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# Leadership Development Programs: Exploring The Real Impact Upon Communities And Organizations

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:  
EXPLORING THE REAL IMPACT UPON  
COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of Fort Hays State University in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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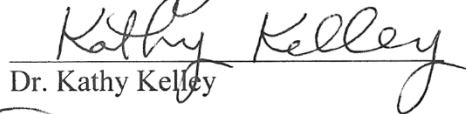
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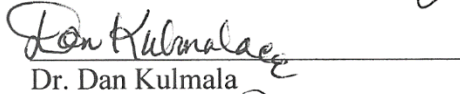
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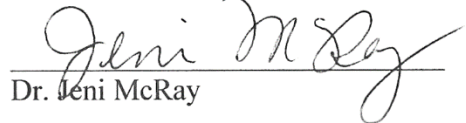
The undersigned have examined the thesis entitled “Leadership Development Programs: Exploring the Real Impact Upon Communities and Organizations” presented by Brandon Steinert, a candidate for the degree of Master of Science, and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

  
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## ABSTRACT

Leadership development programs are a popular tool utilized by communities and organizations to influence culture, challenge status quo and develop individuals. Research targeting the effectiveness of these programs is voluminous, but much of the work done thus far measures program effectiveness by one of two methods: either by the change in the attitudes and behavior of participants, or by the opinions participants held regarding the content and curriculum of the program. This study sought measure program effectiveness by looking at the real impact upon communities and organizations. This study explored the potential relationship between health and vibrancy of communities and the presence of community leadership programs. Leadership program alumni were interviewed and members of their communities were surveyed to determine if the local program, Leadership Golden Belt in Great Bend, Kansas, is effective in generating leadership and to determine if the actions of alumni were impacting their community's health.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have happened without the tremendous support and expert advice from my advisor, Dr. Connie Eigenmann, and recommendations from my dream-team graduate committee with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, Drs. Kathy Kelley, Dan Kulmala and Jeni McRay.

Thanks to the kind souls at the Kansas Leadership Center for getting me started and pointing me in the direction of researchers who came before me, specifically Shaun Rojas.

Also thanks to my many wonderful friends in Great Bend who referred me to potential interviewees, distributed my survey and saw value in my work.

Also thanks to my wife for tolerating the time I spent in the coffee shops and hidden away in the home office reading, writing and researching.

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **Purpose**

This project was designed to explore the real impact of leadership development programs within the context of their missions.

The challenge and the goal of this study was to identify the actions of leadership development program alumni and determine the level of impact those actions had on their community. This project also intended to add value to the conversation about leadership development program assessment.

### **Description**

Two methods were employed to offer multiple perspectives on leadership development programs' effectiveness.

The primary method chosen was interviews of alumni from Leadership Golden Belt (LGB), which serves Barton, Pawnee, Rush and Stafford Counties; The focus however, was on Great Bend, Kansas in Barton County as the location with the highest level of participation. It also allowed a more focused study of participants and the results of their labors. The purpose was to explore alumni accomplishments in their community and tie them to their experiences, skill development and relationship building that might have occurred during their tenure in the leadership program. This approach was inspired by the EvaluLEAD method's three inter-penetrating domains of societal, organizational and individual, which will be discussed in the next chapter (Grove, Kibel, & Haas, 2005).

As alumni would certainly have a skewed view on whether the program was influencing the community through direct observation of their classmates' actions and accomplishments, which was confirmed in the study, a second method was employed. A

community survey was used to determine if there had been a perceived improvement in the health and vibrancy of the community in the past five years among residents who might or might not have heard about the leadership program.

This study's focus begins with alumni of the class of 2008, which is when the class rebooted after being discontinued for some time. The last class to attend LGB under the cohort format was 2014. From 2011-2014, LGB taught the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) competencies of Diagnose Situation, Manage Self, Energize Others and Intervene Skillfully. LGB was affiliated with the KLC from 2008-2010, though the competencies were not the focus of the curriculum.

According to its website, the KLC was established by the Kansas Health Foundation in 2007 with a grant. The philosophy behind the KLC's curriculum is to approach leadership as an activity, not a role or authority position. The KLC has a location in downtown Wichita, Kansas where workshops in various lengths and formats are held throughout the year. The KLC is also affiliated with many of the Kansas community-based leadership programs through its Kansas Civic Leadership Initiative, which puts the KLC's competency- and action-based leadership training curriculum in the hands of localized program facilitators ("Kansas Leadership Center," 2016).

The KLC's mission is to foster civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities. This mission statement was the guiding premise for this study. It inspired several questions:

1. Has civic leadership been fostered?
2. Has it led to healthier communities?
3. What elements of the curriculum are most effective and valued by alumni?

Prior to beginning research, Shaun Rojas, Program Director at the KLC, offered a definition of healthy that was quite broad, incorporating a community's governance, infrastructure, volunteerism, economy, quality of life and physical health of residents, among other factors. I used two descriptors, overall health and quality of life, in my research to incorporate this broad definition while communicating with interviewees and survey participants.

### **Researcher Background**

In 2011, I returned to my childhood home, Barton County, after spending about six years in larger cities in the eastern part of Kansas. I returned for a job opportunity at Barton Community College.

Upon arriving, I suffered from some mild culture shock, as the rural area turned out to be several years behind the times compared to my previous cities. That same year, I participated in Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) and was inspired to dedicate myself to help mold the community into the type of place in which my generation would be proud to reside.

I watched my fellow LGB classmates take on projects and apply their skills over the last five years, and observed the birth of organizations and teams that are now highly influential in the area. Among these are Barton County Young Professionals, which recently installed a \$50,000 playground set, and Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms, which has provided educational opportunities to grade school children, and raises funds to improve the facilities and develop programs at the Kansas Wetlands Education Center. These two organizations and their many projects are just a snapshot of the improvements to the

community that have taken place thanks to skills developed and relationships built in the LGB cohorts in recent years.

In the spirit of the critical tradition, I was inspired to take on this project when the cohort format was abandoned after the 2014 class in favor of informal half-day seminars and luncheons with guest speakers. As a journalist, I was moved to investigate if my observations were objective or skewed, and to determine how much of a role LGB truly had in the origin and development of the aforementioned organizations.

## **Chapter 2 - Relevant Literature**

### **Introduction**

Three common themes emerged from digesting research regarding the current state of leadership programs and several related trends and schools of thought surrounding the topic were revealed.

The first point of discussion is the relationship between effective communication skills and leadership skills. Many scholars found they are one in the same, or at least highly intertwined (Vries, Bakker-Pieper and Oostenveld, 2009, pp. 367, 376) (Hackman and Johnson, 1996, p. 6).

The second common theme is the relative success leadership programs seem to have at improving the communication and leadership skills of participants and the perceived value of the content among participants (Grove et al., 2005, p. 1).

The third recurring concept found throughout current research is the tendency for leadership programs and academic studies of leadership programs to utilize participant feedback about the curriculum to measure a program's success. This method of measurement reveals only how valuable participants found the program, not what the participants accomplished or how they impacted their communities or organizations. There are few studies attempting to measure the impact of alumni (Hedge, 2007, p. 67) (Black, 2006).

### **Part I: Leadership skills and communication skills similarities**

While community leadership programs historically have focused on generating awareness of community resources and providing networking opportunities, the current trend and school of thought in leadership development is to teach communication and

interaction skills to help people develop more effective relationships. This approach to leadership was one of the primary concepts considered when founding the Kansas Community Leadership Initiative, which was developed by the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) (Wituk, Warren, Heiny, Clark, Power & Meissen, 2003, p. 76).

This change in thinking took place more than a decade ago, and it did not go unnoticed by leadership scholars. It takes only a quick database search to reveal the plethora of articles devoted to the commonality among identified leadership competencies and teachable communication skills. Vries et al. (2009) went so far as to headline their study, *Leadership = communication?* inferring that “communication is central to leadership” (p. 367) and “...the question whether leadership = communication can be answered in the affirmative for charismatic and human-oriented leadership” (p. 376).

Vries et al. (2009) speak of communication styles, which they categorized into elements reminiscent of the KLC’s core competencies. The authors state “the close correspondence between human-oriented leadership and communication is due to the fact that consideration is heavily saturated with relational aspects of communication, such as interpersonal concern and warmth...” (p. 369).

Many of the KLC’s competencies, like “Speak from the heart” and “Raise the heat,” under the category of “Intervene Skillfully” are arguably related to being effective by developing “interpersonal concern and warmth.” Further, KLC sub-competencies found under the category of “Energize others,” like “Speak to loss” and “Inspire a collective purpose” are also tightly bound to interpersonal communication traits described by Vries et al. Several of the measurements of communication styles used in the author’s

study, particularly supportiveness and assuredness, are also skills taught by the KLC, identified as “Create a trustworthy process” and “Speak to loss,” respectively. Additional skills taught by the KLC could arguably be included in this comparison. (*For the Common Good Quick Guide*, 2014)

Kegler, Norton, and Aronson (2008) discovered that communication apprehension could be overcome via participation in a healthy communities program geared toward leadership development:

... One coordinator noted that those involved in her community ‘have come to know people on a different level than what they did before.’ Reduced isolation and strengthened social support were highlighted by some; others focused on new or strengthened connections between organizations. (p. 176)

Jolley (2015) also discussed her findings regarding communication apprehension reduction as a result of participating in a leadership program, “Co-researchers (participants) have more self-confidence and feel less like they have to continually prove they are capable individuals” (p. 93).

Hackman and Johnson (1996), who authored a textbook titled *Leadership: A Communication Perspective*, argue that communication skills and leadership competencies are strongly related. Both the title of the book and the title of the course in which it has been used, “Organizational Communication and Leadership,” support the relationship. The definition offered by the authors drives the point home. “Leadership is human (symbolic) communication that modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs” (p. 11). The authors also identify a study by Thomas Neff and James Cirtin, senior executives at an executive search firm. The duo surveyed 500 business and education leaders to find the best 50 in the United States.



They are cited as saying, “Nowhere is it more critical to be a strong communicator than in leading people” (p. 111).

Clutterbuck and Hirst (2002) looked at a large quantity of research and literature focused on leadership and determined there is little consensus regarding the best qualities of leaders. However, they do state, “Just about the one thing almost all these authorities agree upon, however, is that effective leaders are also effective communicators” (p. 351).

Further, Clutterbuck and Hirst (2002) explain four leadership competencies described by leadership scholar Warren Bennis, “Management of Attention,” “Management of Meaning,” “Management of Trust,” and “Management of Self.” For comparison, the KLC Core Competencies are reminiscent of Warren’s; they are “Diagnose Situation,” “Intervene Skillfully,” “Energize Others,” and “Manage Self.” Viewing the *KLC Quick Guide* reveals the skills that feed each of the KLC competencies are also arguably a close match with the competencies revealed by Bennis (p. 352).

Clutterbuck and Hirst (2002) made two bold statements that highlight the connection between leadership competencies and communication skills, “Central to each of those competencies is effective communication” (p. 352). ... “Leaders, who do not communicate well, are not really leading at all” (p. 353).

As illustrated in the next section, leadership development programs are typically successful at teaching participants these skills.

## **Part II: Success of leadership programs at instructing participants**

Research exploring the effectiveness of leadership programs to educate participants is plentiful. Much of the available research refers to the impact on participants as the measure of a program’s success (Grove et al., 2005, p. 1). To that end,

most studies reviewed by this researcher reveal leadership programs are accomplishing what they set out to do.

Wituk et al. (2003) explains their research questions were developed to assess participants' insights gained from the program, their use of leadership skills in their organizations and communities, and the challenges they faced when utilizing the skills.

Based on a review of the leadership literature and discussions with project partners, it was expected that participants would have greater understanding of their own approach to leadership, their relationships with others, and would use the specific leadership skills and concepts in local settings (p. 79).

Some scholars interested in the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) took similar steps toward measuring the organization's success by analyzing individual improvements or behavior changes. Jolley (2015) in particular focused on the inner transformation of leaders participating in KLC programs. Her research was driven by interviews regarding emotional experiences after having their preconceived notions about leadership, themselves and their actions tested. Her interviewees reported internal paradigm shifts that transformed the way they communicate with peers and in groups.

Co-researchers talked about transformation in themselves, and they also talked about how their leadership development experience transformed their purpose and/or helped them focus in on the collective purpose of a group in which they are working (p. 94).

The studies reviewed thus far represent a snapshot of the plethora of studies devoted to measuring outcomes of leadership development programs by gauging participant reactions, most of which reveal positive outcomes. While this is an important piece of the puzzle, it does not provide a holistic view of a program.

Grove et al. (2005) identified this tendency to focus on aspects of program delivery to measure overall effectiveness and argued, "tracing and gauging a program's

multiple and broader influences requires a broader set of questions, or lenses, for evaluation” (p. 1).

These authors’ discovery of the imbalance of studies focused on participant satisfaction versus actual observable impact of leadership programs has not yet shifted researchers’ focus, as the next section discusses.

### **Part III: Lack of literature exploring real impact**

Rowan (2012), who evaluated a community college’s internal leadership development program, bluntly states regarding other research on leadership programs that “Most studies suggest that evaluations are limited to the reactions of participants to programmatic events” (p. 5).

While measuring participant response may be an adequate measure of the quality of curriculum and the ease with which participants retain material, most programs have a more ambitious overarching purpose to influence and improve the communities and organizations served by leadership program alumni. It is the mission of this study to attempt to reveal the impact effective leadership training has on communities through the real actions of program participants.

Rowan (2012) did seek out the answer to the question, “Based on what participants learned in the program, what did participants apply in their work?” (p. 6).

Further, Rowan states, “Unless GYO leadership programs are thoroughly evaluated for effectiveness, they may be regarded only as events that participants attend, not as effective strategies for individual and institutional growth” (p. 8).

Hackman and Johnson (1996) acknowledge that leadership enhancement and training have typically been embraced on their own merit as effective, saying

“Historically, training programs have focused on developing the individual leader in the belief that improving a leader’s effectiveness will improve the organization as a whole” (p. 376).

Jolley (2015) identified this need in her research on transformational effects of the Kansas Leadership Center’s (KLC) programs on participants.

Another possibility for future research could involve exploring what actions Kansas Leadership Center participants have taken to affect the common good and what have been the results of those actions. While the Kansas Leadership Center’s work involves impacting individuals, the overall goal of the organization is that these individuals who participate in KLC programs will ultimately change the civic culture and the overall health of Kansas... What other examples do individuals have related to how applying what they learned through KLC has impacted groups or organizations they work with? (pp. 112-113)

This quote from Jolley’s work is highly relevant to this study. Her interviewees reported being transformed in terms of their perspective and behavior. Jolley’s study motivated the decision to utilize interviews to gather both the impact a leadership program has had on its participants, and the impact participants have had on their communities or organizations for this study.

As mentioned, the KLC’s mission is to “Foster civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities.” The lofty goal and mission to change culture and improve quality of life give more meaning to a leadership program’s existence. This deserves an approach that reaches beyond self-reporting from participants regarding the quality of curriculum or instructors, which is a valuable feedback mechanism for the day-to-day operations, but perhaps not the long-term progress of the organization (“Kansas Leadership Center: About Us,” 2016).

One reason that measurement or impact has not been attempted at this level is the duration required before any measurable change could have taken place.

Laverack (2000) writes:

Community empowerment can be a long and slow process, and is one that, almost by definition, never fully ends. Particular outcomes in the community empowerment process may not occur until many years after the time frame of the programme has been completed. (p. 260)

If this is the case, the lack of studies dedicated to revealing the impact of leadership programs might be due to the relative youth of leadership programs geared toward developing relationship-building and communication skills.

Numerous articles identified that the time is right for this type of research. Hedge (2007) thoroughly describes the need, saying much is known about community leadership program backgrounds, purpose, sponsors, goals and participant perceptions, but “still open for debate was what impact the programs made on their organizations, communities, fields and systems” (p. 67).

Over time, I began to wonder: Did this program work? Did our community have more or better leaders as a result of Leadership LaPorte County? Were participants more likely to assume leadership roles in non-profit organizations, government and business after they graduated from the program? Because of Leadership LaPorte County, had public discussion on issues changed? Had there been more collaboration on finding answers to community problems?

Hedge said she realized her questions were not unique, and that people across the country were contemplating the same issues, and that she sees a renewed effort to more adequately and holistically measure the impact of leadership programs on the horizon, saying the “search for meaningful data on leadership programming will go on” (p. 70).

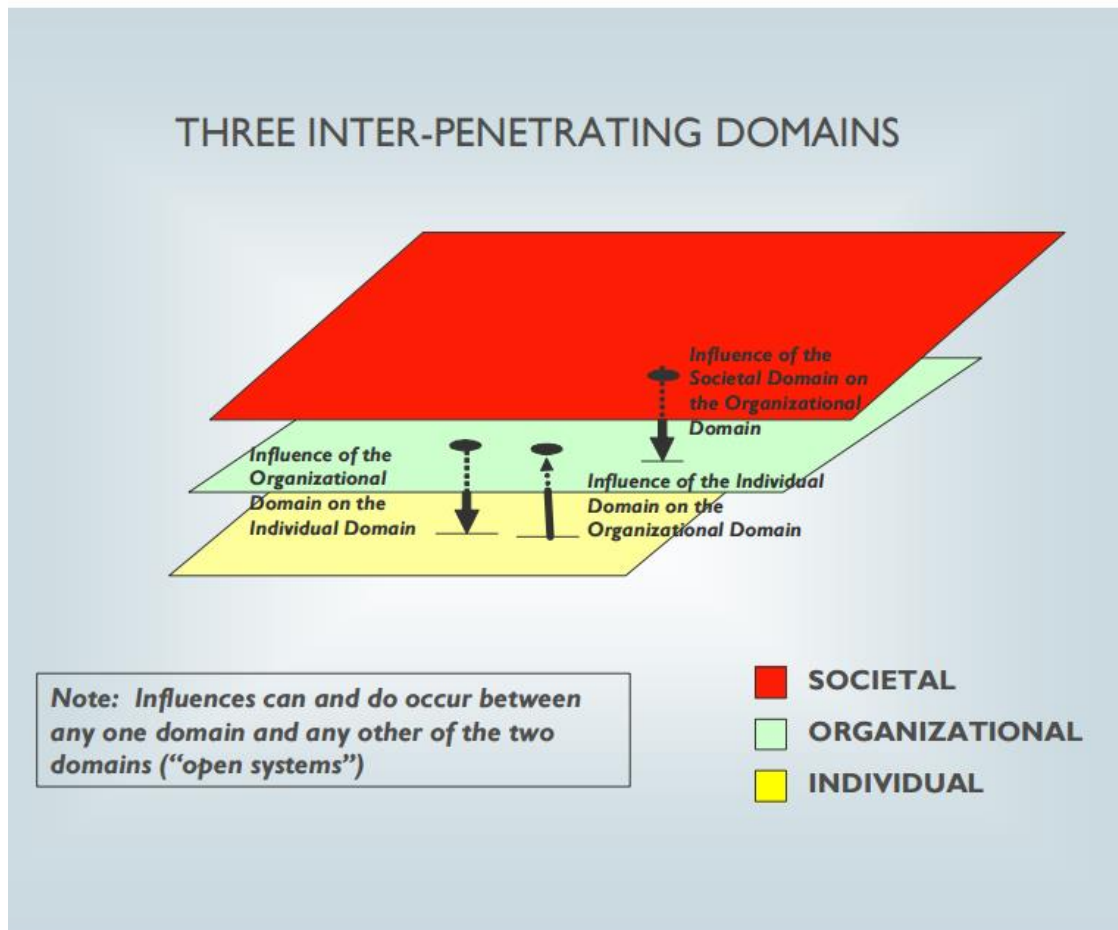
Some attempts have been made to measure the impact programs have on communities. Wituk et al. (2003) for example, surveyed participants in a KCLI program

before they began the curriculum; After six sessions, the authors found “over 80% of participants assisted groups and organizations in their local communities, something that rarely happened prior to KCLI” (p. 84). Increased involvement in the community among participants can certainly be considered an impact on the participant as a member of the community. What remains to be seen is to what degree participants’ involvement has impacted the health of the community.

Grove et al. (2005) offer a fresh look and thorough approach to evaluating the real impact of leadership programs called EvaluLEAD, which analyzes impacts of a program upon individuals, the individuals’ impact upon their organizations and the impact of those organizations upon society. In addition, at each of the three levels, there are three degrees to which an impact can be rated and two forms of inquiry for acquiring the degrees of impact at each level, resulting in 18 “evaluation activities” (p. 11).

The researchers claim the direct benefits of leadership programs are found in individuals, which is where most results are likely to be expected. This provides justification for approaching the research with qualitative methodology. That is, the origin of the change measured is found in the experiences of individuals.

Further exploration of the methods for evaluating leadership development programs from Grove et al. revealed three intersecting tiers where a program might influence change. These are on the levels of individual, organization and society. A change in one influences the other two.



*Figure 1: Inter-penetrating domains of influence. (Grove et al., 2005, p.6)*

Grove et al. (2005) also argues there are three types of results leadership development programs aspire to accomplish: episodic, developmental and transformative changes. Definitions are as follows:

**Episodic changes** are of the cause-and-effect variety: An intervention is made and predictable results ideally follow. Episodic changes are typically well-defined, time-bound results stimulated by actions of the program or its participants and graduates. Examples might include knowledge gained, a proposal written, a conference held, and an ordinance enacted.

**Developmental changes** occur across time; include forward progress, stalls, and setbacks; and proceed at different paces and with varied rhythms for participating individuals, groups, and communities. Results are open-ended, and less controllable and predictable than for episodic changes due, among other factors, to external influences and internal willingness and ability to change. Developmental results are represented

as sequences of steps taken by an individual, team, organization, or community that reach toward and may actually achieve some challenging outcomes. Their pace may be altered by unanticipated or uncontrollable conditions and events. Examples include a sustained change in individual behavior, a new organizational strategy that is used to guide operations, and implementation of an economic development program.

**Transformative changes** represent fundamental shifts in individual, organizational, or community values and perspectives that seed the emergence of fundamental shifts in behavior or performance. These transformations represent regenerative moments or radical redirections of effort, and they are often the prize to which programs aspire.

Transformative results represent a crossroads or an unanticipated new road taken for the individual, organization, or community, whereas episodic and developmental results are not nearly so unexpected or so potentially profound in their consequences. Examples of transformative results include substantial shifts in viewpoint, vision, or paradigms; career shifts; new organizational directions; and fundamental sociopolitical reforms (p. 7).

This study sought to identify all three changes occurring in Great Bend, Kansas and tie them to Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) alumni.

This type of thorough study is large in scope, highly time consuming and usually performed by teams rather than individual researchers. For this reason, themes from EvaluLEAD were utilized to guide this research, but an exhaustive use of the methods would not be feasible in the allotted time. The main element utilized in this study is the concept of the “three inter-penetrating domains” of Individual, Organizational and Societal (p. 6). Details on how these were utilized are included in the results and discussions sections.

Black (2006) applied the EvaluLEAD method to measure the impact of an agriculture program utilizing interviews and surveys. Several of Black’s approaches and applications of the EvaluLEAD materials motivated the methods selected for this research with some modifications.



**Conclusion**

Leadership programs have repeatedly been proven to help individuals develop their own communication and leadership skills, and much research exists to support this claim. However, relatively little work has been done to measure the impact leadership programs, through participants, have had on their respective organizations or communities. It is the mission of this thesis to attempt to conduct such research.

## **Chapter 3 - Methods**

### **Introduction**

This study utilized two different qualitative research methods: interviews of alumni of the Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) program and a community perception survey targeted to residents of Great Bend, Kansas, the largest beneficiary of LGB in terms of population and resident participation.

The goal of the study was to determine if fostering civic leadership leads to healthier communities, as stated by the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) website (“Kansas Leadership Center: About Us,” 2016).

The definition of health employed by the KLC is broad, including the state of a community’s governance, infrastructure, volunteerism, economy, quality of life and physical health of residents, among other factors, according to Shaun Rojas, Program Director at the KLC (July 2015).

Black (2006) utilized a similar set of methods, including focus group interviews and a survey. This study’s application of the methods differs in many ways, but the inspiration for this study’s methods came partly from Black’s approach.

This study’s research methods were selected in an attempt to deliver a snapshot of all three of the EvaluLEAD interpenetrating domains from multiple perspectives (Grove et al., 2005, p.6).

Surveys targeting the community allowed measurement of residents’ perceptions of local pride and any perceived progress. Since the program in question had ceased operation for many years and rebooted in 2008, the general time frame referenced to

survey participants to gauge any perceived improvements, increases or changes in civic activity and other measures of program effectiveness was within the last five to 10 years.

Interviews of LGB alumni were the foundation of the research.

### **Leadership Golden Belt Alumni Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with 30 graduates of Leadership Golden Belt (LGB). Participants were approached via email, Facebook and phone utilizing a script approved by the Fort Hays State University Institutional Review Board. Interviewees signed a consent form prior to answering questions. Participants were selected to be approached for an interview if they currently lived or worked in the Great Bend, Kansas area and were graduates of the LGB classes of 2008 through 2014. They were selected from a list provided by the Golden Belt Community Foundation. Individuals who met the prerequisites were contacted in alphabetical order until 30 interviews were acquired. See Appendix C for interview questions.

Interview questions were crafted to determine the level of influence LGB had on the interviewee and how much influence the interviewee had on any relevant organizations in which they participate(d), and ultimately the Great Bend community via the interviewee's actions or the actions of their respective organizations.

The interview included 13 questions. The first six questions were to identify demographics and basic details about participation in the program, such as year graduated and duration living or working in the Great Bend area. The other seven questions sought to determine the level of influence the program had on the individuals' involvement and activism in the community. The final question asks participants to reflect on the impact of LGB upon the health and overall quality of life of the interviewee's community.

Upon completion, the recorded interviews were transcribed word-for-word by the researcher, and the content was analyzed using grounded theory and coded for common themes and recurring answers to open-ended questions. Excerpts from transcripts were identified to illustrate common themes in participants' words. Lastly, tangible instances of involvement that could be tied back to LGB were identified during interviews and listed as evidence of the program's impact (Löfgren, 2013) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

While alumni input is valuable to pinpoint their activities in the community, the picture is not complete if the impact is not being felt by the intended beneficiaries, so methodological triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, was used. Specifically, a community perception survey was employed (Denzin, 2006).

### **Community Perception Survey**

A brief survey consisting of 10 questions was used to determine the level of awareness among Great Bend, Kansas residents of community leadership programs, specifically Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) and its perceived impact on the community. The first two questions were ordinal indicators of age and duration living or working in Great Bend. A five-point Likert scale was used for the other eight continuous questions, ranking from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

The survey was distributed primarily via Facebook shares, but was also referred to via word of mouth at local community events such as Chamber of Commerce coffees. The survey gathered responses from 105 Great Bend residents. The results were analyzed to determine the perception of the community's vibrancy in terms of activities and civic engagement, and the awareness and perception of leadership programs. (Schulz, 2012)

See appendix F for survey questions.

## Chapter 4 - Results

### Introduction

Thirty Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) alumni were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and coded based on recurring themes. Comments or perceptions shared by at least two interviewees were noted as themes.

One hundred five respondents filled out the community perception survey, the results of which were analyzed to determine an estimate of the percentage of the population of Great Bend, Kansas who have recognized changes in the community in recent years.

Online instructional videos were used to guide the process of analyzing data (Löfgren, 2013) (Schulz, 2012).

### Interview Results

Of the 30 interviewees, 13 were between the ages of 28-37 and nine were between the ages of 43-47. The mode was age 33-37 with seven occurrences. The population spanned almost the entire age range from 18-65, but was predominantly female at 73%.

<b>AGE BREAKDOWN</b>	
18-22	0
23-27	1
28-32	6
33-37	7
38-42	1
43-47	5
48-52	4
53-57	2
58-62	1
63-65	3

<b>GENDER</b>	
Female	22
Male	8

*Table 1: Age and gender of interview participants.*

More than half (16) reported living or working in the Great Bend area for more than 13 years. The remainder had been in the community for at least 3 years.

<b>YEARS IN GREAT BEND AREA</b>	
<3 Years	0
3-6 Years	6
7-12 Years	8
13+ Years	16

*Table 2: Duration interview participants lived or working in Great Bend, Kansas.*

Participants were found to be mostly representative of the local predominant industries. Among the two most represented were education (7) and accounting/finance (8). Notably, agriculture was not represented despite being arguably the most prominent industry in the Great Bend area.

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	
Healthcare	4
Manufacturing	1
Media/Communications	4
Entrepreneur	1
Insurance	1
Education	7
Social work	3
Agriculture/Farming	0
Accounting/Finance	8
Economic development	1

*Table 3: Industries in which interview participants were employed.*

Interview participants were asked “Why did you decide to participate in Leadership Golden Belt.”

Three themes emerged:

- 1) Voluntold: Individuals who were urged or claimed to be “forced” to participate by their employer.
- 2) Voluntold with interest: Individuals who were urged to participate by their employer, but identified they were also curious or interested in the class and participated willingly.
- 3) Self-referred: Individuals who enrolled or pursued participation on their own accord without influence from superiors.

The number of individuals who reported each of these motivations was nearly even with 9, 11 and 10 respectively.

<b>MOTIVE</b>	
Voluntold	9
Voluntold but Interested	11
Self-referred	10

*Table 4: Reason interviewees enrolled in Leadership Golden Belt.*

Interviewees were also asked to determine the year in which they first learned of the local leadership program. This was compared to the year participants enrolled. Two-thirds (20) of the interviewee population enrolled the same year they were made aware of the program. Seven enrolled one year later. One participant had been aware of the local program for 16 years. This is explained by the participant’s relationship to the program, which existed in another form, specific to Great Bend, Kansas, through the Great Bend

Chamber of Commerce in the early 2000s before discontinuing and returning as Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) through the Golden Belt Community Foundation.

<b>AWARE-TO-ENROLLED GAP</b>	
0 Years	20
1 Year	7
2 Years	1
3 Years	1
16 Years	1

*Table 5: Duration between exposure to LGB and enrollment among interviewees.*

Participants were asked to identify civic groups, planning committees, governing boards or other volunteer or civic activities in which they were engaged from the time of their graduation to present day. A follow-up question asked participants to identify if any of those “instances of involvement” were as a result of their participation in LGB, whether through motivation from the course or its curriculum or through networking with classmates or fellow LGB alumni.

More than 100 instances of involvement were recorded. The latter question revealed 47 motivated instances of involvement that could be traced back to LGB. About 44% of alumni community involvement could be attributed to LGB.

The least number of reported motivated instances of involvement from an individual was 0; six participants did not claim to be involved in any activities that could be tied to LGB.

One third (10) reported one motivated instance of involvement. One participant noted up to five instances of involvement motivated by LGB.



<b>MOTIVATED INVOLVEMENTS</b>	
Instances Reported	Participants
0	6
1	10
2	8
3	4
4	1
5	1

*Table 6: Interviewees' motivated instances of involvement.*

Of the 47 motivated instances of involvement reported, 17 community assets were affected. However, this number is conservative, as “event planning committees” and “capital project committees” were counted only once each, per participant. For example, if a participant served on more than one event planning committee, it was only recorded once. The research was designed to investigate involvement with groups or organizations that would instigate such projects, and there were several instances of overlap between a capital project or event and a group in which a participant was involved. This consolidation arguably improves the reliability of the data.

Reported instances of involvement	Community Assets Impacted					
10	Young Professionals					
9	Employer Benefit					
7	Event Planning Committee(s)					
3	Chamber of Commerce	Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms	Be Well Barton County			
2	Lions Club	Capital Project Committee(s)	Toastmasters	Central KS Dream Center	Heartland Farm Council	
1	Miss Barton County Pageant	Elder Care, Inc.	Child Advocacy Center	Central KS CASA	Human Traffic Task Force	United Way

*Table 7: Community assets impacted by LGB as reported by interview participants.*

After discussion about involvement in the community, interviewees were asked to rate the relevance and usefulness of their leadership training to the success of their ability to accomplish work in their respective organizations or projects. A scale of 1-10 with 10 representing the most relevant or useful and 1 representing the least relevant or useful was used. The average score was 7.68. The lowest score was 1 and the highest, 10. Nearly all (26) scored the relevance at 7 or higher.

<b>USEFULNESS RATING</b>	
AVG	7.68
Score	Frequency reported
1	1
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	2
6	1
7 or 7.5	10
8	7
9 or 9.5	4
10	5

*Table 8: Perceived usefulness of competencies among interviewees.*

Following the participants' rating of the usefulness of the curriculum, interviewees were offered the opportunity to elaborate. The open-ended follow-up was reviewed and coded for themes. Eleven themes were coded into three categories. Numbers in parenthesis indicate frequency of occurrence. Some were only reported twice. In these cases, there were other circumstances substantiating the need to code a theme that will be described later in this study.

Surface-level benefits: (25)

- Professional networking. (13)
- Exploration of region. (7)
- Long-term friendships. (5)

Internal changes: (26)

- Paradigm shift. (7)
- Improved communication confidence. (7)
- Expanded comfort zone. (6)
- Enhanced empathy and listening. (6)

Room for improvement: (15)

- Surprised by civic focus. (7)
- Overuse of buzzwords. (2)
- Curriculum lacks clarity. (4)
- Smaller communities a non-priority. (2)

An unintentional but useful aspect of the interviewee selection was the nature of the curriculum taught. The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) competencies were not taught as the primary material to classes from 2008-2010. The curriculum was introduced in 2011 and continued through 2014. The sample of interviewees selected turned out to be exactly 15 participants who learned KLC competencies (KLC alumni) and 15 who took the course prior to the emphasis on skills-based leadership (pre-KLC alumni).

Those who received training in the KLC competencies were asked to follow up by identifying the most relevant competencies to their progress. There was no minimum or maximum on how many a participant could select.

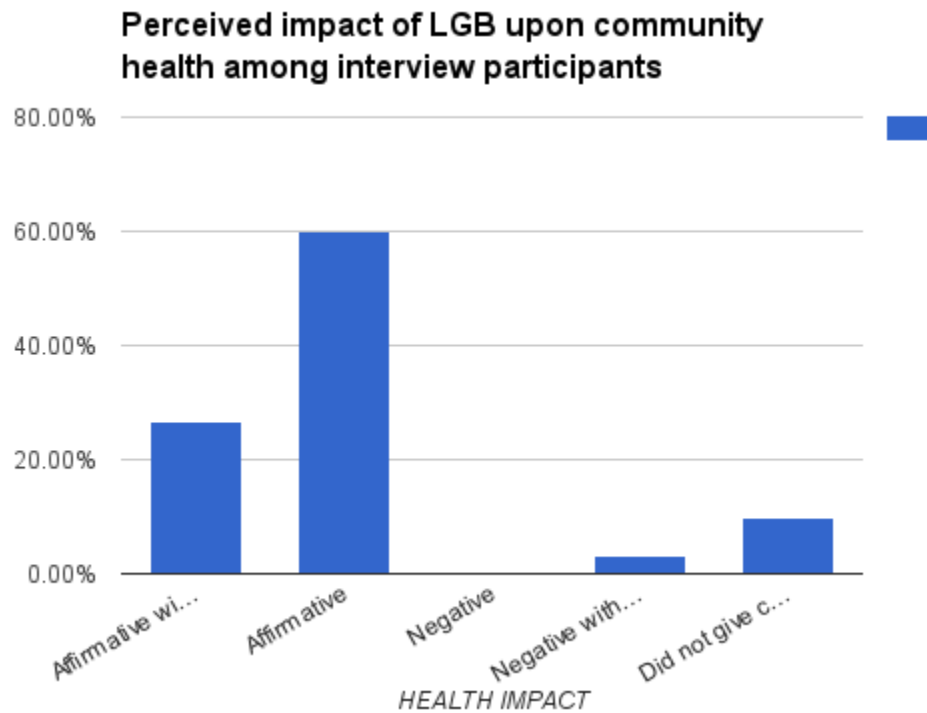
“Energize Others” was reported as the most useful, being chosen 11 times. Manage Self and Diagnose Situation came in a close second and third with seven and six selections respectively. Intervene Skillfully was selected only twice. One participant reported not using any competencies.

<b>MOST USEFUL COMPETENCIES</b>	
<b>COMPETENCY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY REPORTED</b>
ENERGIZE OTHERS	11
MANAGE SELF	7
DIAGNOSE SITUATION	6
INTERVENE SKILLFULLY	2

*Table 9: Most useful or relevant competencies as reported by interviewees.*

The closing question directed participants to consider the impact of LGB upon the health of the community.

About 87% said they believe the leadership program's presence has improved the overall health and quality of life in the community. Almost a third of those who answered in the affirmative, or 26% of all interviewees, were recorded as being enthusiastic with their responses. Three individuals said they did not know if the program had influenced the community, or did not provide a clear enough answer to place in affirmative or negative categories. One individual reported that he believes no improvement to the community's overall health and quality of life had taken place due to the leadership program's presence.



*Figure 2: Interviewees' perceived impact of LGB upon community health.*

Interviewees were asked to elaborate on their opinions. The answers to this open-ended question were coded and categorized to identify themes. Only one category, “evidence,” was identified, which was divided into four themes. Numbers in parenthesis indicate frequency of occurrence.

Evidence: (37)

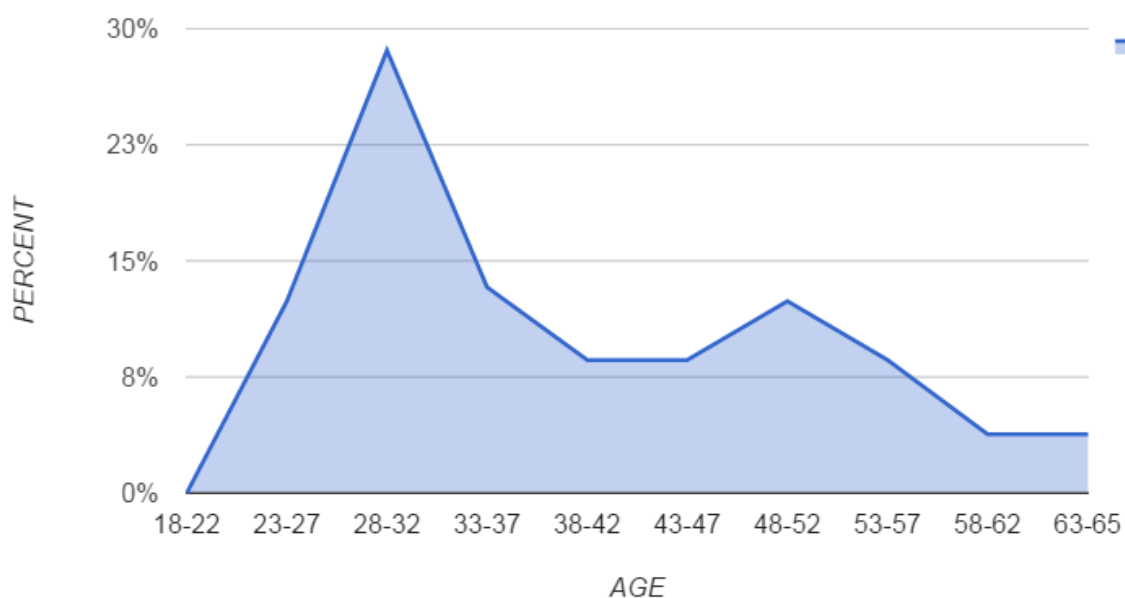
- Enhanced awareness of community needs. (14)
- Observed project or organization initiate due to LGB. (11)
- Witness other alumni as active in community. (6)
- Diversity of participants' backgrounds benefits whole. (6)

## Survey Results

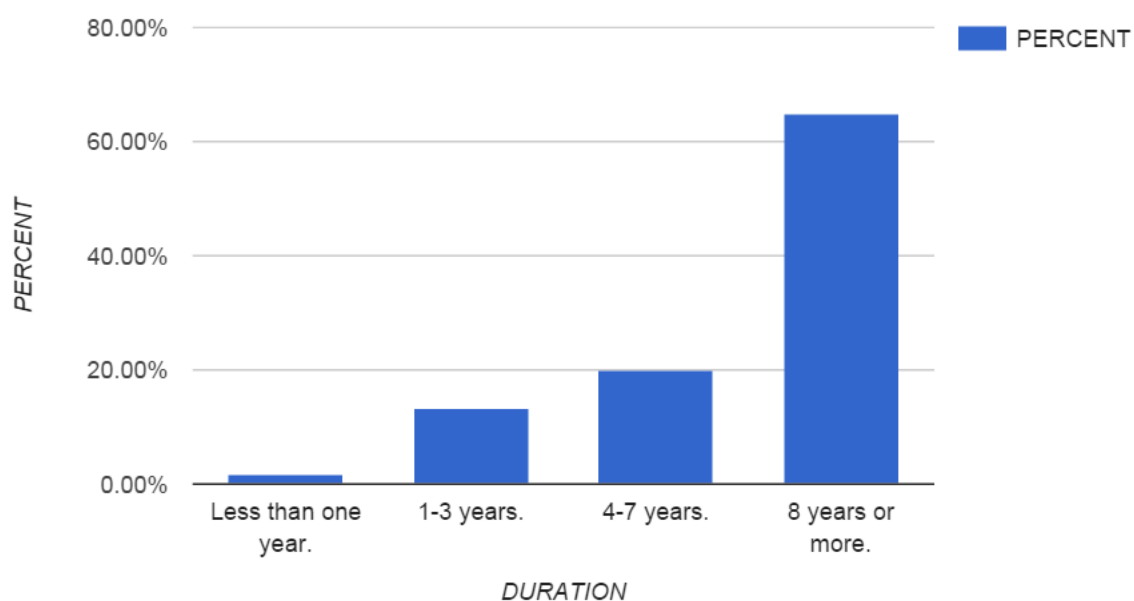
A survey targeting those either working or living in Great Bend was developed to determine if a perception existed among the population that civic involvement and overall health and quality of life were on the rise. It was also designed to gauge awareness of Leadership Golden Belt's (LGB) presence in the community and the degree to which people attributed progress to the program.

The survey was not solicited directly to interview participants, but as interviewees would technically fit in the target demographic for the survey, it is possible some interviewees also participated in the survey, which garnered 105 responses.

The majority of participants (54.3%) were between the ages of 23 and 37 years old, and most (64.8%) had lived or worked in Great Bend for more than eight years. About one third had lived or worked in Great Bend for at least one but not more than seven years.



*Figure 3: Age of survey participants*



*Figure 4: Duration residing or working in Great Bend among survey participants*

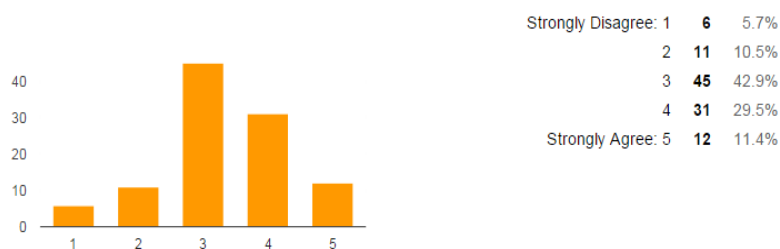
After the two demographic information questions, eight questions followed. Each used a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree and 5 representing Strongly Agree and 3 as the neutral option.

One of the main goals of the survey was to determine awareness of the LGB program. Three questions were geared toward this end. First, “The local community leadership program, Leadership Golden Belt, has positively influenced the quality of life in Great Bend.”

The majority (42.9%) selected the neutral option, 3, on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating they are not aware of any such influence. About 41% answered in the affirmative with options 4 and 5. About 16% disagreed.



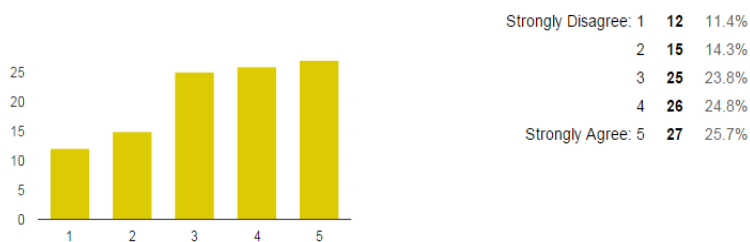
**2. The local community leadership program, Leadership Golden Belt, has positively influenced the quality of life in Great Bend.**



*Figure 5: Survey participants' perception of LGB influence on quality of life.*

Second, “I am aware of at least one project or community improvement that came about as a result of the Leadership Golden Belt Program. A majority (50.5%) answered with 4 or 5 ratings, indicating they are aware of an instance when LGB generated a project or community improvement. About 24% provided a neutral answer and about 25% answered in the negative.

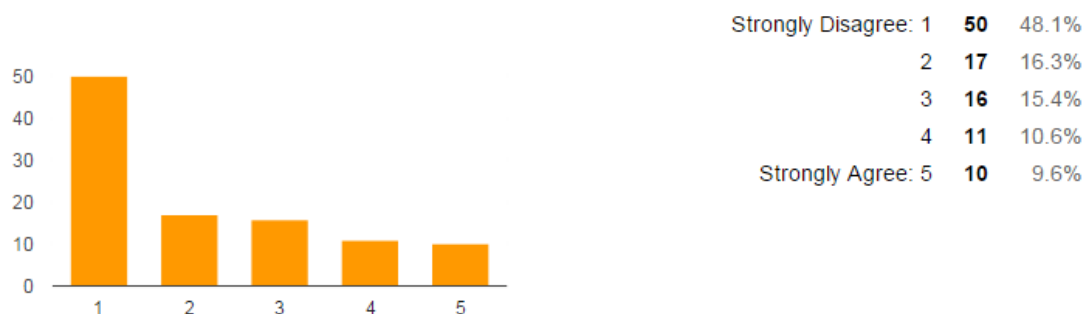
**4. I am aware of at least one project or community improvement that came about as a result of the Leadership Golden Belt program.**



*Figure 6: Survey participants' awareness of LGB projects.*

A third question geared toward awareness was designed to be vague about leadership programs in general. It states, “I did not know about community leadership programs until this survey.” Most respondents (64.3%) indicated they were aware of such programs.

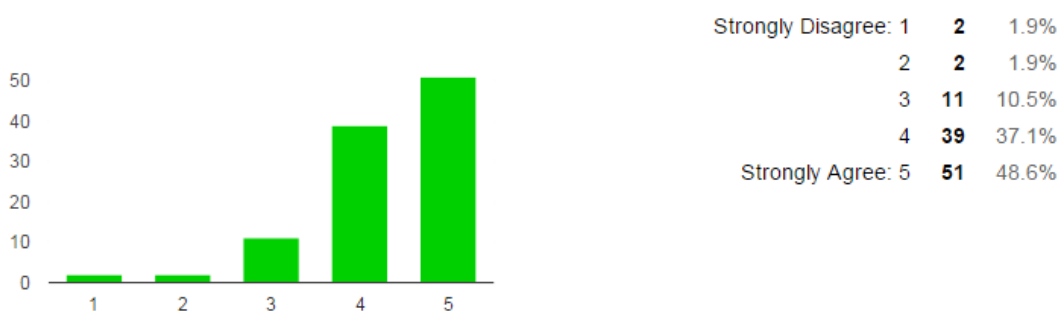
**8. I did not know about community leadership programs until this survey.**



*Figure 7: Survey participants' awareness of leadership programs.*

Another goal of the survey was to determine the degree to which residents value leadership programs and their role in the community. Two questions were designed to gather this information. First, "I believe community leadership programs are a key component of any healthy community." More than 85% of participants indicated they agreed with the statement, with almost 50% selecting "strongly agree." About 10% selected the neutral option and 4% disagreed.

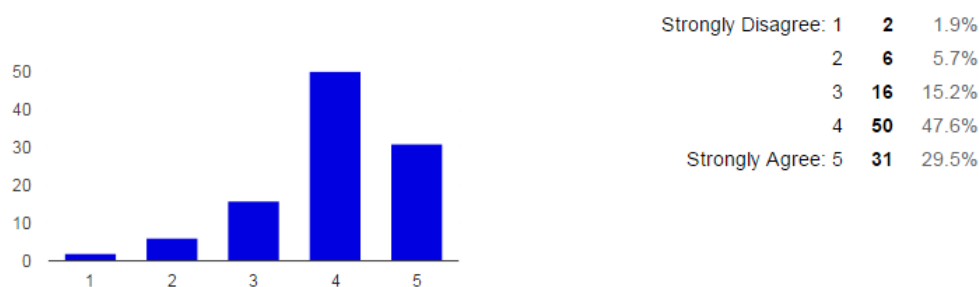
**5. I believe community leadership programs are a key component of any healthy community.**



*Figure 8: Survey participants' perception of leadership relevance to community health.*

The second question gauging the value of leadership programs among residents was, "I believe community leadership programs motivate people to be more involved in their communities." About 77% answered in the affirmative, 15% responded neutral and 7.6% indicated they disagreed.

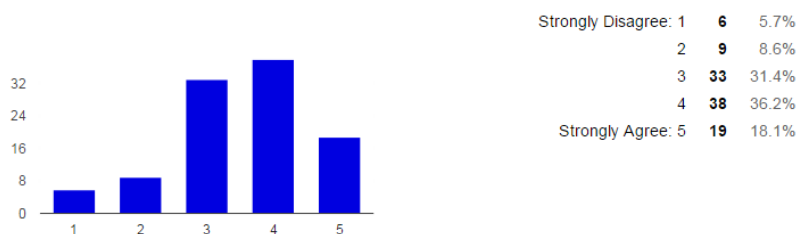
**7. I believe community leadership programs motivate people to be more involved in their communities.**



*Figure 9: Survey participants' perception of program ability to motivate people.*

Two questions were designed to determine if those who live or work in Great Bend have noticed an increase in available activities and events, and civic engagement among residents. The first of the two questions was, “The number of activities and events available to Great Bend residents has noticeably increased in the last five to 10 years.” A majority (54.3%) agreed, 31.4% chose to remain neutral, and 14.3% indicated they did not perceive an increase in activities and events.

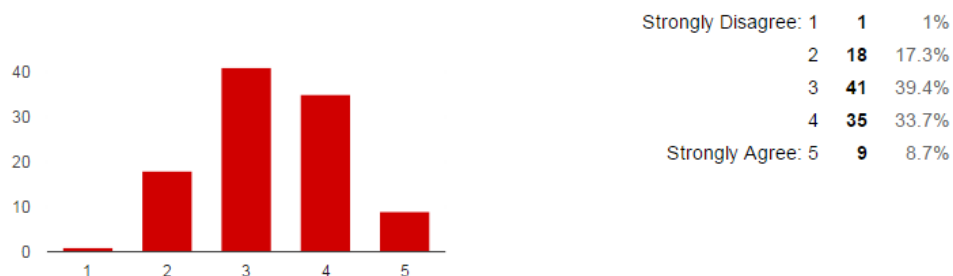
**1. The number of activities and events available to Great Bend residents has noticeably increased in the last five to 10 years.**



*Figure 10: Survey participants' perception of quantity of activities in community.*

The second question measuring the perception of frequency of events or civic engagement was, “I have noticed an increase in civic engagement among residents in Great Bend within the last five years.” Most participants (57.7%) were either unsure or disagreed with the statement. About 42% indicated they noticed an increase in civic engagement in Great Bend.

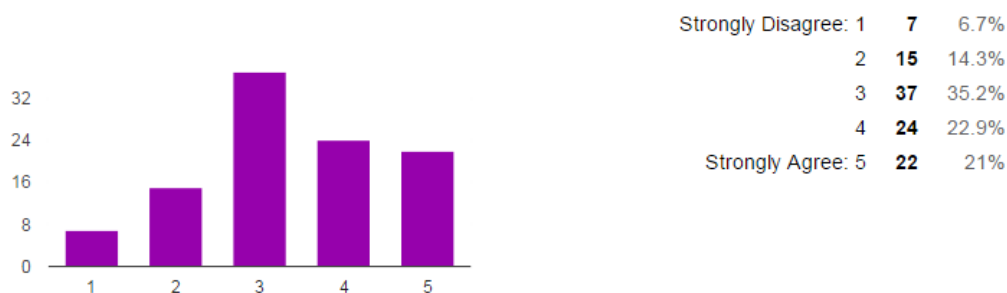
**3. I have noticed an increase in civic engagement among residents in Great Bend within the last five years.**



*Figure 11: Survey participants' perception of rate of civic engagement in Great Bend.*

In an effort to gauge the level of civic knowledge and experience and orientation of the sample population, respondents were asked to consider the statement, "I consider myself an involved community member." More than one third chose the neutral option, while 44% claimed to be involved and 21% uninvolved.

**6. I consider myself an involved community member.**



*Figure 12: Survey participants' perception of their own involvement in community.*

## **Chapter 5 - Discussion**

### **Prime Directive: measuring the real impact**

The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree the Kansas Leadership Center's curriculum and programs are "fostering civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities," as indicated by its mission statement ("Kansas Leadership Center: About Us," 2016).

This mission inspired several questions that guided the qualitative research efforts. This chapter is organized by these questions.

### **Review of definitions**

Leadership, for the sake of this study, is defined by the researcher as the development of communication and relationship skills, as outlined in the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) Competencies, and the application of those skills toward progress in an organization or community, as revealed in the Relevant Literature chapter.

A healthy community, as defined by personnel at the KLC, includes a community's governance, infrastructure, volunteerism, economy, quality of life and physical health of residents, among other factors. This research used the descriptor "overall health and quality of life" to incorporate this broad definition while communicating with interviewees and survey participants.

### **Is Leadership Golden Belt effective in "fostering leadership"?**

**Interviewees' perception of program effectiveness.** The primary measure used to indicate the impact upon individuals is the ratio of instances of involvement (how many groups, organizations or projects in which a participant reported being engaged) motivated or instigated by their time in Leadership Golden Belt (LGB), whether through networking

connections made or general motivation to get involved, to the total number of instances of involvement.

In other words, of all the civic activities a given participant is engaged in, the research sought to determine how many are due to LGB.

The average motivated to unrelated instances of involvement was 43.56%. Nearly half of an alumni's impact on civic assets (civic organizations, employer, capital projects, etc.) were related in some way to LGB.

Further, participants were asked to rate the relevance of their training to their progress related to any projects or organizations in which they are practicing leadership on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most relevant or useful.

The average score was 7.68. It is notable to mention some details regarding the lowest scores. The individual reporting a 1 was highly negative and apparently disgruntled at the time of the interview and had difficulty staying on topic. The two individuals who reported the next lowest score of 5 expressed surprise when asked a follow up question regarding their use of the competencies where a Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) competency "quick guide" was provided as a refresher. Both shared they did not realize how much they had used the competencies. However, the researcher did not ask for an updated rating after the follow up, so the scores were left at 5. Without the lowest three scores, the average rose above an 8.

After providing the relevance score, participants were asked to elaborate, which revealed several relevant themes.

**Relevant Theme: Paradigm Shift.** One of the themes revealed by participants when asked to elaborate on their opinion of the usefulness or relevance of their experience with Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) was Paradigm Shift.

This was coded when an individual explained that the program opened their eyes to a new dimension within themselves and/or a capacity to lead they did not know was there until participation in the program. It might also refer to an enhanced ability to watch their own thoughts and recognize the difference between their own objective observations and subjective interpretations of those observations.

Paradigm Shift was coded seven times, though it is not necessarily exclusive to those seven individuals. They are simply the ones who valued that as a key benefit of their participation enough to report it while elaborating.

One individual who rated her experience at the highest level with a 10 and reported a paradigm shift said the change in her approach has been noticed by others:

“It’s not just how I feel about it, but how others see the change in me. There’s a way that I now look at people and events. Just a whole way of looking at people and situations, almost a calmness and a way of stepping back and seeing the big picture, and then going back in. Sometimes it’s really hard to explain to other people but I will honestly tell you that people have seen a huge difference in me.”

Another reported her shift in thinking came at a very specific moment in the class:

“We were talking about different scenarios and she (the facilitator) had said to me, specifically, ‘if that’s the story you want to tell yourself...’ and I’ll never forget that, and I think of that often when I’m working on something or thinking about something; Is that just my story? Is that just what I’m telling myself or is that really what’s going on? Is my thinking bigger than my own perspective? That’s been very helpful to think bigger and know that this is just my own perception.”

Two alumni who reported paradigm shifts said they never considered community involvement or civic engagement an important part of everyday life until they

participated in the program. Both mentioned that their parents and family did not get involved in their communities during their childhoods, so the primary motivating factor for their shift was simply exposure to the concept of civic engagement through the course. One reported that it changed nearly everything about who she was:

“It really put my life on a different trajectory. I just really was influenced by the class.”

Another reported witnessing paradigm shifts in other alumni:

“I think it’s fostering new people, new leaders. People who didn’t think of themselves as leaders realizing that they have something to share with the community.”

### **Relevant Themes: Improved Communication Confidence, Expanded**

**Comfort Zone, Enhanced Empathy and Listening.** Three additional themes identified from the elaboration upon the relevance scale rating were Improved Communication Confidence, Expanded Comfort Zone and Enhanced Empathy and Listening. They were coded 7, 6 and 6 times, respectively.

Improved Communication Confidence was coded when a participant expressed an increased ability to act boldly in difficult situations, or to bring up difficult conversations or topics if the situation needed it for progress to be made.

Expanded Comfort Zone was coded when somebody specifically mentioned that a portion of the class made them uncomfortable or overly emotional, but with the benefit of increased understanding. One alumnus whose ratio of motivated involvements was 100% with four instances of involvement, that is, she was not involved at all prior to LGB, shared her comfort zone expansion experience:

“I grew through my experience with Leadership Golden Belt. It took me out of my comfort zone and this little box that I was in and I really do



believe it helped me out through both my career and even stand up for myself more in life.”

Enhanced Empathy and Listening was coded when an individual described the realization that other people might be looking at a scenario or problem differently, and that this gap is one that can be closed by listening. For example, one alumnus said:

“I’m able to take that ‘personal’ out of it, and it’s made me more able to look at it from other peoples’ point of view and see the passion and what drives people. When I take my own blinders off and look at people and what they’re doing, and then once you do that you can be more willing to work within that; Work with them and work with that outline of what they want. ‘Start where they’re at,’ is one of the things that I remind myself every morning.”

Enhanced Empathy and Listening was quite similar to Paradigm Shift in terms of coding criteria. The primary difference between the two codes is how the user defined the experience, as a skill (Enhanced Empathy and Listening) or a change in their perception of reality (Paradigm Shift).

**Two approaches to fostering leadership.** As previously mentioned, an unintentional but useful aspect of the interviewee selection was that half of the interviewees were taught one type of curriculum whereas the other half learned leadership concepts that were more ad hoc. The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) competencies were not taught as the primary material to classes of 2008-2010. These early classes were primarily geared toward networking in six sessions in a different community within the four-county service area each time. Interviewees reported the early curriculum focused on a few traditional concepts of leadership, but was loosely structured and open-ended.

The KLC competency-based curriculum was introduced in 2011 and continued through 2014. This curriculum was more structured and skills-based compared to the

early classes, though the format was similar in that it was held in six sessions in various communities in the Golden Belt region, followed by a finale three-day seminar in the KLC in Wichita, Kansas.

The sample of interviewees selected turned out to be exactly 15 participants who learned KLC competencies (KLC competency alumni) and 15 who took the course prior to the emphasis on skills-based leadership (pre-KLC competency alumni).

Several questions were motivated by this occurrence that were not originally considered, such as “Was one format more successful at training and motivating participants, and did the participants find one more useful than the other?” and “Did one group suggest different types of improvements?”

<b>PARTICIPANTS WHO LEARNED KLC CURRICULUM</b>		
USEFULNESS AVERAGE	7.2	"Too Structured" – 1 person
Complaints or suggestions	4	Surprised by civic focus (3)
Motivated to Unmotivated %	47.46%	Small communities afterthought (1)
Internal changes reported	12	
Individuals reporting internal change	10	
Surface-level benefits reported	13	
Individuals reporting surface benefits	9	
<b>PARTICIPANTS WHO DID NOT LEARN KLC CURRICULUM</b>		
USEFULNESS AVERAGE	8.1	
Complaints or suggestions	11	Use of Buzzwords (2)
Motivated to Unmotivated %	39.67%	Lack of Clarity (4)
Internal changes reported	8	Surprised by civic focus (4)
Individuals reporting internal change	7	Small communities afterthought (1)
Surface-level benefits reported	18	
Individuals reporting surface benefits	9	

*Table 10: Differences between cohorts pre and post introduction of KLC competency curriculum.*

As indicated by Table 10, participants who learned the KLC competencies actually scored their experience slightly lower on average. However, the three lowest scores as mentioned before all had caveats. All three of those low scores came from the cohorts who learned the KLC competencies. Subtracting those scores reveals an average of 8.1, which is the same rating as participants who went through the course prior to the KLC competency-based curriculum's introduction. Another interpretation of the data

could be that a large portion of the latter group of cohorts have not had enough time pass since their graduation to accurately gauge the usefulness of the curriculum.

Individuals who learned the KLC competencies were more influenced by the course to get involved as reflected by the percentage of instances of involvement motivated by the course. About 47% of the instances of involvement reported by those who learned the KLC curriculum were motivated by their participation, versus about 39% of instances reported by those who did not learn the competencies.

Individuals who learned the KLC competency-based curriculum were also more likely to report an internal change (Paradigm Shift, Improved Communication Confidence, Expanded Comfort Zone, Enhanced Empathy and Listening) and less likely to report a surface level benefit (Professional Networking, Exploration of Region, Long-Term Friendships) than alumni from the early classes.

This suggests the KLC competencies and the techniques used to teach them have a greater capacity to impact a person's self-awareness and the absence of this curriculum arguably leaves the focus on surface level benefits as the primary positive features of the program.

Pre-KLC competency alumni reported more areas where the class could improve. Alumni from this group reported a lack of clarity and focus and an overuse of buzzwords.

There were two areas in which the two groups of cohorts had similarities: participants were surprised by the civic focus upon taking the course and two individuals, one from each group of cohorts, were disappointed in the lack of emphasis on issues in communities outside of Great Bend.

The latter was reported by the only two individuals who actually lived outside the Great Bend city limits. One had recently changed jobs, but lived outside of Great Bend and commuted to work while taking the class, and the other commuted to work from a nearby town. Considering these were the only two individuals who had strong ties outside of Great Bend, and they were the only two who mentioned that they felt their communities were afterthoughts by program leaders suggests there might be a trend worth investigating if future researchers are so inclined.

Participants' were surprised by the program's civic focus. This reaction is likely due to how the program is portrayed to participants before beginning the class. These individuals shared that they expected the class to be more focused on management with a business emphasis, as two-thirds of all participants were voluntold by their employer to take the course. These individuals also commented that the program should be better marketed as focused on civic engagement and leadership.

It is notable that despite the civic focus, the second most coded civic asset impacted was a participant's employer, and several participants identified that the skills are useful in multiple settings, including home life and workplace.

While participants' self-reporting is valuable data, it is worthwhile to look at data from individuals who are a step removed from the topic at hand.

**Community perception of civic leadership.** The community perception survey was distributed to individuals who live or work in Great Bend, Kansas. When asked if an increase in civic engagement among residents in Great Bend had been noticed in the last five years, about 42% of 105 respondents answered in the affirmative compared to 18.3%

who did not perceive an increase in engagement and 39.4% who remained neutral in their answer.

Great Bend residents have also noticed an uptick in activities and events available, with 54.3% who “agreed” that the quantity of these occurrences has increased in recent years. As reported by Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) alumni, many events and activities brought to Great Bend in recent years can be traced back to the leadership program as the project incubator.

**Fostering leadership conclusion.** Based on the evidence discussed in this section, the question “Is Leadership Golden Belt effective in ‘fostering leadership’?” can be answered in the affirmative. Participants self-reported numerous instances of personal growth and development, and provided examples of how they were motivated to take action and practice leadership in their communities. Further, community perception survey results indicate a perceived increase in civic engagement and level of activity in the community.

The next step in the line of inquiry is whether the leadership that has been fostered has value and has been effective, which is discussed in the next section.

### **Is the increase in civic leadership leading to “healthier communities”?**

**Community perception of community health.** As previously revealed, Great Bend residents have perceived both an increase in civic engagement among residents and an uptick in activities and events available in recent years. In addition, 41% agreed that Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) has positively influenced the quality of life in Great Bend. About 43% remained neutral and only 16% disagreed. This indicates there exists a perception that LGB has had a positive influence on quality of life.

The alumni of the program arguably have a more trained eye in terms of identifying when something that has impacted community health can be tied to LGB, which is why they were asked to share such observations and are summarized in the next section.

**Alumni Perception of Community Health.** Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) alumni interviewees also offered their perceptions of the program's impact on the community's health. They were asked to answer a yes or no question – whether or not the presence of the program has impacted the community's health, and if so, they were asked to elaborate. As described in Figure 2, nearly all (26) participants said they perceived a positive impact on the community's health and overall quality of life. Three did not have a clear opinion and one was adamant that no improvement on the community's health had taken place.

Participants' elaborations upon their opinions yielded four themes, which were interrelated in many ways:

Enhanced Awareness of Community Needs. (14)

Observed Project or Organization Initiate Due to LGB. (11)

Witness Other Alumni as Active in Community. (6)

Diversity of Participants' Backgrounds Benefits Whole. (6)

Enhanced Awareness of Community Needs was coded when a participant described it as one of the driving motivators behind the impact made by either themselves or their classmates. In many cases, individuals reported they were simply not aware of some of the disparity or shortcomings of their community until exposed to them during the leadership program. For example, one of the sessions held lunch at the local soup

kitchen where participants ate alongside individuals who are food insecure or homeless, which is an eye-opening experience many participants admitted they would not have pursued on their own.

The themes of Observed Project or Organization Initiate Due to LGB and Witness Other Alumni as Active in Community were closely related, as many of the visible actions taken by alumni and reported by their peers were related to the formation of a new organization, project or event.

One alumnus discussed her involvement with the formation of a local not-for-profit that has raised thousands of dollars to educate local elementary school children on local wildlife:

“I think our (project) was (worthwhile), and you’re not going to get that in every group that comes out, but I would say it was a shining example of what’s possible.”

Perhaps the most noted organization by interviewees was Barton County Young Professionals (BCYP), which started as a project within LGB in 2009 and was later taken on again in 2011. Interviewees report it has since grown from a handful of members to about 900 on the distribution list, more than 500 in the Facebook group and more than 300 active members. Some projects instigated by BCYP include the following:

1. “Tot Spot” playground equipment, a capital project worth more than \$50,000
2. Numerous young-family focused events like Fall Fest
3. A summer pool party
4. And a half marathon and 5K race to raise funds for fitness infrastructure.



The local health-focused organization Be Well Barton County was also reported as a direct result of LGB alumni. The group recently adopted a master plan to develop cycling and walking infrastructure throughout Barton County.

Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms was founded as a result of a LGB class project. The group raises funds to assist with needs of the local wildlife refuge, Cheyenne Bottoms. One project the group completed is the restoration of a monarch butterfly habitat used by the Kansas Wetlands Education Center (KWEC) for education purposes. Another project the group initiated is an education day focused on exposing elementary school children to Cheyenne Bottoms and the KWEC. The event has occurred every year since it began about five years ago.

The theme “Diversity of Participants’ Backgrounds Benefits Whole” was coded when participants indicated a benefit derived from bringing multiple perspectives to the table in open discussion. However, this theme was difficult to categorize, as it is not evidence of impact upon community health. Rather, it was considered an ingredient participants found vital to the development of the internal changes and surface level benefits discussed prior.

For example, one interviewee stated:

“I’m a big picture person, then we had the detail-oriented person, who of course drove me nuts and I drove her nuts, but we needed each other to put a project together. You need the different viewpoints and the class taught me that. We needed all of us to put it together and pull it off.”

Another identified the diversity of the group as an element with the potential to spark paradigm shifts:

“That program... there were so many people from all different places, all different walks of life, and I think any time you get those kinds of minds

together you've got so many different ways of learning and solving problems it can't be a bad thing."

Much of the impact upon community health starts as an impact on a group or organization. For example, individuals impacted Barton County Young Professionals, which then impacted the community's health with its programming and projects.

**Impact upon organizations.** The spawning of new organizations and the projects they completed has already been discussed, but many civic groups and community based events already existed in Great Bend and at least 14 were impacted by Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) alumni interviewees - 17 if it is counted that the three new organizations founded by LGB alumni were continually impacted by subsequent alumni.

In total, there were 47 instances of involvement motivated by participants' experience with LGB. It is notable to mention the other 56 instances reported as being unrelated to LGB will likely have benefited from the enhanced skills of the alumni involved.

The Family Crisis Center's annual event "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" has men donning high heels to raise awareness for domestic and sexual violence against women. Two participants reported using skills learned in LGB to enhance the productivity of the planning committee for the event to grow it each year, raising tens of thousands of dollars.

**Healthy community perception conclusion.** Considering the data that reveals Great Bend residents perceive a positive influence on quality of life in their community and the perceptions and evidence of impact upon the community's health provided by alumni, the question "Is the increase in civic leadership leading to 'healthier communities'?" can also be answered in the affirmative.

## **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**

### **Summary**

This research sought to determine if the local community leadership program, Leadership Golden Belt (LGB), was living up to the mission statement of its curriculum's developer and umbrella organization, the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC), to "foster civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities." This research used the KLC's broad definition of healthy community, discussed previously to include economic factors, elected leaders, physical health and other elements. This study defined leadership as the development of communication and relationship skills, and the motivated application of such skills to make progress on projects or issues related to community health.

More than 100 survey responses and 30 LGB alumni interviewees revealed civic leadership was indeed being fostered in Great Bend, Kansas, and that leadership was edging the community toward a healthier existence.

Great Bend residents noticed it in the increased level of civic engagement and quantity of events and activities available. LGB alumni reported changes within themselves, and that they had witnessed the birth of new organizations as a result of the class and the many projects those organizations developed to fill a community need. For example, Barton County Young Professionals was formed as a direct result of alumni efforts. BCYP has since raised \$50,000 to install a playground set safe for toddlers, which had long been a community need. It also spawned more than half a dozen events per year geared toward networking, young families, fundraising, fitness and more. At least two other organizations were founded via LGB that are currently impacting the health of the Great Bend area and beyond: Be Well Barton County and Friends of

Cheyenne Bottoms. Other relevant groups, event-planning committees and task forces have formed under these umbrella organizations.

For these reasons and more, as revealed in this study, the questions of whether LGB is fostering civic leadership and whether that civic leadership impacts the health of the Great Bend community can both be answered with a yes, and to a greater degree than this researcher anticipated.

If not for a small window of time in which to conduct research, among other restrictions, the researcher is confident this research would have revealed an even deeper and far-reaching impact.

### **Limitations & Future Research Recommendations**

Several limitations to the study are worth noting, not the least of which is duration. Less than four weeks were available to conduct, transcribe, analyze and code interviews and garner survey responses. The timeline reduced the scope of this project from investigating multiple communities with Kansas Leadership Center sanctioned leadership programs to one community. There is always the chance Great Bend's results are an anomaly. However, contacts made during this process reveal several other community leadership programs are seeing similar results, not the least of which is Leadership Garden City located in Garden City, Kansas. Future research would do well to plan a smaller number of interviews in a larger number of communities and explore the impact the curriculum has in different environments, cultures and communities with varying population densities.

Another limitation presents a bit of a paradox. As an alumnus of the program, the researcher was able to see the same impact reported by interviewees. While the

researcher took steps to remove himself from the topic and approach interviews and the research as objectively as possible, it could be perceived that he was too vested in the project to be completely objective. However, without the experience of having participated, it is doubtful the researcher would have identified the opportunity to study Leadership Golden Belt's (LGB) progress and relevance to the community's health and quality of life.

Another limitation might have been the unidirectional wording of the questions in the survey. For example, "I have noticed an increase in..." might be reworded to "I have not noticed an increase in...". Then it would be wise to allow the two formats to be delivered to survey respondents at random to enhance the reliability of the data.

Future researchers would do well to recruit other scholars to assist in implementing more of the format from EvaluLEAD as outlined by Grove et al. (2005). This project took many concepts from EvaluLEAD such as exploring three dimensions of impact: individual, organizational and society, and the three levels of impact ranging from episodic, developmental and transformative, though using EvaluLEAD terminology was avoided since the evaluation methods were not adopted and applied rigorously due to time constraints.

Given more time, the researcher would have also chosen some of the more prominent outcomes of Leadership Golden Belt, such as the Tot Spot playground set, and interviewed beneficiaries of the project.

### **Closing thoughts**

"Something is better than nothing."

That's the sentiment expressed by an interviewee after elaborating on why he believed Leadership Golden Belt (LGB) has improved the community's health.

This statement brings to mind the "maturity scale" used for strategic planning at the researcher's employer, Barton Community College. The college's goals and ideals are placed on a list where faculty and staff are asked to issue their opinions on how well Barton is handling each priority. The maturity scale uses a scale of 1-4. 1 is "Ad hoc." 2 is "Some structure and foundation." 3 is "Solid structure with regularly monitored outcomes and adjustments based on results." Achieving a 4 means a 3 has been attained for some time, and the institution has become a thought leader to its peers in that area.

The data collected in this study clearly shows a progression along this path to maturity. One example comes from the ad hoc first year with "lacking focus and structure" as a primary complaint from participants, which ultimately faded after curriculum was set and practiced. Later participants also began reporting more internal fundamental changes like enhanced ability to listen and empathize versus surface benefits like "networking" that were reported in the program's early days.

This researcher believes the program was approaching a solid 3 rating on that scale in its last couple of years, 2013 and 2014. This progress toward maturity is one reason it was somewhat disheartening to learn the program changed its methods in 2015 and the cohort format of 10-15 people spending half a dozen full days together over the course of three months was disbanded.

The course was replaced by a series of opportunities made available and promoted to the community. Scholarships are available to send people to the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) in Wichita for seminars and conferences. Come and go luncheons and a

half-day workshop have also been added to the programming. These are certainly of high value and may well impact participants.

However, most of the interviewees were not aware of the format change until after the recorder was off and they began asking questions about LGB's status.

The looks of disappointment received upon delivering the news were very telling. This research missed something important: How critical was the cohort format to participants' ability to learn and grow? I believe the value many placed on networking and lifelong friends reveals a piece of this answer; however, it does not reveal the degree to which the cohort format impacted participants' level of involvement and impact on the community. Any future research on the KLC, LGB or similar leadership programs should take into account the learning environment in terms of cohort, seminar, luncheon series, half-day workshops, etc.

It is this researcher's opinion, based on personal experience and the opinions of nearly all the interviewees in this project, that LGB is one of the primary originating sources of the community pride, civic engagement and overall health improvements Great Bend has been enjoying (and noticing) in the last few years, whether it is known and identified on the surface or not.

Even several alumni did not realize the impact it had on their lives until reflecting on it during an interview. Much of the program's influence seems to be manifesting in the peripheral of a community's awareness and in the subconscious of alumni, which makes it difficult for the masses to see and understand a leadership program's value at a glance.

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Appendix A  
Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



**FORT HAYS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Forward thinking. World ready.*

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**OFFICE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND SPONSORED PROJECTS**

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Fort Hays State University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Full Committee Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form unless documentation of consent has been waived by the IRB. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document. The IRB-approved consent document must be used.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Paige at 785-628-4349 or [lp Paige@fhsu.edu](mailto:lp Paige@fhsu.edu). Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

## Appendix B Interview Informed Consent Form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

*Department of Communication Studies, Fort Hays State University*

## Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations.

*Brandon Steinert – Master of Science candidate & principal researcher*

[b\\_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:b_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu)

620.617.4163

*Dr. Connie Eigenmann – Thesis chair*

[cseigenmann@fhsu.edu](mailto:cseigenmann@fhsu.edu)

You are being asked to participate in a research study. It is your choice whether or not to participate. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

#### **What is the purpose of this study ?**

The purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which Leadership Golden Belt has “fostered civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities.”

#### **What does this study involve ?**

The study involves a survey for the general population of Great Bend (those residing or working in town) and interviews of Leadership Golden Belt alumni.

Survey respondents will be kept completely anonymous, and will answer less than a dozen short questions and some basic demographic information, which should take less than five minutes.

Interviewees will be asked less than a dozen questions and should take less than 20 minutes.

No payment or incentives will be provided to participants. Participation is completely voluntary.

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in any harm.

None of the questionnaires used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for analysis.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you. The length of time of your participation in this study is less than 20 minutes. Approximately 100 participants will be in this study.

#### **Are there any benefits from participating in this study ?**

Your participation will help us learn more about the importance and effectiveness of community leadership programs.

#### **Will you be paid or receive anything to participate in this study ?**

You will not receive any compensation if the results of this research are used towards the development of a commercially available product.

**What are the risks involved with being enrolled in this study ?**

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in harm to participants.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

**Interview** responses will be kept confidential. Interview files will be kept on the principal researcher's password-protected hard drive.

All data will be destroyed one year after the study.

Data is collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by ID number, not name, all personal identifying information will be kept in locked files and these files will be deleted after one year. Access to all data will be limited to the principal researcher and his thesis chair.

The information collected for this study will be used only for the purposes of conducting this study. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

**Other important items you should know:**

- **Withdrawal from the study:** You may choose to stop your participation in this study at any time.
- **Funding:** There is no outside funding for this research project."

**Questions?**

Contact the primary researcher Brandon Steinert or his thesis chair Dr. Connie Eigenmann using the contact information provided at the top of this form.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about human research at FHSU, you may call the Office of Scholarship and Sponsored Projects at FHSU (785) 628-4349 during normal business hours.

**CONSENT**

I have read the above information about this study on leadership development programs, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. By signing this I agree to participate in this study and I have been given a copy of this signed consent document for my own records. I understand that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent at any time. By signing this consent form I understand that I am not giving up any legal rights. I am 18-65 years old.

- ☐ By checking this box I acknowledge that this interview will be recorded.

---

Participant's Signature and Date

### Appendix C Interview Questions

Age at time of interview: (18-22, 23-27, 28-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-47, 48-52, 53-57, 58-62, 63-65)

Years/months in Great Bend:

Employment category (marketing, education, retail, etc.):

Year of first exposure to leadership golden belt:

Leadership program/year attended:

Gender:

Why did you attend leadership training?

Tell me what governing boards, committees, civic groups or volunteer activities currently engaged in:

Any of these groups joined due to the leadership program?

What issues or projects have you worked on in the community since your KLC experience? Please be specific.

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the most relevant, please rate how useful your leadership training was to the success of these projects.

Which competencies would you say are the most relevant to your progress?

Do you believe the leadership program's presence has improved the overall health and quality of life of the community? How so?

## Appendix D Interview Debrief

### **Study Debriefing**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Leadership Golden Belt has “fostered civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities.”

#### **How is this tested?**

Through interviews and surveys, information regarding the perception of health in Great Bend and its affiliation with projects motivated by the Leadership Golden Belt program is collected and will be analyzed.

#### **Hypothesis and main questions.**

We suspect effective leadership development curriculum will indeed lead to healthier Kansas communities as broadly defined by the Kansas Leadership Center to include civic engagement and general vitality and vibrancy. We also hope to determine which parts of the KLC curriculum seem to be the most effective.

#### **Why is this important to study?**

If leadership training truly leads to a more vibrant and progressive, healthy community, a study linking the curriculum to results could underscore the importance of such programs in society at large.

Thank you for your participation. Please limit responses to surveys to one per person to prevent invalidating results.

If you have questions feel free to email the researcher, Brandon Steinert, at [b\\_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:b_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu).

Aggregate results will be available by contacting Steinert. Publication in a disciplinary journal is likely.

If questions are invasive or upsetting please contact Steinert or the Kelley Center, FHSU Picken Hall 111 (785) 628-4401.

## Appendix E Survey Informed Consent

# SURVEY: Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations

Clicking "continue" at the bottom of the page indicates your consent to participate in research.

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: Department of Communication Studies, Fort Hays State University

Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations.

Brandon Steinert – Master of Science candidate & principal researcher  
[b.steinert@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:b.steinert@mail.fhsu.edu)  
 620.617.4163

Dr. Connie Eigenmann – Thesis chair  
[cseigenmann@fhsu.edu](mailto:cseigenmann@fhsu.edu)

You are being asked to participate in a research study. It is your choice whether or not to participate.

Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

What is the purpose of this study ?

The purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which Leadership Golden Belt has "fostered civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities."

What does this study involve ?

The study involves a survey for the general population of Great Bend (those residing or working in town) and interviews of Leadership Golden Belt alumni.

Survey respondents will be kept completely anonymous, and will answer less than a dozen short questions and some basic demographic information, which should take less than five minutes.

Interviewees will be asked less than a dozen questions and should take less than 20 minutes.

No payment or incentives will be provided to participants. Participation is completely voluntary.

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in any harm.

None of the questionnaires used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for analysis.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you. The length of time of your participation in this study is less than 20 minutes. Approximately 100 participants will be in this study.

Are there any benefits from participating in this study ?

Your participation will help us learn more about the importance and effectiveness of community leadership programs



Will you be paid or receive anything to participate in this study ?

You will not receive any compensation if the results of this research are used towards the development of a commercially available product.

What are the risks involved with being enrolled in this study ?

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in harm to participants.

How will your privacy be protected?

Survey responses are recorded anonymously. At no time will survey respondents be identified.

All data will be destroyed one year after the study.

Data is collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by ID number, not name, all personal identifying information will be kept in locked files and these files will be deleted after one year. Access to all data will be limited to the principal researcher and his thesis chair.

The information collected for this study will be used only for the purposes of conducting this study. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

Other important items you should know:

- Withdrawal from the study: You may choose to stop your participation in this study at any time.
- Funding: There is no outside funding for this research project."

Questions?

Contact the primary researcher Brandon Steinert or his thesis chair Dr. Connie Eigenmann using the contact information provided at the top of this form.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about human research at FHSU, you may call the Office of Scholarship and Sponsored Projects at FHSU (785) 628-4349 during normal business hours.

## CONSENT

I have read the above information about this study on leadership development programs, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. By clicking "continue" and submitting a completed survey, I agree to participate in this study and I have been given the opportunity to print this consent document for my own records. I understand that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent at any time. By agreeing to this consent form I understand that I am not giving up any legal rights. I am 18-65 years old.

Continue »

## Appendix F Survey Questions

# SURVEY: Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations

## SURVEY: Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations

**Age when survey completed:**

- ☐ 18-22
- ☐ 23-27
- ☐ 28-32
- ☐ 33-37
- ☐ 38-42
- ☐ 43-47
- ☐ 48-52
- ☐ 53-57
- ☐ 58-62
- ☐ 63-65

**Length of time residing or working in Great Bend:**

- ☐ Less than one year.
- ☐ 1-3 years.
- ☐ 4-7 years.
- ☐ 8 years or more.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

**1. The number of activities and events available to Great Bend residents has noticeably increased in the last five to 10 years.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**2. The local community leadership program, Leadership Golden Belt, has positively influenced the quality of life in Great Bend.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**3. I have noticed an increase in civic engagement among residents in Great Bend within the last five years.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**4. I am aware of at least one project or community improvement that came about as a result of the Leadership Golden Belt program.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**5. I believe community leadership programs are a key component of any healthy community.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**6. I consider myself an involved community member.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**7. I believe community leadership programs motivate people to be more involved in their communities.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

**8. I did not know about community leadership programs until this survey.**

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

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Submit

Appendix G  
Survey Debrief Screen

# SURVEY: Leadership development programs: Exploring the real impact upon communities and organizations

Thank you for your submission!

## Study Debriefing

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which Leadership Golden Belt has “fostered civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities.”

## How is this tested?

Through interviews and surveys, information regarding the perception of health in Great Bend and its affiliation with projects motivated by the Leadership Golden Belt program is collected and will be analyzed.

## Hypothesis and main questions.

We suspect effective leadership development curriculum will indeed lead to healthier Kansas communities as broadly defined by the Kansas Leadership Center to include civic engagement and general vitality and vibrancy. We also hope to determine which parts of the KLC curriculum seem to be the most effective.

## Why is this important to study?

If leadership training truly leads to a more vibrant and progressive, healthy community, a study linking the curriculum to results could underscore the importance of such programs in society at large. Thank you for your participation. Please limit responses to surveys to one per person to prevent invalidating results.

If you have questions feel free to email the researcher, Brandon Steinert, at [b\\_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:b_steinert@mail.fhsu.edu).

This form was created using Google Forms.  
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## Appendix H

### Kansas Leadership Center Quick Guide

# COMMON GOOD

## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

### DIAGNOSE SITUATION

- Explore tough interpretations
- Distinguish technical and adaptive work
- Understand the process challenges
- Test multiple interpretations and points-of-view
- Take the temperature
- Identify who needs to do the work

### MANAGE SELF

- Know your strengths, vulnerabilities and triggers
- Know the story others tell about you
- Choose among competing values
- Get used to uncertainty and conflict
- Experiment beyond your comfort zone
- Take care of yourself

### ENERGIZE OTHERS

- Engage unusual voices
- Work across factions
- Start where they are
- Speak to loss
- Inspire a collective purpose
- Create a trustworthy process

### INTERVENE SKILLFULLY

- Make conscious choices
- Raise the heat
- Give the work back
- Hold to purpose
- Speak from the heart
- Act experimentally

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# FOR THE COMMON GOOD

## QUICK GUIDE

### LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES:

1.  
**Leadership is an activity, not a position.**
2.  
**Anyone can lead, anytime, anywhere.**
3.  
**It starts with you and must engage others.**
4.  
**Your purpose must be clear.**
5.  
**It's risky.**

Leadership is mobilizing others to do difficult work for the common good. Today, thousands of people are working to exercise the type of leadership described here. Keep this card handy and do the same. Your organization and community will be better off because of it!

[www.kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://www.kansasleadershipcenter.org)



## Often leadership starts with a question.

*Use these questions to stimulate conversation, engage others and move forward.*

### DIAGNOSE SITUATION

- What's our story about what's going on here?
- What story do we imagine others are telling?
- What aspirations do we have related to this issue?
- What needs to change to reach those aspirations?
- What values might be in conflict here?
- What processes need to be created to address this challenge?
- What factions are involved with this issue? What does each faction value?
- For real change to happen, who has to work on this? Who else?

### MANAGE SELF

- What difficult choice or unpopular action might be necessary?
- Among us here, what are our strengths? How are we vulnerable?
- How do we leverage our strengths?
- How do we transform our vulnerabilities into assets?
- What's our part of the mess?
- Are there risks we need to take or hard choices we need to make?

### ENERGIZE OTHERS

- How will we build bridges between factions?
- What do our opponents and members of other factions care about?
- What would it look like to "start where they are?"
- Does a collective purpose exist among the factions?
- How can we inspire a collective purpose?
- Who could lose because of our activity?
- How will we speak to that loss?
- What can we do to help everyone trust the process?

### INTERVENE SKILLFULLY

- Do we need to raise or lower the heat? Why?
- What is our typical approach to issues like this?
- What new approaches might be necessary?
- What actions or interventions are needed now?
- What would be the purpose of those interventions?
- Do they connect with our larger purpose?
- What is our plan? Who will do what, when?



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