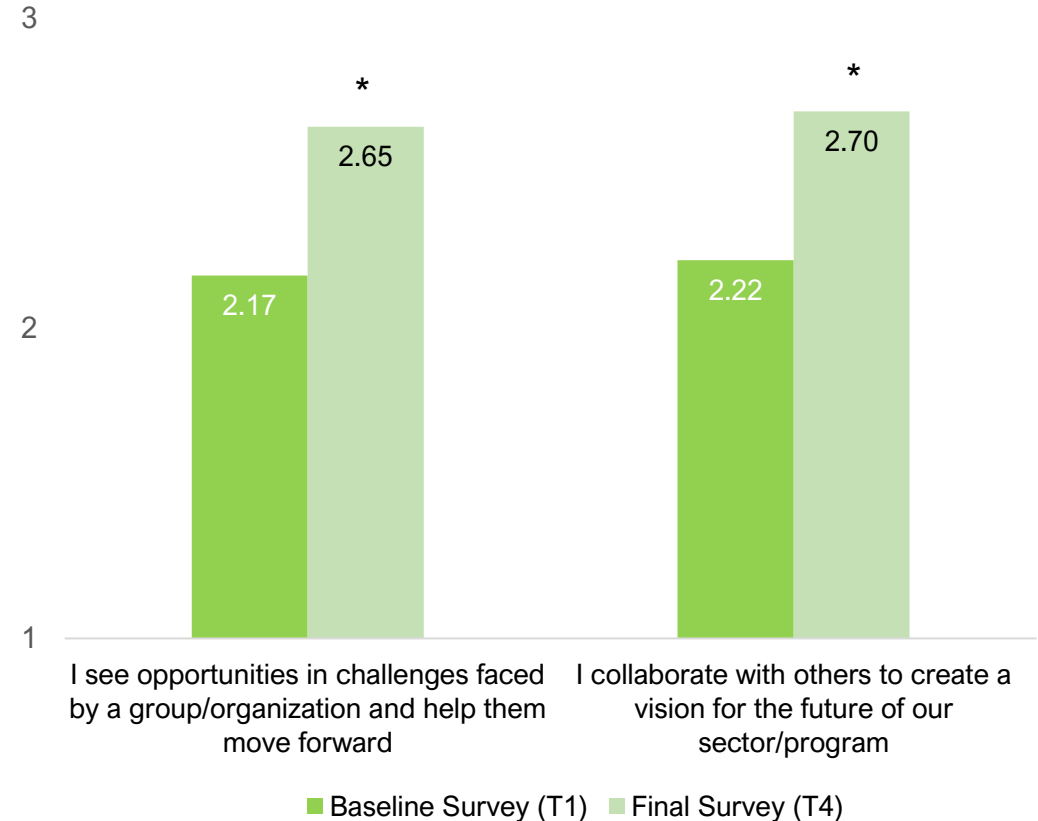
	I see opportunities in challenges faced by a group/organization and help them move forward	I collaborate with others to create a vision for the future of our sector/program
Baseline Survey (T1)	2.17	2.22
Final Survey (T4)	2.65 *	2.70 *

(1) Do not do well; (2) Do somewhat well; (3) Do well

■ Baseline Survey (T1)   ■ Final Survey (T4)

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

5. Leadership & Confidence

Facilitate the development and implementation of community-led childcare solutions.

Creating Change:

"When we collaborate with each other, the process often turns out differently than we might have expected. Many minds, viewpoints and skills blend together. As we take action in both collective and individual ways, we can discover and celebrate the strengths and talents of both ourselves, and our teammates.

During the Leading Change program, exploring in this way has improved my confidence in my professional voice, and has furthered in my ability to engage in deeper dialogue with my colleagues, ELC students, children, and families. I have been reminded just how political our work is and have felt empowered in my advocacy."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

6. Advocacy and Activism

Encourage full participation of ECL professionals in all levels of decision making.

The community projects represent diverse initiatives to promote change through ECE participation at individual, community, policy and sector levels. Through these projects, Leading Change participants self-advocated for the change that they wanted to see within the sector. Examples include providing more opportunities for ECEs to collaborate, supporting each other and participating in learning activities, partnerships with the Ministry of Education and Child Care or participating in ECE education and professional standard enhancement.

"Leading Change allowed us to be voices for other professionals who would just rather work and make it through the day. ECEBC, through those workshops, they allowed us to think, is there more you can do as an ECE? How can we be the voices of change?"
- Leading Change Participant
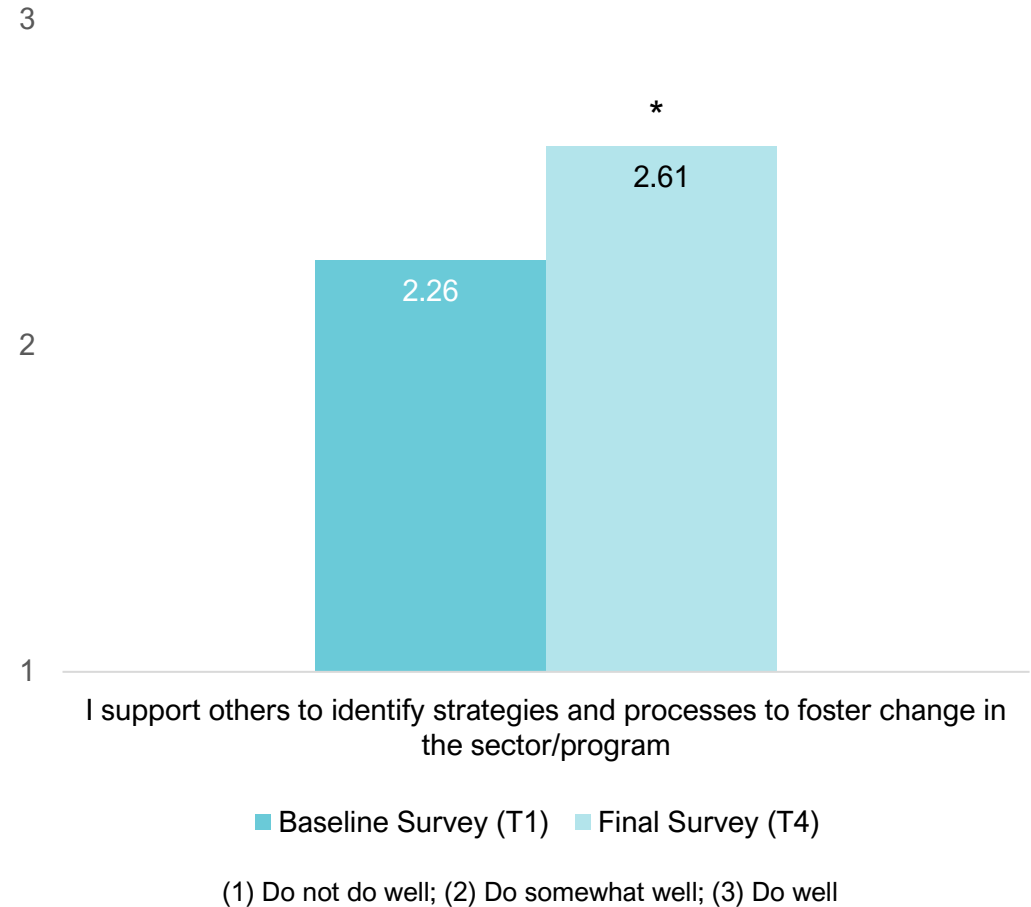
I support others to identify strategies and processes to foster change in the sector/program

■ Baseline Survey (T1)   ■ Final Survey (T4)

(1) Do not do well; (2) Do somewhat well; (3) Do well

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

6. Advocacy and Activism

Encourage full participation of ECL professionals in all levels of decision making.

Voices we Carry:

"As educators when we speak to advocate, we are holding the voices of others. We have the responsibility to care for the children and families we work with and to fight for a better future for them and the ones that come next. It is not something we take lightly and it should not be taken lightly by others. Every fight for people's rights is our fight because we care for all kinds of people."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

7. Renewed Connections

Facilitate engagement and connection between participants, decision makers, media and other stakeholders.

All projects included engagement and connections between participants or others in the sector, often in different ways. Some projects involved engagement and connections between multiple stakeholders simultaneously. Projects (and participant capacity to implement and lead them), were enhanced by many of the individual and group level outcomes. These connections and collaboration opportunities also helped participants feels less isolated and more supported as a member of an accessible community of practice.

"Leading Change afforded me the opportunity to create this document, tell my story, and create a lasting community of connection and collaboration."
- Leading Change Participant
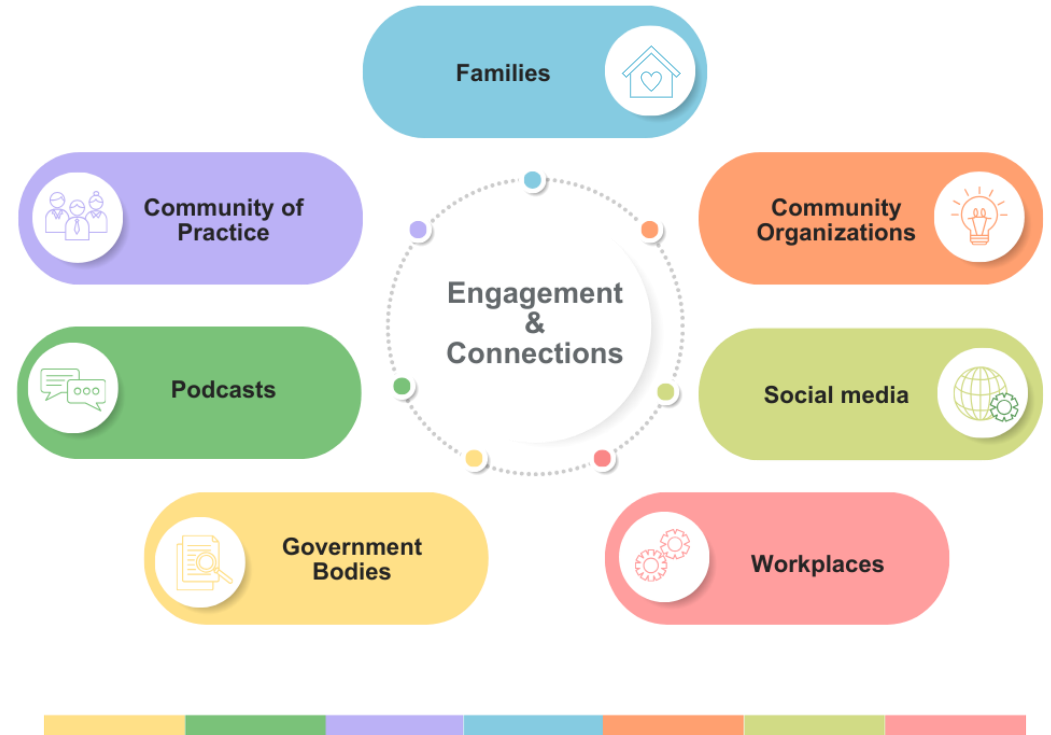
Families

Community of Practice

Community Organizations

Podcasts

Engagement & Connections

Social media

Government Bodies

Workplaces

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

7. Renewed Connections

Facilitate engagement and connection between participants, decision makers, media and other stakeholders.

Strong Roots in Connections that Keep our Sector Grounded:

"The early years workforce is strong and determined, even when presented with harsh conditions. We are all intertwined and connected in the work we do, although some of the work is not visible. Through connection we are all stronger."

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

8. Remove Barriers

Remove barriers to participation for ECEs underrepresented in leadership positions through virtual learning to bring cohorts together and compensating participants for their time.

Leading Change successfully brought together participants to support leadership skill enhancement and capacity for collaboration. A key component of this professional development activity was access to a community of practice (CoP). Participants reported that access to a CoP resulted in more effective professional development because it supports the development of relationships through regular interactions, that in turn contribute to longer-lasting changes. The Leading Change program is free to participants, thus eliminating a cost barrier. The inclusion of a stipend to reimburse participants for their time also made participants feel valued and motivated to continue and complete the program. Additional accessibility barriers were removed through virtual program delivery.

"There are so many free workshops and not a lot of attendance because, yes, it's good that it's free, but it's better if organizations can pay for you to educate yourself more, but that doesn't really happen. This project really has everything: you get the training, compensation for your time – it's just so generous – even the hotel rooms – I felt so valued as an ECE and I haven't felt this way before."
- Leading Change Participant
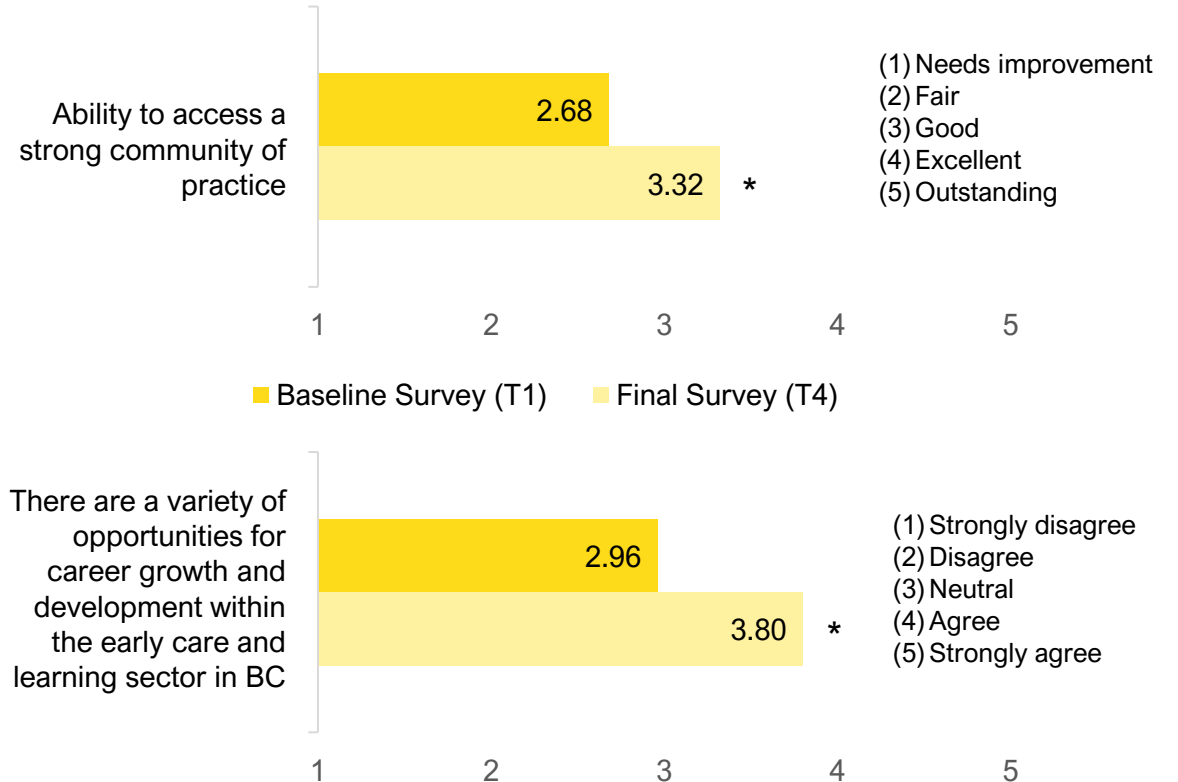
Ability to access a strong community of practice

2.68
3.32 *

(1) Needs improvement
(2) Fair
(3) Good
(4) Excellent
(5) Outstanding

■ Baseline Survey (T1) ■ Final Survey (T4)

There are a variety of opportunities for career growth and development within the early care and learning sector in BC

2.96
3.80 *

(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neutral
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

To what extent has Leading Change met its objectives?

8. Remove Barriers

Remove barriers to participation for ECEs underrepresented in leadership positions through virtual learning to bring cohorts together and compensating participants for their time.

Share the Road:

"There are many programs involved in shaping the ECE leadership field like there are many roads or streets in a city... On the map of the ECE field, one of the roads/streets is the ECEBC Leading Change. The Leading Change project allows many ECEs from all over BC to "share the road" in a welcoming, respectful, and creative way.

In many "vehicles", forms, and ideas, LC facilitates sharing the road of change and leadership. It facilitates every ECE's strengths, gifts, and potential. It facilitates connections, relationships, and space for disequilibrium. It facilitates the empowerment of each individual early childhood educator and the collective power of the ECE field!"

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant
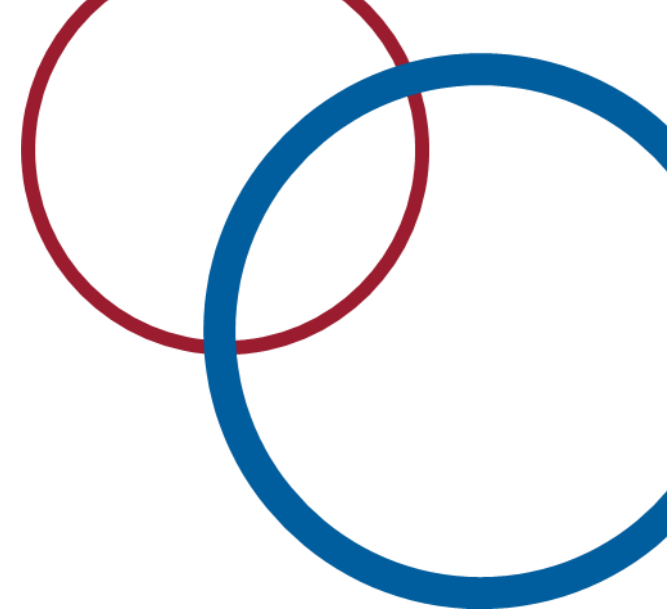
Findings:
Outcomes & Impacts

Outcomes and Impact

2. What have been the outcomes and early impacts of this initiative?

    a)   Did the initiative achieve the anticipated outcomes at the **individual level** (i.e., participants)?
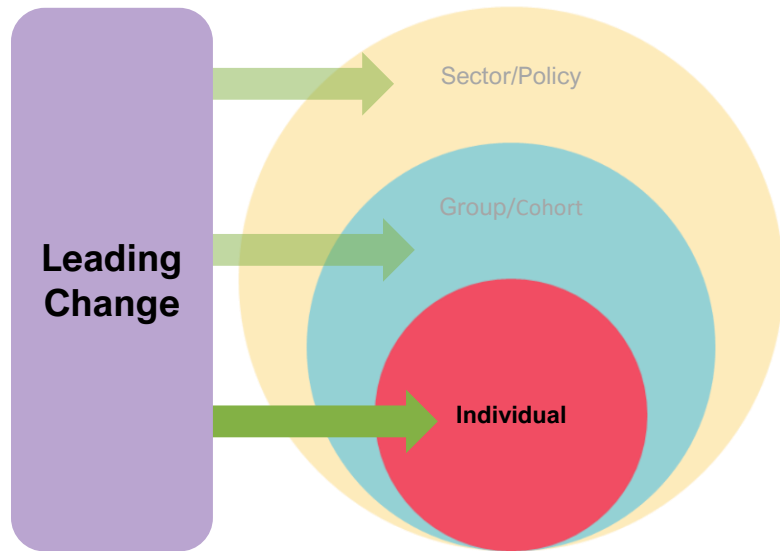
Anticipated individual outcomes:

a)   Increased leadership and self-expressions skills

b)   Increased self-confidence in contributing their voices to help inform decision making around BC's changing childcare landscape

c)   Increased sense of empowerment and well-being

d)   Increased connection with peers

e)   Renewed connection to their strengths, lived experience and wisdom

Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Leadership and self-expression skills

- During the discussion groups, participants noted a sense of empowerment to lead change combined with an increased level of confidence in their ability to do so.

- 9 items in the leadership scale demonstrated significant change by the end of the program (see next page).

- Leading Change supported participants to recognize that they are experts in the field and that their knowledge is unique with respect to challenges on the ground. This reinforced recognition of their role in advocacy for themselves and their profession with decision makers in order to influence change.

Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Leadership and self-expression skills
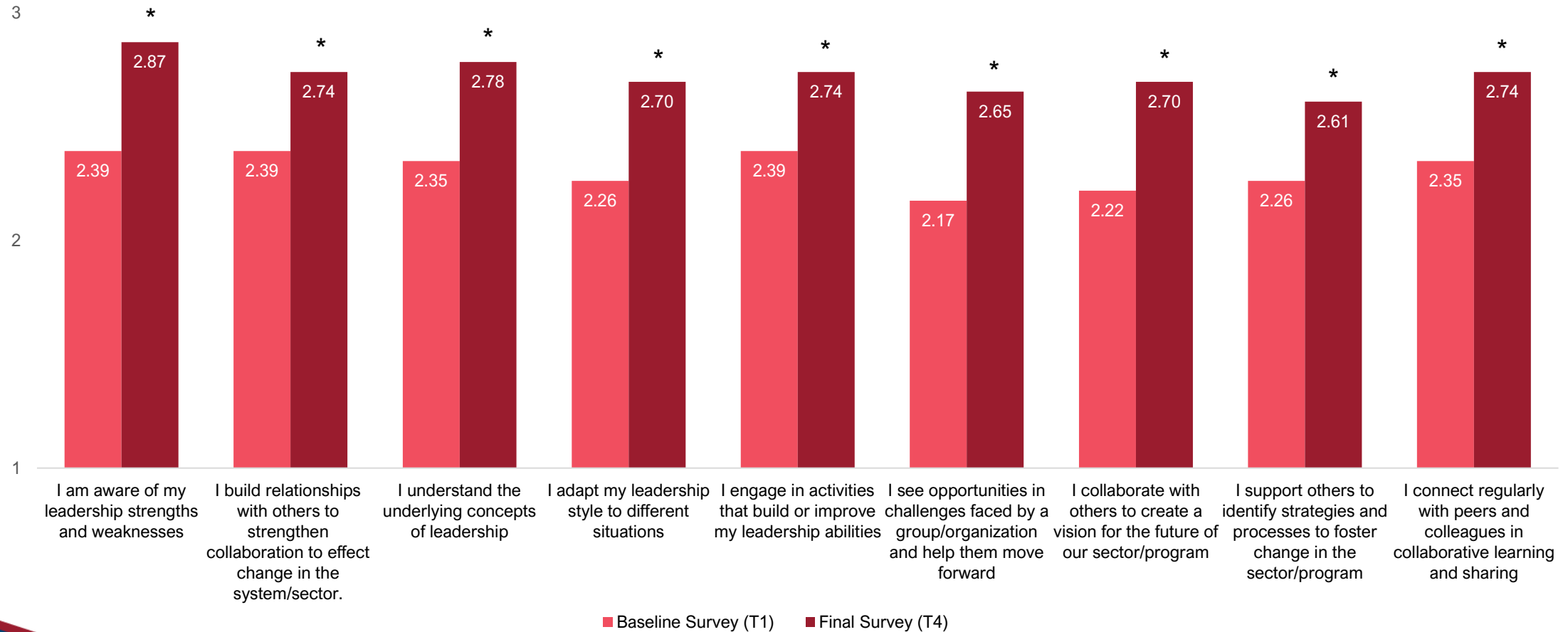
(1) Do not do well; (2) Do somewhat well; (3) Do well

Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Leadership and self-expression skills

- Participants were asked to rate their skills with respect to 3 items (leadership in the workplace, advocating for myself as a valuable team member, and communicating how and why my work is essential).

- "Advocating for myself as a valuable community member" and "Communicating how and why my work is essential" show the biggest increase across participants although all 3 showed statistically significant positive change between baseline (June 2022) and the final survey (November 2023).

Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Leadership and self-expression skills
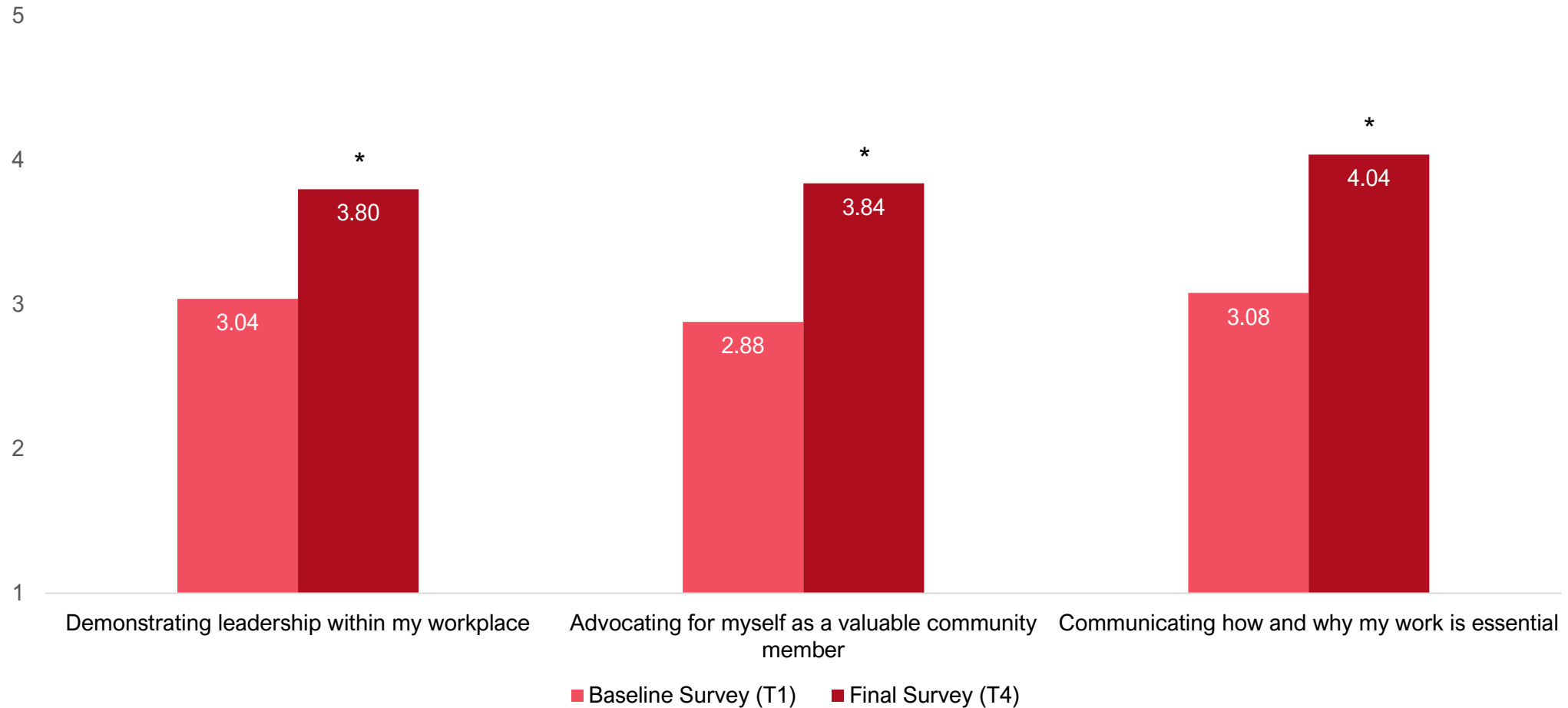
(1) Needs improvement; (2) Fair; (3) Good; (4) Excellent; (5) Outstanding

Outcomes and Impact

Individual level: Self-confidence in contributing their voices to help inform decision-making

FINDING THEIR VOICE

Leading Change helped participants "find their voice" and speak to decision-makers about their needs.

ASSERTING THEIR VALUE

Leading Change helped participants feel that they have equal value at a decision-making level and that their skills and knowledge are assets to decision-makers.

RECOGNIZING THEIR EXPERTISE

Leading Change confirmed participants' belief that they know what they're talking about and that they have a significant role in child development. They live it every day.

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Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Sense of empowerment and well-being

Chart: Baseline Survey (T1) vs Final Survey (T4), scale 1–7

- I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job: 4.43 → 5.22 *
- I have significant influence over what happens in my program: 4.57 → 5.48 *
- My job activities are personally meaningful to me: 5.13 → 5.83 *
- I have mastered the skills necessary for developing and implementing projects focused on change in the sector: 4.13 → 5.09 *

■ Baseline Survey (T1) ■ Final Survey (T4)
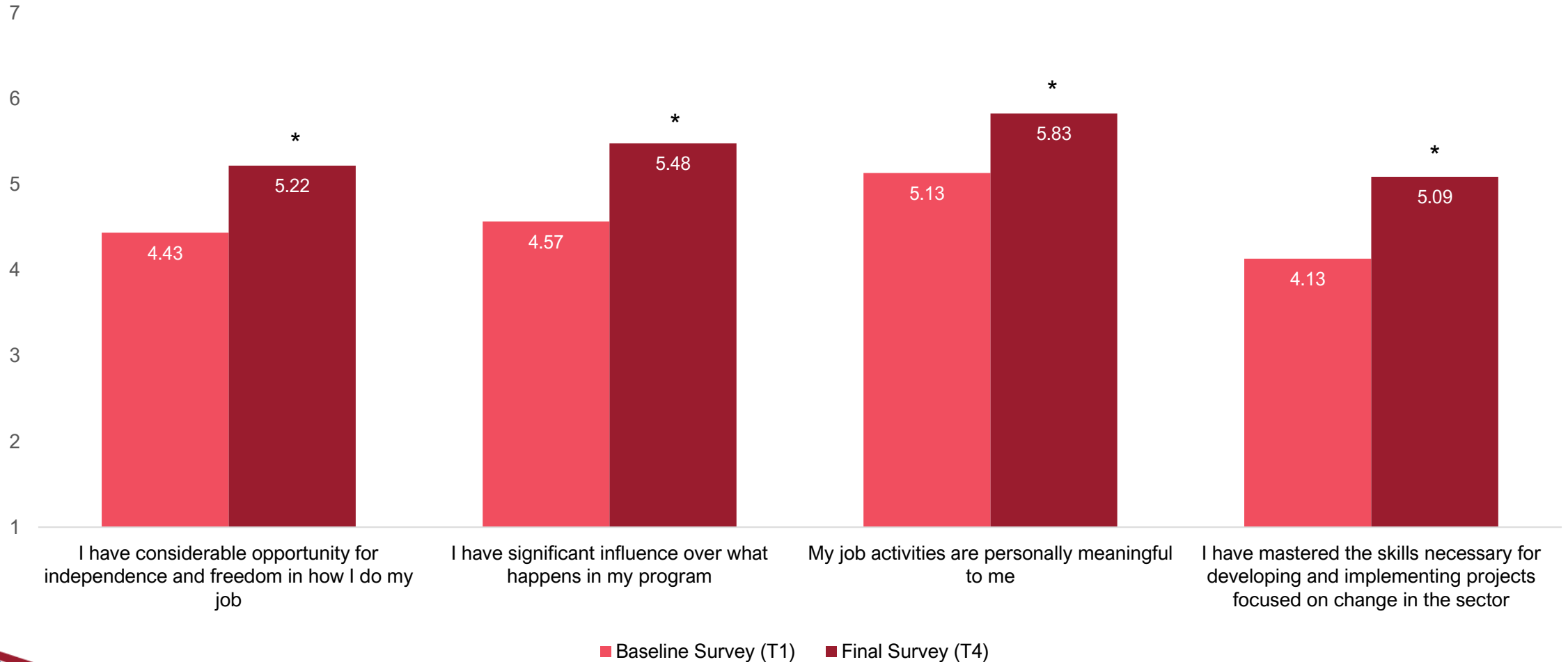
(1) Very strongly disagree; (2) Strongly disagree; (3) Disagree; (4) Neutral; (5) Agree; (6) Strongly agree; (7) Very strongly agree

Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Sense of empowerment and well-being

❤ **PRACTICING SELF-CARE**
Leading Change helped participants recognize how important self-care was to avoiding burnout.

🚫 **DRAWING BOUNDARIES**
Leading Change helped participants feel empowered to say no when necessary and advocate for themselves and their own needs to maintain their well-being.

🏋 **REMEMBERING WHY**
Leading Change helped participants remember why they entered the field and why they do what they do. This renewed connection to their passion helped them to feel empowered personally and professionally.

4

*

3.57

3.26

3

2

1

I have a sense of purpose in my life

■ Baseline Survey (T1)   ■ Final Survey (T4)
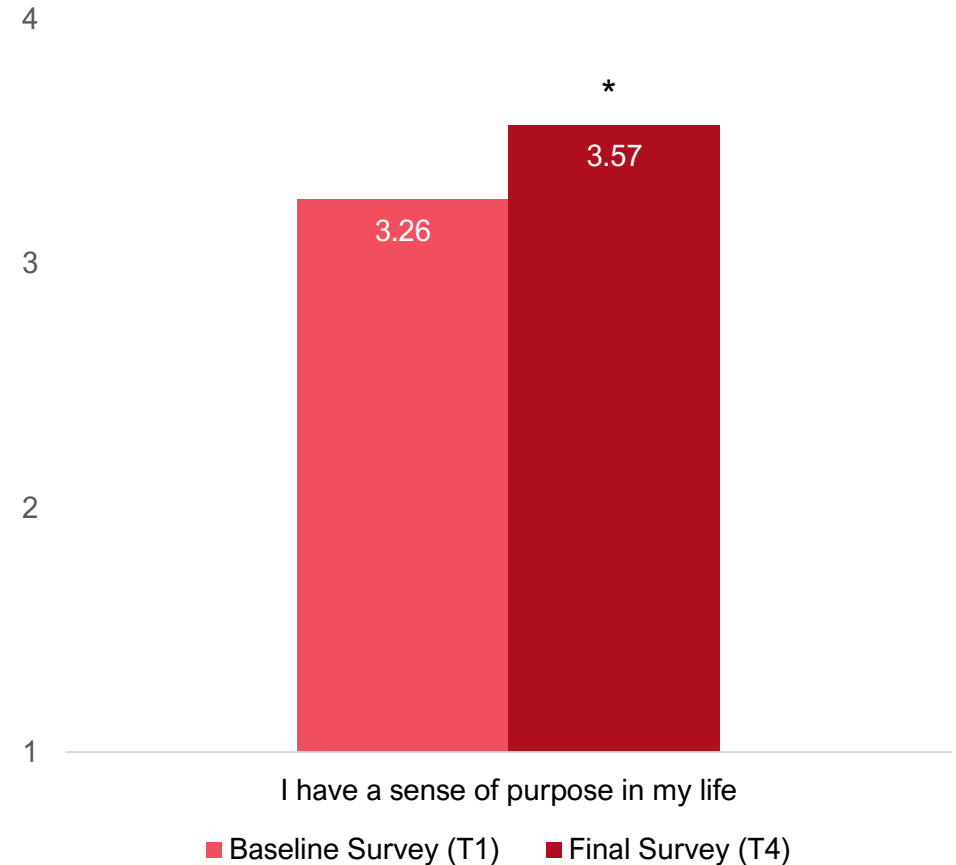
(1) Rarely; (2) Sometimes; (3) Most of the time; (4) Always

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Outcomes and Impact
Individual level: Connection with peers

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
As a result of the community projects, Leading Change participants engaged with over 1,200 peers and stakeholders in the ECL sector, including Elders, families, community organizations, and government bodies.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
By providing opportunities for ECEs to learn with and from each other and collaborate on community projects together, Leading Change has established a Community of Practice that participants indicate has the impact for long lasting collaboration opportunities.

Outcomes and Impact

Individual level: Renewed connection to their strengths, lived experience and wisdom

REMEMBERING THEIR ROOTS

Leading Change helped participants get in touch with their roots and think about the ways their own identity and experiences inform how they help children grow.

CONSIDERING THEIR LEGACY

Leading Change inspired participants to think about the type of educator they want to be and the legacy that they want to be leave behind in the sector. Participants reflected on how their strengths and expertise could contribute to this.

REFLECTING ON THEIR STORIES

Leading Change inspired participants to reflect on their lived experience and the wisdom that others could gain from it. Participants felt renewed connection to themselves, their roots, and their stories and considered the ways that their stories could contribute to the sector and to child development.

Outcomes and Impact

2.   What have been the outcomes and early impacts of this initiative?

a)   Did the initiative achieve the anticipated outcomes at the **group level** (i.e., cohort level)?
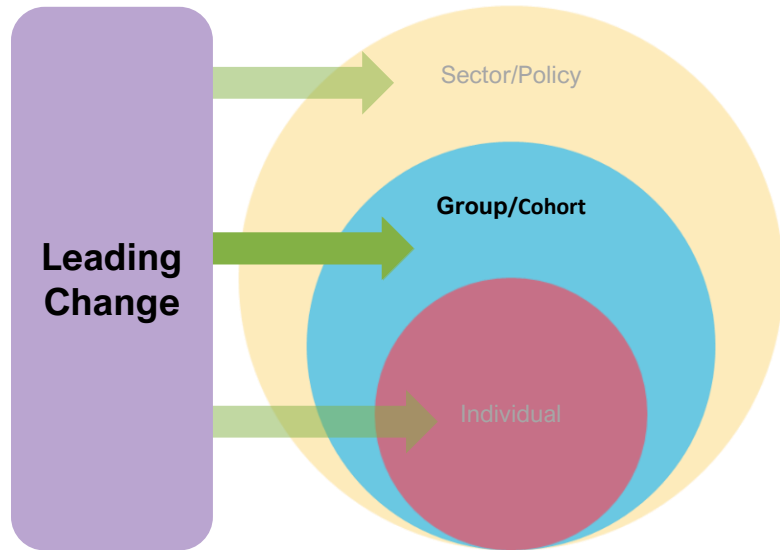
Anticipated group outcomes:

a)   Generation of community project ideas

b)   Increased development and implementation of localized community led childcare solutions

c)   Increase in networks and partnerships, opening possibilities for change in the sector

d)   Increase in knowledge and opportunity to apply best/promising practices

Outcomes and Impact

Group level: Generation of community project ideas & development and implementation of localized community-led childcare solutions

22

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Pathways of Truth	Connections through Self Compassion	Mentorship Initiative for ECE Dual Credit Students	Finding your Why: Reigniting your Passion	ECE Retention: Solutions from the Field	ECE's for Inclusion in BC
ECE Advocacy	Mindful ECE's and Mindful Mini's	The Story that Made Us: Empowering Identities of Early Years Professionals	Evergreen Movement for ECEs	Nurturing our ECE Community	Supporting Indigenous ECE's
Re-connecting with your Roots	Voices of Immigrant Child Care Professionals	Seeds of Hope	Growing Relationships and Connections to the Land	Immigrant Voices in Early Learning	Igniting a Circle of Compassion
	ECE in Rural BC	The Joy of Child Care	Possible Pathways for Educators	Spaces of Inclusion, Well-being, and Belonging	

Outcomes and Impact
Group level: Increase in networks and partnerships

RECOGNIZING THE NEED

Leading Change helped participants see the need for engaging with stakeholders and decision-makers to influence change in the sector. This contributed to an increased awareness of the need to develop networks and partnerships to collaborate and influence wider change.

DEFINING NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participants expressed increased awareness of the need for engagement and an enhanced capacity to do so. However, without definitions of what constitutes a network or partnership, the evaluation lacks the means to use a common understanding to report on the numbers of networks and partnerships established during the Leading Change program at the group level.

*

2.39

2.74

I build relationships with others to strengthen collaboration to effect change in the system/sector.

■ Baseline Survey (T1) ■ Final Survey (T4)

(1) Do not do well; (2) Do somewhat well; (3) Do well
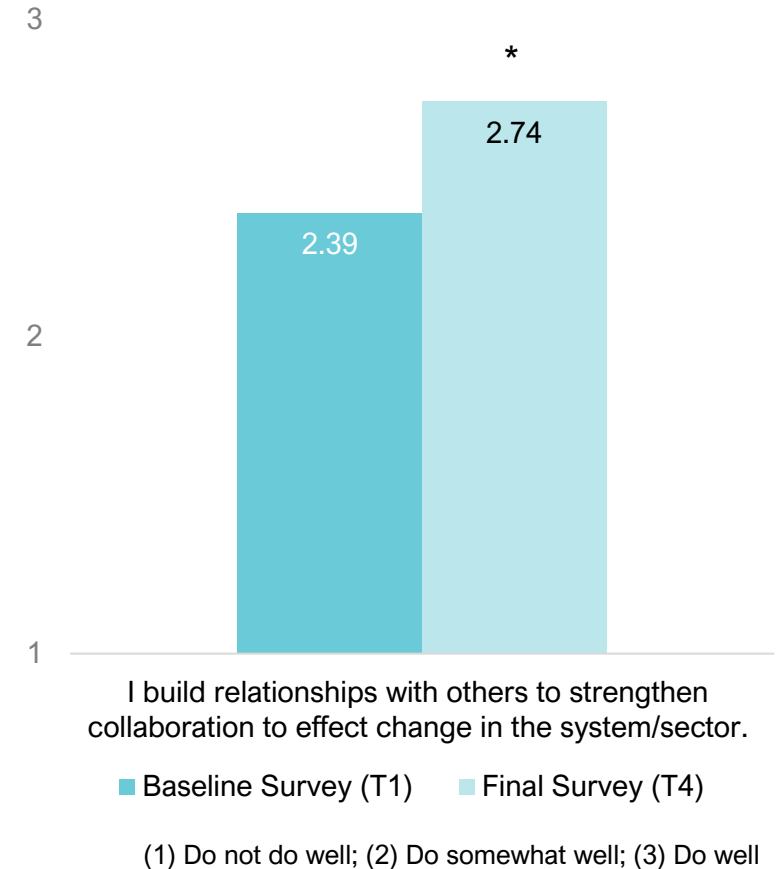
Outcomes and Impact
Group level: Knowledge and opportunity to apply best or promising practices

UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCE
Leading Change helped participants recognize the need to engage with decision makers to ensure that best or promising practices are utilized and standardized in the sector.
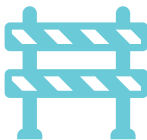
LIMITED ABILITY TO MEASURE OPPORTUNITIES
The participant-led community projects provided a novel opportunity to research and explore perceived best or promising practices. However, the extent to which these projects used best or promising practices was outside the scope of the evaluation.

Outcomes and Impact

2. What have been the outcomes and early impacts of this initiative?

    a) Did the initiative achieve the anticipated outcomes at the **sector/policy level** (i.e., cohort and broader sector)?

Leading Change

Sector/Policy

Group/Cohort

Individual
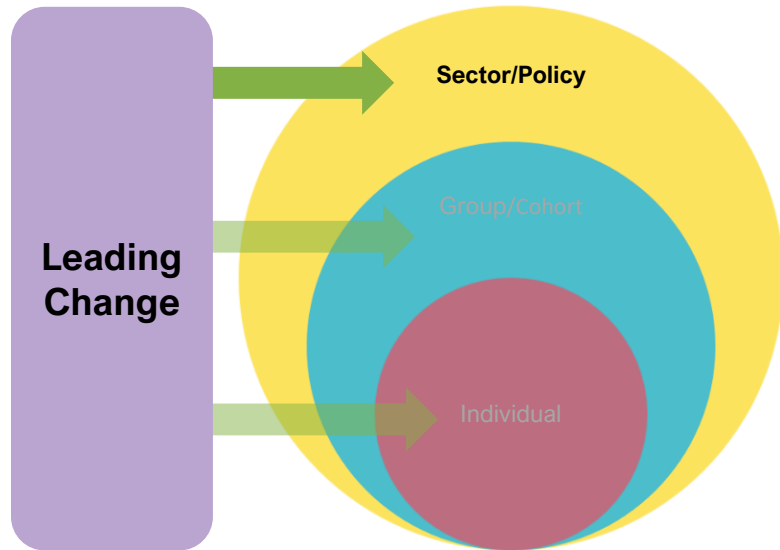
Anticipated sector/policy outcomes:

a) Increase in knowledge and application of strategies to influence change

b) Increased collaboration and strategic partnership capacity

c) Participants are better equipped to take action towards/ influence systemic change

d) Increased awareness of the importance of ECEs and role in influencing change

e) Increase in localized, community led childcare solutions as part of local and regional pandemic recovery and response efforts

Outcomes and Impact
Sector/Policy level

- Due to the timeframe of the evaluation and time scale at which sectoral change occurs, we can only measure progress towards changes on a policy or sector level.

- However, some of the individual and group level outcomes indicate that the program has potential to influence sector changes. This is exemplified by the increase in knowledge of strategies to influence change and ECEs' potential role in doing so, as well as increased awareness of the importance of strategic partnerships and collaboration.

- These findings indicate that additional evaluation could provide further information regarding how impactful the Leading Change program is on the wider ECL sector and policy decisions.

Outcomes and Impact
Sector/Policy level

TOO EARLY TO MEASURE CHANGE
Policy- and sector-level change occurs more slowly than individual and group changes; these impacts operate on a different timescale than the rest of the evaluation.
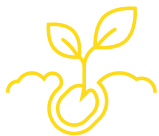
EARLY INDICATIONS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS CHANGE
Nonetheless, some individual and group level changes indicate progress towards sector change, such as increased capacity to influence change and awareness of importance of strategic partnership and collaboration.

Outcomes and Impact

2.   What have been the outcomes and early impacts of this initiative?

b)   What were the unintended outcomes (positive and negative), if any?

JOB CHANGE

Leading Change aims to empower and uplift ECEs by reconnecting them to their values and strengths. In at least one case, participating in Leading Change resulted in an ECE feeling empowered to seek out other ECL opportunities that they felt better aligned with their values than their current workplace. While turnover is common in the ECL sector, this was an unexpected outcome. However, the participant explained that it was a positive change that allowed them to continue their work to improve the ECL sector.

"I felt really empowered by Leading Change but it led me to quit my job – it empowered me out of my job. I'm really excited that I can follow my values [in my new workplace]. By being empowered…it meant the space where I was didn't fit me anymore, and that was challenging. How do I stay when I know things can be so much better?"
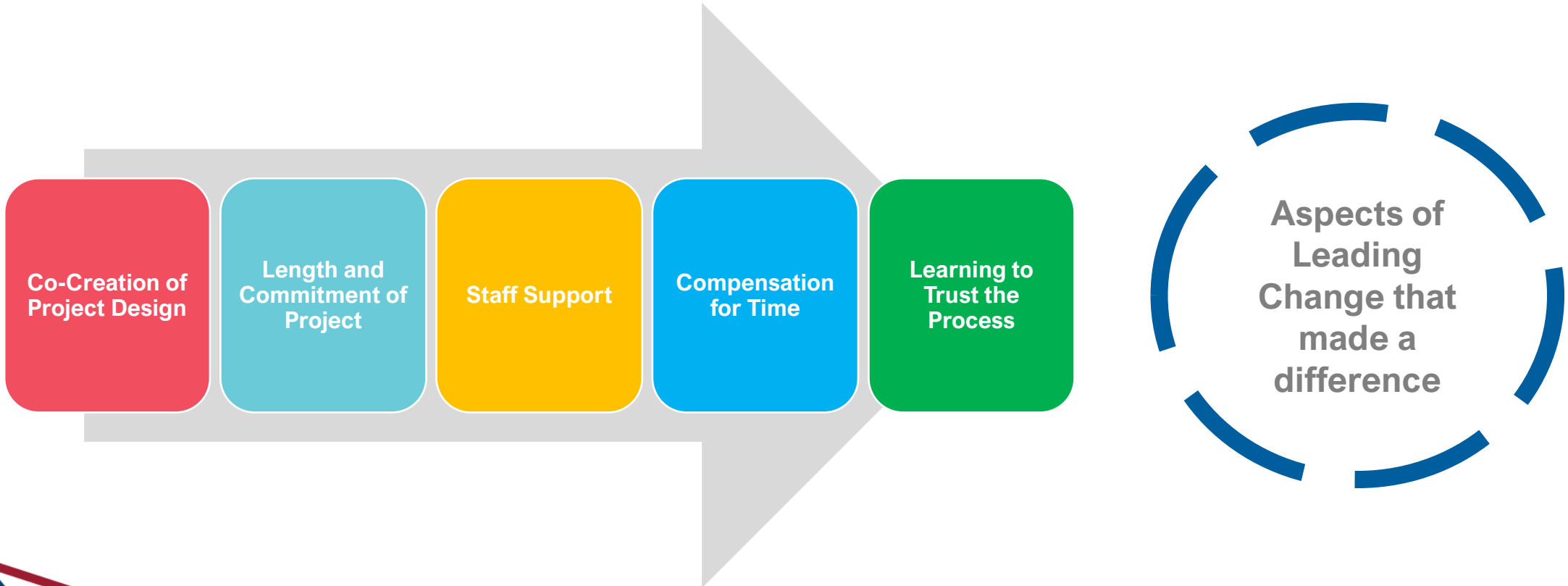- Leading Change Participant
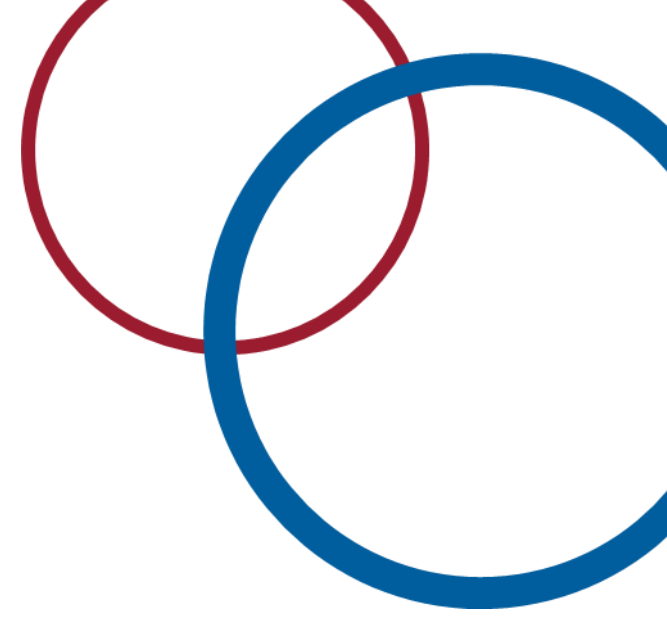
Findings: Overall Value & Fit

Overall Value and Fit

3. **How has the Leading Change initiative contributed to preparing ECEs to influence change in the ECL sector of BC?**

| Co-Creation of Project Design | Length and Commitment of Project | Staff Support | Compensation for Time | Learning to Trust the Process |

Aspects of Leading Change that made a difference

Overall Value and Fit

Qualitative data collection revealed the following aspects of the Leading Change project that participants identified as contributing to success:

- **Co-created project design**: participants had a voice in how the project evolved. This was noted as different from typical, colonial approaches to such programs with rigid timelines and rules. The flexibility and space for participants to figure out their passion and eventual project was essential.

- **Length and commitment**: rather than a quick one-off professional development activity, the commitment required for Leading Change helped participants slowly but surely integrate their learnings into their practice. Eventually, these changes became habitual and over time, their mindsets shifted. This type of change is rarely possible in a short timeframe.

- **Staff support:** Participants were grateful for the encouragement and inspiration to keep going, as well as reassurance when they weren't feeling confident about their projects/ideas. ECEBC staff were noted as fundamental to the success of Leading Change by meeting participants where they were at and acknowledging the daily challenges that can impede progress.

Overall Value and Fit cont'd

- **Compensation:** ECEs felt that their time was valued and as a result, they were motivated to maintain commitment.

- **Trusting the Process:** helped participants to embrace change and flexibility. Hearing about others' stories allowed participants to learn and be inspired, as well as persevere when they doubted their ideas or abilities.
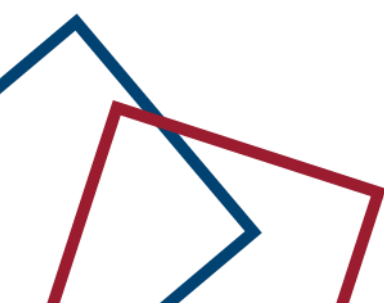
Conclusions

Key Highlights

ENHANCED SKILL & CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicated that Leading Change helped participants master the skills necessary for developing and implementing projects to influence change. They also increased their knowledge of the strategies to do so, including how to engage with decision-makers.
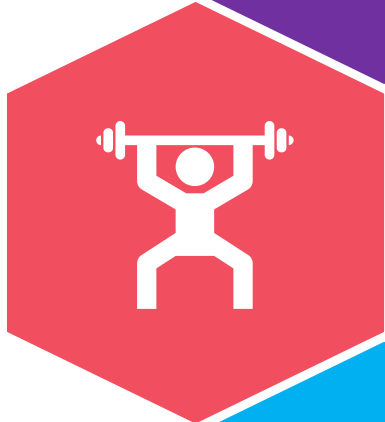
ECE EMPOWERMENT

Qualitative findings indicated that Leading Change reaffirmed participant strengths, enhanced their confidence and provided opportunities to build supportive networks with peers.

ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leading Change was more effective for professional development and growth than typical rigid and one-off professional development activities or programs. It offered flexibility and space for participants to reflect and reignite their professional passion, fostered by a co-created project design. The longer-term program design allowing for sustained changes and significant access to a CoP of other passionate ECEs.

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Conclusions

- Based on the discussion groups we conducted; Leading Change's **most successful objective was uplifting ECEs.** Participants felt valued, recognized their value and were able to communicate their value to others.

- Participants also reported **significant individual level changes regarding empowerment and leadership, communication and advocacy abilities**.

- These abilities were showcased with the **implementation of 22 community projects.**

- Through individual and group-level outcomes, **Leading Change succeeded in preparing ECEs to influence change in the ECL** sector of BC.

- These **outcomes suggest that long-term changes in the sector can be anticipated** because of the program.
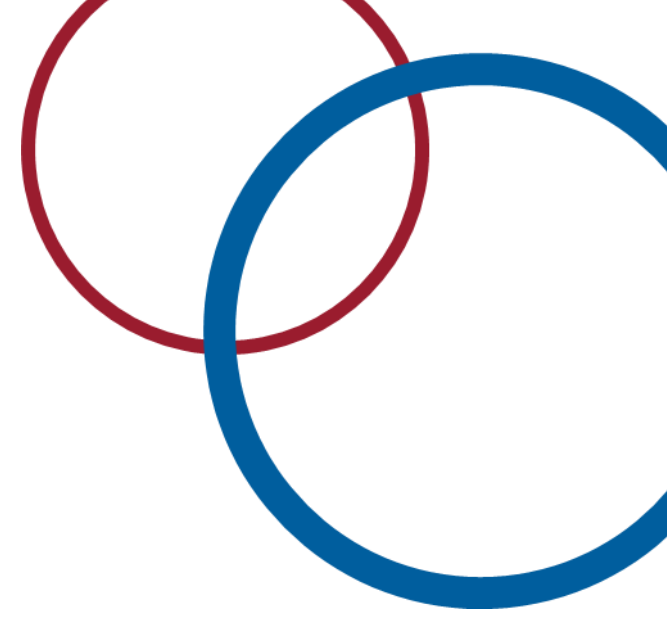
Recommendations

Recommendations

1. SCALE UP LEADING CHANGE

Given the success of Leading Change in this small group of participants, more cohorts are warranted. Continue to offer the program to another cohort of participants, who reflect diversity in the sector. Consider extending the evaluation phase to enable tracking of long-term ripple effects.

2. EXTEND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Participant response to CoP access and its influence on their professional growth and empowerment was strongly positive. Continue to emphasize community of practice as a professional development tool. Consider creating a self-sustaining CoP for current and, ideally, future participants. Connecting changemakers in the province could also provide mentorship opportunities and a place for new childcare solutions to organically develop.

3. INCREASE IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

Offer more opportunities for in-person learning activities or collaborative sessions. There was strong positive response to relationship building and collaboration.

Transformation:

Early childhood educators, when working together can achieve remarkable results and bring about a positive change in their communities.

- Leading Change Photovoice Participant