

Synthesizing and Integrating Learning from Across Leadership Development Evaluations

Content and Process Notes

Evaluation Learning Circle November 29 - 30, 2005

Convenor and Note Synthesizer: Claire Reinelt
Facilitator and Notetaker: Janet Rechtman

The Evaluation Learning Circle held a two-day gathering in Baltimore to explore the possibilities and challenges of synthesizing and integrating learning from across our leadership development evaluations. Twenty people participated in the Circle discussions (see Attachment A for a complete list of attendees). An agenda for the meeting may be found in Attachment B.

Preparing for the Gathering

Prior to the meeting we asked participants to answer three questions in order to gather information that could be used to shape the discussion when we met face-to-face. We asked people to share their thinking about benefits and hazards of synthesizing and integrating learning across our evaluations, what supports and interferes with sharing and disseminating knowledge, and what priority learning questions they have about leadership development practice and impact. The questions we asked may be found in Attachment C. Attachment D provides a synthesis of the responses we received. This synthesis was shared with participants in advance of the meeting.

Meeting Objectives

- Clarify the benefits and hazards of integrating knowledge across our evaluations
- Identify and map leadership development evaluation resources we collectively bring to the table
- Investigate concrete ways in which lessons learned become useful and applicable in diverse contexts
- Prioritize a set of questions for learning across our evaluations
- Explore tools for creating “shared learning spaces” that build knowledge and community

Benefits and Hazards

After a review of the benefits and hazards listed in the synthesis (see Attachment D), we broke down into small groups to identify additional benefits and hazards. When the groups reconvened the following benefits and hazards were recorded.

Benefits	Hazards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A webpage that thematically organizes and makes research and evaluation data accessible (an example is the Leadership for a Changing World webpage http://leadershipforchange.org/insights/research/) • Identify gaps in knowledge that might generate other opportunities for research and evaluation • Reach a few sound generalizations • Capture how knowledge evolves over time • Establish what leadership development support works for whom under what conditions • Transcend different terminologies to be able to learn from each other • Find common meaning across different terms and different contexts • Develop a statement of principles about what evaluation is not • Disseminate a product that is useful to others • Find common themes and lessons through a collaborative process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgeneralization and losing context • Reinforcing blind spots without questioning them • Missing multiple points of view (e.g., danger of just getting the evaluation specialists in the conversation) • Using language that is too esoteric and exclusive • Epistemologically privileging western ways of knowing, missing out on data that might be equally valuable (e.g, what is known but unseen, experienced but not easily captured in words) • Reinforcing assumptions about what constitutes valuable and valid data • Giving up on trying to synthesize because it is so challenging • Getting stuck on terminology and specifics about outcomes and indicators • Getting bogged down in the process • Accepting uncritically biases in evaluations that are most often shaped by what funders want to learn • Evaluation is a high stakes activity that distorts learning by sometimes breeding an environment of suspicion and distrust • Investing a lot of time in a project that does not “pay off” • Feeling the pressure to disseminate a product • Danger of overlooking how what we learn is linked to practice and embedded in community experience

Challenges to doing this work

- Holding the tension by seeking to find the common while at the same time honoring the important details and particularities that must be taken into consideration
- Figuring out what we mean by synthesis: Is it a tool, a process, a strategy, an outcome or all of those? Is it clustering, individual points of knowledge, consensus?
- Finding other resources that might help us develop a framework (e.g., the products of the leadership theory group on the LLC website <http://www.leadershiplearning.org/pools/theory/>)

Potential products

- A reference guide of individuals that can be a resource for people when they encounter problems evaluating leadership development programs or other efforts

Mapping Leadership Development Evaluation Resources

The following is a list of leadership development evaluation and research that we know about (with the person who suggested it):

Kelly Hannum (CCL)

- Reflections – 360 evaluation tool to evaluate individual behavior change and group/organizational impact
- Center for Creative Leadership individual client evaluations (see internal CCL Evaluation History written by Meena Wilson)
- Documents gathered by Bill Gentry for CCL
- Evaluation of Scottish Leadership Foundation – Anne Murphy, Lancaster University
- Work by Fredrick Rohs at the University of Georgia
- UN Institute for Leadership –Muna Odera
- Moasic Program Evaluation – Dash Douglas
- Management Sciences for Health Leadership Program – Alison Ellis – focuses on evaluating teams
- Conference Board Publication on Leadership Development

Claire Reinelt (LLC)

- Evaluation of six leadership development programs for developing and supporting family planning and reproductive health leaders in developing countries funded by the Packard and the Gates Foundations
- Rhode Island Foundation Fellowship Retrospective Evaluation of a nonprofit executive director fellowship program
- Evaluation of Kellogg's International Leadership Program
- Evaluation of The California Wellness Foundation's Violence Prevention Leadership Programs
- Evaluation of Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education – a policy fellowship
- Numerous scans of the leadership development field funded by (The California Endowment, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington)

Manuel Gutierrez and Tania Tasse (OMG)

- Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership Program
- Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World Evaluation
- Eisenhower Fellowship Program Evaluation – international fellowship program
- Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Family Fellowship Evaluation

Cindy Wilcox (Mirror Image Consulting)

- Blandin Health Care Leadership Program – balanced scorecard approach; involving key stakeholders; organizational and community impact
- Blandin Educational Leadership Program – balanced scorecard approach; involving key stakeholders in multi-layered initiative; organizational and community impact
- Partners in Leadership Program Evaluation (David Scheie – evaluator)
- Blandin Reservation Communities Leadership Program
- BCLP Program Culture: A Case Study in Transformative Education

Laura Kemp-Rye (Community Collaborative)

- Brushy Fork Institute of Berea College – Peter Hille, website with Community Transformations Lessons Learned
- Pew Partnerships Leadership Plenty
- On-going evaluation of Leadership Network of Community Collaborative in West Virginia

Tom Kelly (AECF)

- Community Organizing Lessons Learned on the Casey website
- Center for 21st Century Leadership, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, (Andy Hernandez)
- Faith in Action: Evaluation Manual, Mass. Bay United Way (Margaret Chase Anderson), and the whole "faith" spirituality field re: transformation
- Evaluation of British Isles Fellowships (Mitchell, Marshall, Rhodes)
- Army/West Point

Cynthia Chavez (LeaderSpring)

- Eureka Communities evaluation of their nonprofit ED leadership program, conducted by CAPD
- LeaderSpring evaluation using the EvaluLEAD model

Dick Couto (Antioch University)

- Macro analysis of corporate leadership development programs by Scott Allen
- What is the leadership in leadership development?
- Appalachia, civil rights movements and social justice advocates
- Information on the origins (rather than development) of leadership at the community level
- Evaluation of leadership development in higher education curriculum programs (Astin and Astin)

Kim Hsieh (LLC Board Member)

- Investing in Leadership, Vols. 1 and 2 – available at www.geofunders.org

Hazel Symonette (University of Wisconsin)

- Relevance of Assessment and Culture in Evaluation (Stafford Hood, ASU)

- EvaluLEAD Manual with cases in Appendix (available at www.wkkf.org and at www.leadershiplearning.org)

Ken Williams (New Voices)

- Self-reflection questions for leaders in New Voices
- New Voices evaluation by Innovation network; video interview protocol and interviews, profiles of fellow accomplishments
- Tool for comparing theories of leadership (coming in 2006)
- Congressional Hunger Fellows Evaluation
- Possible evaluations of Ashoka Fellowship, Echoing Green and OSI
- Lefthanded Fastballers by David Nevins – Book about early Ford Foundation leadership program

Maria Saenz (Georgetown University)

- Guide to Evaluating Leadership Development Programs by the Evaluation Forum
- Pat Millar and Sue Kilpatrick from University of Tasmania, “How community development programmes can foster re-engagement with learning in disadvantaged communities: leadership as process”

Miscellaneous without names

- Rural Leadership Case Studies from the Heartland Center
- Northwest Area Foundation’s Leadership Programs (Frank Schweigert is evaluation lead at NAAF)
- Kellogg National Fellowship Program

Current Efforts to Synthesize Learning about Leadership Development

Kelly Hannum presented a framework of analysis that CCL is developing to review their own leadership development evaluations and literature in the field of training and development. LLC is looking to complement CCL’s work, not duplicate it. We agreed to look for ways to collaborate.

Learning Questions

Following is a synthesis of the questions that we are asking about leadership development practice and impact. These questions were generated in the pre-meeting inquiry process and in small group discussions at the meeting.

Identification, selection, cohorts

1. Who gets selected to go to leadership development programs and for what purposes?
2. What are we learning about how to move away from recruiting and privileging an elite or licensed group of leaders?
3. Is there a snowball effect in selecting cohorts for leadership programs over time and what are the effects if this occurs?
4. What do we know about how to effectively match the person with an appropriate program?
5. How does the composition of the group (e.g., unified identity group vs. a diverse group) affect leadership development outcomes?
6. How do we effectively identify and support groups, teams, and other collective entities?
7. What are we learning about alternative approaches to identifying and supporting leaders that are more natural and responsive to communities?

8. What are the variables in communities, organizations and individuals that create a conducive environment for leadership development and how is that knowledge being used to make better selections?

Curriculum Design and Learning Approaches

9. What options or modules are common across leadership development programs?
10. What are the most important factors in successfully developing leadership capacity, both personal and circumstantial?
11. What techniques and experiences do people learn best from?
12. How are programs addressing -isms and phobias?
13. How do visible and invisible leaders develop links with each other?
14. To what extent is taking the leader out of context for leadership development effective or to what extent is it more effective to develop leadership in context?
15. What are we learning about coaching as a leadership development strategy?
16. How do we build sustainable evaluation capacity within leadership development programs and how do we know we have been successful?
17. How are leadership development programs cultivating collaboration and collective sensemaking in their program design and execution?

Democratizing leadership development

18. How is leadership becoming more inclusive and empowering without expert direction?
19. What are we learning about less expensive and more natural ways to enhance leadership processes?
20. How are community leaders being supported and developed outside formal leadership development programs?
21. How is indigenous leadership supported in communities?
22. What are the effects of internalized oppression on leadership development?

Leadership Pathways, Cycles, and Relationships

23. What are we learning about leadership development pathways for individuals, organizations, communities, fields, etc.?
24. What are we learning about developmental benchmarks that occur across contexts?
25. To what extent is leadership development correlated with, a contributor to, or the cause of documented transformative changes in organizations, communities, fields, systems, or individuals and how are these relationships established?
26. What is the impact of one change effort on the formation of leadership for the next one?
27. What are the stages and pathways of leadership development for individuals and fields?
28. What are we learning about the leadership cycle within organizations and fields (including recruitment/entering the pipeline, retention/avoiding burn-out, transitioning leadership)?
29. What is the path between leadership development and transformative changes in communities/fields/systems?
30. What are we learning about how people build on transformative moments no matter what the context?
31. What relationship(s) exist between organizational capacity building and leadership development?
32. What relationship(s) exist between collaborative leadership and community-wide change?
33. What are we learning about how leadership pathways unfold/move across sectors,

life stages and different leadership positions?

Leadership Outcomes

34. What array of short and long-term outcomes (and indicators of these outcomes) are seen in common in ANY leadership development program?
35. What are the unintended consequences of leadership development?
36. What are the negative effects of leadership development?
37. How do we expand the intended but unspecified outcomes of leadership development?
38. What are the consequences (intended and unintended) of identifying and supporting leaders to advance a political or policy agenda?

Links between program design and outcomes

39. What are documented successes/outcomes of leadership development programs and to what extent do we know which design features of programs may lead to the development of these outcomes?
40. Which program components (or bundle of program components) are most strongly associated with which leadership outcomes?
41. What are best practices to instill in individuals a sense of responsibility for the common good?
42. What are effective strategies that foster/strengthen leadership that promotes community change in under-resourced neighborhoods or communities?
43. What is the role of leadership development program networks in supporting/strengthening individual leadership and community change?

Cultural context and leadership environments

44. What are the variations, from context to context and organization to organization in the same context, in how leadership emerges?
45. What changes need to be made to open real opportunities for young leaders to participate in social change initiatives in their communities?
46. What particular combinations of circumstances best support the flourishing of leadership (development) in different contexts?
47. How is leadership experienced in different cultures and different populations?
48. What happens when leadership program participants go back to a setting where the definition of leadership is different from what they experienced in the program?
49. What are we learning about how to integrate and sustain learning from leadership programs in environments with different assumptions about leadership?
50. What is the leadership environment and in what ways do leaders have choice or face constraints from their environments?
51. What are we learning about leadership environments (e.g., communities) that is different from what we are learning about individual leaders?
52. What are the underlying cultural assumptions we are making in our programs and evaluations (e.g., values and orientation around time)?
53. How are evaluations of leadership development programs distinguishing factors outside of the program (such as individual motivation, character, experience), as well as external leadership opportunities?

Leadership Concepts, Definitions and Theories

58. How is leadership development (and its subcomponents) being defined into generally acceptable and understood components?
59. Given the different types of leadership development programs, how is “leadership” currently being thought about, understood, and studied by programs, funders and

researchers?

60. What definitions of “leadership” are currently being used in the field?
61. What different frames or lenses are we using to look at leadership (e.g., multicultural competence)?
62. What is the connection between learning theory and leadership development?
63. How are we redefining notions of emerging and established leadership that move beyond age?
64. What constitutes a critical mass of effective leaders who have the capacity to lead change around specific issues?

Learning and evaluation methodologies

65. What evaluation and data collection strategies are best for following up on graduates of leadership development programs?
66. How do we take in, and integrate information about effective leadership development that does not lend itself to being systematically/comprehensively tracked by currently available (and/or accepted) evaluation methodologies?
67. How do evaluators negotiate value differences with their clients?
68. How do we bring diversity as a social lens into every aspect of evaluation?
69. What are the most promising leadership development evaluation tools that we are using?
70. How are we valuing/articulating chaos/complexity theory in our thinking about links/causality?
71. Is there an iterative process where we are learning about the common categories we use to collect information and how do we begin to categorize that into a database that can be queried so that subsequent work can build on this information?
72. Is there a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership development efforts that is emerging from our scans?
73. How can aggregate/code our understandings in a data base that we can build on for future work?
74. How do we access the information that we gather?
75. How are we cross-fertilizing or communicating evaluation findings across sectoral and other boundaries?
76. How can information from what we are learning best be used?
77. How are we creating less expensive ways to share/replicate promising practices?
78. How do we link the learning agenda and priorities of the Evaluation Learning Circle with other LLC circle learning priorities?

What We Have Learned About Sharing and Transferring Knowledge Across Contexts

Working with our own experiences of sharing knowledge with others, we considered what supports and interferes with shared understanding and learning.

Presentation

- Paint a picture of the impact instead of focusing on the learning process
- Make it real first by slowing down and taking the time to really share the context and the story of it rather than data tidbits out of context
- Experiment with ways of sharing information on a topic, e.g., culturally based leadership. Create a mind map of lessons that have emerged and attach to those lessons stories, journal articles, etc. that allow you to learn more about each of the lessons; also describe the context of the lessons.

- Share information in multiple formats, e.g., written reports, websites, video, pictures, storytelling and simulations – the latter get people into the actual experience of the lesson
- When talking to donors, feature stories using writing, video, bringing people to presentations.
- Show how the same lesson is learned through multiple programs, e.g., the link between healing and personal transformation
- Present connections/intersections between lessons about personal transformation, organizational change and community change rather than creating silos of lessons
- Look for heartfelt connection so that people can relate with their own emotional experience
- Show how networks evolve as people go through a program. Individuals bring a personal network as well as a work network of horizontal and vertical linkages to their program experience.
- Important task is to identify bridging terms (like social capital) that can be reclaimed and defined with meanings that are useful for us
- Use very specific tasks or questions to help people directly experience the meaning of the terms

Relationships

- When we need to know something we seek out others we know. What we learn depends on who is in our network; or if we are thinking about expanding our networks we may use the “need to know” as a way to reach out to others.
- For the Americans for Indian Opportunity Leadership Program, wealth is measured by relationships. Focus is on diversity of people in the network and how you relate to them not just on number of contacts.
- Share information in small groups; this takes time and it’s hard to find the time
- Use our own networks to effectively share information

Role of the Evaluator

- When evaluators become the messenger, interpreter of knowledge, this may become a barrier to sharing
- The bad history that people have had with evaluation may make it difficult for the evaluator to be the messenger
- Successfully sharing information depends on whether the evaluator can enter into a trusting relationship with the people being evaluated
- Invite people to participate in their own learning
- Go beyond tools, tips and strategies to engage people in real trusting relationships
- Evaluators become spokespeople, filters when they bring information to clients (e.g., funders). We should consider going on strike so people will have to go straight to communities and listen a little more

- Avoid colluding with “expert” perspective; embed interpretation into the leadership development evaluation so that it is a collective reflection of learning lessons in context
- Be aware that our models legitimize knowledge that others have and are willing to share, but who are often ignored
- Evaluator as a convenor, creator of a space for stakeholders to speak in their own voices

Source of Learning

- How ready are people to hear about an experience that comes from a completely different context
- Pay attention to lessons that come from really screwing up
- Learn what the context has to tell us
- Pay attention to the shifts in meaning making that occur through the process of learning itself
- Recognize the power of community leaders to infuse knowledge into a community
- Use resources for local enrichment and development

Introduction to Wiki -- Elissa Perry

Wiki is one technology that would enable us to collectively share what we know and the evidence that we have collected as well as co-author a synthesis of that learning.

A wiki is a collection of web pages that allows users to add content, but also allows anyone to edit the content. Wiki also refers to the collaborative software used to wiki, meaning "quick" or "informal." Sometimes "wikiwiki" or "WikiWiki" is used instead of "wiki".

– From Wikipedia <http://www.wikipedia.org> accessed November 22, 2005

A wiki enables documents to be written collectively (co-authoring) in a simple markup language using a web browser. A single page in a wiki is referred to as a "wiki page", while the entire body of pages, which are usually highly interconnected via hyperlinks, is called "the wiki".

A defining characteristic of wiki technology is the ease with which pages can be created and updated. Generally, there is no review before modifications are accepted. Most wikis can be open to the general public like Wikipedia or open only to a defined group.

Research on wiki software is included in Attachment E, along with a comparison of their features.

Next Steps

Step 1: Use Survey Monkey to gather input from Evaluation Learning Circle members about priority learning questions.

Step 2: Identify 2-3 learning questions that will be the focus for collecting evidence and insights from our evaluation and research

Step 3: Pilot a Wiki so that everyone can contribute to answering these questions.

- Claire, Dick, Kim, Kelly and Manuel will create a template for reporting (include some criteria for distinguishing between impressions, interpretation, and evidence)
- Clarify confidentiality requirements for the pilot
- Ask people to indicate level of confidentiality on their posts so that we can make informed decisions about how to share
- Create a space for posting process feedback on the pilot at the same time as we post content to the pilot
- Explain what is not working and why so that we can engage in joint problem-solving

Step 4: Develop an Agenda for Creating Space VII Evaluation Learning Circle

- Debrief pilot
- Decide how to share/disseminate knowledge synthesis
- Orient people to using Wiki to gather data
- Discuss quality control and ground rules

Attachment A

Evaluation Learning Circle Participants

1. **Hazel Symonette**
University of Wisconsin
2. **Thomas Kelly**
Annie E. Casey Foundation
3. **Laura Kemp-Rye**
Community Collaborative, INC
4. **Richard Couto**
Antioch University Leadership and Change PhD Program
5. **Mary Achatz**
Westat (consultant to Casey's evaluation unit)
6. **Sally Leiderman**
Center for Assessment and Policy Development
7. **Hanh Cao Yu**
Social Policy Research Associates
9. **Ken Williams**
New Voices National Fellowship Program
10. **Marian Krauskopf**
Research Center for Leadership and Action, Wagner Graduate School of Public Services, NYU
11. **Maria Saenz**
Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership
Georgetown University
12. **Cindy Wilcox**
Mirror Image Consulting Group
13. **Tania Tasse**
OMG Center for Collaborative Learning
14. **Alfred Ramirez**
National Community for Latino Leadership Inc. (NCLL)
15. **Kim Hsieh**

LLC Board Member

16. **Manuel Gutierrez**
OMG Center for Collaborative Learning
17. **Kelly Hannum**
Center for Creative Leadership
18. **Cynthia Chavez**
LeaderSpring
19. **Janet Rechtman**
Rechtman Consulting Group
20. **Claire Reinelt**
Leadership Learning Community

Attachment B

Leadership Learning Community

Evaluation Learning Circle

“Synthesizing and Integrating Learning from Across Leadership Development Evaluations”

November 29 - 30, 2005

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Objectives:

- Clarify the benefits and hazards of integrating knowledge across our evaluations
- Identify and map the leadership development evaluation resources we collectively bring to the table
- Investigate concrete ways in which lessons learned become useful and applicable in diverse contexts
- Prioritize a set of questions for learning across our evaluations
- Explore tools for creating “shared learning spaces” that build knowledge and community

November 29

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch (503 North Charles Street) |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | Break (Walk to 701 St. Paul Street, Board Room) |
| 1:30 – 2:00 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 2:00 – 2:15 | Brief Introduction to the Evaluation Learning Circle and an Overview of the Day |
| 2:15 – 3:00 | Clarify the Benefits and Hazards of Collecting, Synthesizing, Aggregating, Integrating Knowledge Across Our Evaluations |
| 3:00 – 3:30 | Mapping our leadership development evaluation resources |
| 3:30 – 3:45 | Break |
| 3:45 – 4:30 | Scan current efforts to synthesize learning across programs/ evaluations
<i>Kelly Hannum, Enterprise Associate, Center for Creative Leadership</i> |
| 4:30 - 5:15 | Surfacing questions to guide learning across evaluations |

- 5:15 - 5:30** Evaluating today; looking forward to tomorrow
- 5:30 – 6:00** Break
- 6:00 – 8:00** Reception and Dinner (701 St. Paul Street, Fifth Floor)

November 30

- 8:00 – 8:30** Breakfast (701 St. Paul Street)
- 8:30 – 8:45** Check In
- 8:45- 10:00** Learning from our experiences about how to share and apply knowledge in diverse contexts
- 10:00 – 10:15** Break
- 10:15 – 11:00** Explore tools for creating “shared learning space”
Introduction to Wikis
*Elissa Perry, Web and Community Learning Director,
Leadership Learning Community*
- 11:00 – 11:30** Creating some next steps
- 11:30 – 11:45** Taking stock
- 11:45 – 12:00** Closing and evaluation
- 12:00** Lunch



- 1:00 – 4:00** Joint session with Funders’ Affinity Circle
“Leadership Development and Multicultural Evaluation”
Those of you who are planning to attend will receive a separate email on this session.

Attachment C

Synthesizing and Integrating Knowledge from Leadership Development Evaluations

Questions to Surface our Individual and Collective Learning

Please respond by November 20th to claire@leadershiplearning.org

Benefits and Hazards of Synthesizing Knowledge Across Program Evaluations

What are the potential benefits of extracting lessons from multiple leadership development evaluations conducted in different contexts? What are the potential hazards of building general knowledge from multiple evaluations?

Sharing and Integrating Knowledge

What best supports sharing and integrating knowledge from one context to another?
What most interferes with the usability of knowledge across contexts?

Priority Learning Questions

Based on your evaluation experiences and assessment of the current state of leadership development work, what 3 questions do you think we could answer from our combined evaluation experiences about how to effectively develop and support leadership? Are these the questions that will make the most significant contribution to the practice of leadership development and if not, what would the breakthrough questions be?

Attachment D

Synthesis of Shared Inquiry Responses Synthesizing and Integrating Learning From Across Leadership Development Evaluations November 29-30, 2005

Benefits and Hazards of Synthesizing Knowledge Across Program Evaluations

Benefits

Establishing what works

- The leadership field is lacking in good models of assessment, theory (implementation and evaluation), and implementation standards. A multi-program assessment could further the field's establishment of standard definitions and benchmarks of quality.
- The benefits, of course, will give us a tighter handle on what works. The significance of this is to prevent wasted effort in reinventing wheels. Different contexts is a particularly important factor because it will imply generalizations about leadership and its development from one context to another.

Gaining new knowledge

- Seeing how different programs/funders define and think about leadership, how they (and evaluators) try to measure leadership capacities and "qualities"; what are the indicators that are often used, etc.
- Avoiding duplication of efforts and making the same mistakes.
- Contribute to a wider knowledge base.

Having an opportunity to reflect

- The process of extracting lessons is valuable in itself since people reflect on their experiences.

Establishing evidence of impact

- The field needs stronger evidence of impact that it can use to make a more effective case for investing in leadership development.

Discovering what is in common

- We also would benefit by developing some common language and frameworks that help us make sense of what we are learning across our evaluations.
- Discovery of common themes, common threads in leadership development processes, common assumptions and theories of change.
- Especially with “leadership” as a concept, it is critical to consider the common or shared definitions of the concept, of the interventions, and of the expected outcomes.

Learning across contexts

- To understand what are the key questions being asked about leadership development, the places of common inquiry; what seem to be the findings that hold true about leadership despite changes in other variables; the state of “sophistication” of the field.

Hazards

Different concepts of leadership

- Differences in scope or breadth of the concept of leadership across programs or evaluations creates issues or challenges in interpretation of data across sites.

Variations in program design

- LD programs vary so significantly in what it is they’re trying to develop, among whom, for what, etc. that I don’t believe it’s possible to aggregate results of evaluations.

Losing the context of learning

- One of the greatest hazards is that we lose an understanding of the context in which knowledge is generated, and therefore it becomes detached from the actual process of learning. Knowledge that is not embedded in a process of learning loses its usefulness.
- Lessons do not describe adequately the context in which these are developed, and later are used as cookie-cutter solutions out of context.
- Lessons are developed by people who do not understand the in-depth needs of their users (e.g., which problems users consider relevant, what is the appropriate timing and format).

Standardization

- The hazards are that a set of principles of practice come from this; funding streams get directed down their channels; and some excellent

groups and practices get ignored. A corollary to this is that lessons from one context are imposed on another.

- Ignoring/under-appreciating unique program elements and/or unique LD theory.

Knowledge becomes too general

- To increase applicability of lessons, these are formulated in very general terms, which makes them almost useless.
- Overgeneralization, overlooking or discounting the importance of certain variables

Too much information

- Overloading intended users with too much information without a system that helps them retrieve the lessons when needed.

Lessons learned are wrongly attributed

- Lessons are based on wrong causal relationships.
- Possible attribution of changes to leadership development, rather than other circumstantial/environmental factors that were not systematically reviewed and accounted for (making causative rather than correlative conclusions).

Sharing and Integrating Knowledge

What supports integrating knowledge across contexts

Having shared learning spaces

- Convenings, such as the ones sponsored by the Leadership Learning Community.
- The users extract the lessons with the help of a facilitator. The facilitator makes sure that the context is adequately described.
- Sessions such as LLC sponsors offer the space to share findings and to learn from one another.
- Creating "shared spaces" where people can interact in ways that make connections between what they know and what others know so that some new knowledge emerges. (These shared spaces can be face-to-face or virtual.)
- Time together.

Joint Projects

- Special projects that focus on distilling and integrating knowledge across contexts.

Concreteness of Knowledge

- There is always a need to make knowledge easier to apply in practice; therefore, what does the consolidated knowledge contribute towards practical applications for funders, program developers, trainers, and evaluators.

Communication

- Dialogue
- When specific information is needed, users are able to communicate easily and timely with the group that extracted the lessons.

Understanding Context

- Clarification of assumptions and other “uncontrolled factors” that exist in different contexts

What interferes with usability of knowledge across contexts

Lack of awareness about what knowledge exists

- Lack of recognition that knowledge exists. Program designers’ need to attempt to create something “new and different” from everything else.

Knowledge becomes too generic and abstract

- When consolidated knowledge becomes too generic or abstract, then people are less likely to be able to apply it in the specifics of their work.

Over-reliance on written documentation

- Relying too heavily on written documentation, which cannot always adequately cover important knowledge that is difficult to transmit in writing

Different contexts

- Organizations within contexts vary, contexts vary, and the right timing varies all of these are factors in replicability.
- Knowledge that does not make explicit the context in which it was learned and its potential applicability to other contexts has less usability across

contexts.

Lack of mutual understanding and respect

- What interferes with knowledge sharing is when people in one context do not respect or trust people (and the knowledge they have) in another context. In this case sharing useful knowledge won't be very likely.
- Language commonly used in some settings may be considered offensive in others. Bridging the language gap may be an important aspect to consider when drawing conclusions

Lack of resources

- Opportunity costs is another factor for many organizations without much marginal operating resources.

Priority Learning Questions

Definitions and concepts

- How can leadership development (and its subcomponents) be defined into generally acceptable and understood components?
- Given the different types of LD programs, how is "leadership" currently being thought about, understood, and studied by programs and funders (and researchers)?
- What definitions of "leadership" are being currently used in the field?

Link between program design and outcomes

- What are documented successes/outcomes of LD programs and to what extent do we know which design features of programs may have led to the development of these outcomes?
- Which program components (or bundle of program components) are most strongly associated with which leadership outcomes?
- What are the best practices to instill in individuals a sense of responsibility for the whole and the common good?
- What are effective strategies that foster/strengthen leadership which promotes community change in under-resourced neighborhoods or communities?
- What is the role of leadership development program networks in supporting/strengthening individual leadership? Community change?

Methods

- What evaluation and data collection strategies are best for following up on graduates of leadership development programs? How long (and how far and wide) should graduates be followed?
- How do we take in, and integrate information about effective leadership development that does not lend itself to being systematically/comprehensively tracked by currently available (and/or accepted) evaluation methodologies?

Program design

- What options or modules can be expected in specialized leadership development programs?
- How do we enrich our practices of leadership development with some of the recent scholarship in the field?
- What seem to be the factors most important in the successful development of leadership capacity, both personal and circumstantial?
- What techniques and experiences do people learn best from?

Outcomes and Pathways

- What are we learning about leadership development pathways for individuals, organizations, communities, fields, etc.? Are there developmental benchmarks that occur across contexts?
- What array of short and long-term outcomes (and indicators of these outcomes) should be seen in common in ANY leadership development program?
- To what extent is leadership development correlated with, a contributor to, or the cause of documented transformative changes in organizations, communities, fields, systems, or individuals? How was this relationship established?
- What is the impact of one change effort on the formation of leadership for the next one?
- What relationship(s) exist between organizational capacity building and leadership development?
- What relationship(s) exist between collaborative leadership and community-wide change?
- How do people build on transformative moments no matter what the context?

Context

- How can evaluations of leadership development programs distinguish factors outside of the program (such as individual motivation, character, experience), as well as external leadership opportunities?
- What are the variations, from context to context and organization to organization in the same context, in the emergence of leadership?

- What changes need to be made to open real opportunities for young leaders to participate in social change initiatives in their communities?
- What particular combinations of circumstances best support the flourishing of leadership (development) in different contexts?