Leadership Program Outcomes

Over the past year the Leadership Learning Community has been actively trying to learn more about the leadership outcomes that programs are seeking for individuals, organizations, and communities; and the tools and methods programs are using to evaluate these outcomes. This document reflects and honors some of the important work that the Community has done together so far, and provides a point of departure for continued learning and exploration during the May Conference and beyond.

In what follows we share a framework that captures the leadership outcomes that programs have most consistently articulated as well as some of the methods that have been used to evaluate these outcomes. The purpose of this work is to become clearer about what we are trying to achieve with our programs so that we can be more intentional about how we plan and deliver our programs, and more capable of assessing what we are achieving both in the short term and over time.

Categories of Leadership Outcomes

There are four broad categories of leadership outcomes programs are seeking to promote:

- Core Leadership Competencies
- Personal Transformation and Mastery
- Organizational Leadership Capacity
- Community Leadership Capacity

Short and Long-Term Outcomes

The range of outcomes extends from the inner work of transformation to the outer work of organizational and community capacity building. The process of achieving these outcomes begins while leaders are participating in a program and it develops and deepens over time. Thus the full impact of our programs cannot be known in the short-term. One of the challenges and opportunities we have as a Community is to develop projects, approaches, and tools that will enable us to capture change and transformation over time. One approach may be to specify stages of growth and development that become benchmarks for us to assess how individuals, organizations, and communities are nurturing and deepening their leadership capacity over time. If we have a theory about how change and transformation happen then in our evaluations we can begin to document where individuals, organizations, and communities are along a continuum of leadership development and change.

There are many possibilities for how this work may continue and we urge you to be creative in your thinking about how to improve our ability as a Community to learn from and better understand the impact of our programs.

Some possibilities may include:

- Further refining/elaborating questions/indicators in a selected category

- Discussing what you would look for to demonstrate an outcome

- Considering whether there are important outcomes that are not captured here

- Sharing your experiences and tools with evaluating any of these outcomes (both your successes and failures/challenges)

- Thinking strategically about how we as a Community can work together to develop and implement more powerful evaluation tools

Core Leadership Competencies

- Communication (Is the leader able to articulate and convey a problem? Motivate action? Broaden and deepen the understandings others have of issues affecting their communities? Is the leader capable of influencing the shape of public discourse and debate? Effective at using the media to convey a message? Able to use technology to increase access to and disseminate information? Does the leader express her point of view without rancor?)

- Collaboration and Democratic Process (Is the leader capable of cooperating/collaborating with others? Is the leader able to negotiate conflicts fairly?)

- Critical Social Analysis (Does the leader have the capacity to be critical of the status quo? Is the leader capable of understanding the root cause of a problem? Does the leader raise new questions? Does the leader understand how her work fits into a larger movement for change?)

- Systems Thinking (Does the leader have the ability to see how individual situations are shaped by a broader context? Does the leader have a theoretical framework for understanding social problems? Does the leader understand the "fit" between theory and practice?)

- Leadership Development (Is the leader willing and able to share his learning with others? Does the leader actively cultivate the leadership of others, especially young people? Does the leader foster increased self-awareness in others?)

- Cultural Competence (Is the leader aware of his own culture and how it shapes his behavior and perspectives; and how others may respond to him? Is the leader able to understand and respect other cultures? Does the leader recognize that diverse perspectives strengthen the dialogue and approaches to solving social problems? Is the leader aware of how power and diversity affects relationships? Is the leader able to build relationships across boundaries?)

Methods that programs have used for assessing Core Leadership Competencies

- Self-reporting on skill acquisition through interviews, surveys, and internal reporting systems

- External assessments through interviews with placement/internship sponsors, feedback from employers, and input from faculty and trainers

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Personal Transformation and Mastery

- Self-Reflection and Awareness (Does the leader use reflection to clarify his values and vision? Is the leader aware of her strengths and weaknesses as a leader? Is the leader aware of his own leadership style and how that style may differ from others? Is the leader able to critically examine her role in organizations and communities?)

- Spirituality and Inner Work (Does the leader take time for reflection and spiritual renewal? Does the leader value and engage in improving herself? Is the leader aware of and committed to overcoming her fears? Does the leader demonstrate a balance between being and doing? Does the leader have a sustained commitment and willingness to work for the good of others even though results may not be realized in their lifetime? Is the leader capable of aligning her values with her work?)

- Reflection and Learning (Does the leader take time for reflection and learning? Is the leader open to receiving feedback about how to improve from others? Does the leader have a thirst for new knowledge? Is the leader capable of learning from failure? Does the leader look for and create learning opportunities?)

- Courage and Ethical Action (Is the leader capable of taking risks? Is the leader willing to try new things and experiment with ideas? Does the leader act ethically? Does he demonstrate courage? Is the leader trustworthy?)

- Authenticity (Is the leader capable of acting in accordance with her visions and values? Is the leader able to lead with compassion? Does the leader call forth the best from himself and others? Are the leader's values transparent to others through her work?)

Methods that programs have used to assess Personal Transformation and Mastery

- Personal anecdotes
- Fellow reflections and assessments
- Vehicles for these assessments included storytelling, interviews, survey instruments, written testimonials, personal letter or journal reflections, and required reports.

Organizational Leadership Capacity

- Leadership/Governance (Does the organization have strong leadership, e.g. staff and volunteer? Is the organization's leadership diverse? Is the leadership responsive to the community's needs?   Does the organization's leadership promote empowerment?)

- Program Planning and Implementation (Is the organization providing programs that meet community needs? Is the community engaged in setting organizational priorities? Are there opportunities for constituent/client involvement in identifying problems; and developing and implementing solutions? Are services culturally appropriate?)

- Learning (Does the organization evaluate its programs using criteria it has defined? Is the organization able to learn from its evaluation work? Does the organization take time to reflect on what it is learning in the course of its work? Does the organization learn from its mistakes? Is there an environment of trust that enables learning to take place? Does the organization disseminate what it is learning to others in the community?)

- Sustainability (Is the organization capable of generating the financial resources it needs to support its programs? Does it have a strategy for developing leadership? For transitioning leadership? Does the organization pay attention to spiritual renewal?)

- Connections/Networking/Partnerships (Does the organization initiate partnerships with other organizations in the community? Leverage existing partnerships?   Does the organization have connections with policymakers? The media? Business? Does the organization share its resources with others? Is the organization open to learning from other organizations?)

- Social change (Does the organization take an active role in building a movement for social change? Advocating for changes in policy? Develop alternative models for delivering services? Replicating its program model? Does the organization try to raise public awareness about the issues it addresses? Actively create a public consensus for changes that will benefit the community?)

Methods that programs have used to assess Organizational Leadership Capacity

- Organizational audits that assess organizational strengths and weaknesses. These may be done at the beginning of the program to provide a baseline and again at the end of the program to assess change

- Identifying three organizational goals at the beginning of the program against which success is measured at the end of the program

Community Leadership Capacity

- Leadership (Does the community's leadership reflect its diversity? Are there grassroots leaders who are motivated and capable of making needed changes?   Is the community's leadership ethical and authentic? Are community leaders developing innovative and appropriate services? Are grassroots leaders active in setting policies and priorities for the community? Are leaders able to sustain their commitment over time? Are non-positional

leaders recognized and valued? Is leadership shared? Is there an appreciation for diverse leadership styles? Is the community aware of its leadership assets?)

- Decision-Making (Are different points of view actively sought out when community decisions are being made? Is there transparency in the decision-making process?)

- Social capital (What is the level of trust in the community? Do people support and help one another? Do people respect one another and value their diversity? Is there a sense of hope and optimism in the community?)

- Leadership Development (Are opportunities created for new leaders to emerge? Are there leadership programs in the community? Do existing leaders actively pass on their knowledge and skills to others?)

- Collaboration, Networks, and Partnerships (How strong and dense are collaborations in the community? Are there enduring forums that bring people together across boundaries? Are leaders supported by one another in peer leadership networks? Do community leaders share resources with one another? Are new partnerships always emerging?)

- Civic Participation (Is there a vibrant non-profit sector? Are citizens motivated and engaged to work for the good of the entire community? Do people believe that they can actualize their vision? Do citizens have the opportunity to communicate their experiences in public forums?)

- Learning (Does the community have the capacity to assess its own strengths and weaknesses? Is the knowledge and experience of citizens actively sought out and used to inform decisions? Do community members have the opportunity to set research and knowledge priorities and generate their own learning? Can the community learn from its failures?)

- Mobilization/Change Movements (Do movements for change exist in the communities? Is there broad-based participation in these movements? Do the movement's leaders inspire others to get involved? Are new groups being empowered to find their own voice?)

Methods that programs have used to assess Community Leadership Capacity

- Inventory fellows about new collaborations with fellows and other leaders in their communities

- Document programs initiated, policy changes, increases in services, changes in the nature of services, changes in public opinion, and the development of new leadership and strategies

- Creating community capacity baselines by using social change indexes and then measuring change over time

- Additional indications of impact and transformation can be gathered from media coverage, interviews with policymakers, and the recognition of fellows and leadership programs through citations and awards.