



Evaluation Findings Report to KHF & KLC



Kansas Health Foundation



**KANSAS
LEADERSHIP
CENTER**

November 3, 2016

Philadelphia
2 Penn Center
1500 JFK Blvd, Suite 1910
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-568-0399

New York
31 West 27th Street
4th Floor
New York, NY 10001
212-949-0990

San Francisco
One Sansome Street
35th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-439-8368

tccgrp.com

Executive Summary

The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) initially worked with TCC in a project that was funded by the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF). Based on the KLC logic model, a community with strong, active civic leaders is likely to experience those leaders doing effective and efficient work at community institutions. Through this increasingly effective work, organizations can “move the needle” on health indicators in a positive direction. Initial 2009-2012 KLC evaluations were designed with an emphasis on assessing community outcomes and were based on the pre-existing KLC logic model. They then served as a springboard for launching this recent three-year longitudinal study aimed at assessing outcomes. TCC worked with KLC and KHF to plan the three-year evaluation and then to execute it. There were regular opportunities for TCC to share new learnings with KHF and KLC. This report represents the culmination of those learnings over the multi-year engagement.

Using multiple tools, data were collected over three years (2013-2015). After a thorough evaluation planning phase, key data were collected using the following methods: statewide polling in 2013 & 2015, annual site visits from 2013-2015, and alumni surveys in 2014 & 2015.

The abbreviated logic model used during this evaluation contained four types of KLC outcomes: individual outcomes, network outcomes, community outcomes, and KLC reputational outcomes. This report’s outcomes findings are laid out in those four main groups. Individual outcomes for KLC alumni are laid out in the following subsection. They are most directly influenced by KLC, and findings include the following:

Individual Outcomes

Increased Alumni Knowledge & Awareness

- **Alumni experienced gains in knowledge of the competencies.** In site visits, alumni have consistently described their knowledge gains since participating in KLC. Across both years of the alumni survey, there were similar trends in many of the variables related to individual knowledge and skills outcomes.
- **KLC has given alumni new tools and frameworks for engaging in both work and civic activity.** This finding was consistent across all site visit locations and across all years of the study. Alumni regularly spoke in the “KLC language” during interviews, indicating key concepts have remained top-of-mind where they may be recalled and utilized during leadership opportunities. Quantitative data from surveys reinforces these qualitative site visit findings.

Improved Alumni Attitudes & Perceptions

- **Alumni experienced increased buy-in on the importance of KLC concepts.** Site visit interviewees regularly mentioned the degree to which their buy-in increased related to their newly-learned KLC concepts.

- **Alumni value Energizing Others, particularly components related to connections, networking, and interpersonal communication.** Across all sites and across all years, alumni indicated they place importance on the KLC competency of Energizing Others. When asked about key attributes in leaders, this competency was cited most frequently. Alumni particularly valued connections and networking as well as other people skills and communication skills.
- **Alumni value the importance of diagnosing the situation.** Diagnosis/deliberation was one of the top attributes mentioned by interviewees as important in leaders.
- **Alumni also highly value leadership characteristics that fall outside of the KLC Core Competencies.** Alumni regularly named key characteristics that did not fall under a KLC competency. Commitment and persistence, not explicitly associated with KLC Core Competencies, were mentioned frequently.
- **Some alumni credit KLC with their leadership wins.** Though not all alumni attributed their successes in a leadership role to KLC, subsets in communities like Garden City and Hutchinson were able to do so. It may be easier for alumni to credit KLC with successes when the successes are related to a framework or tool that is clearly connected to KLC.

Improved Alumni Process for Addressing Challenges

- **Respondents apply the KLC competencies and concepts to their lives, particularly diagnosing the situation and relating to others.** Site visit interviewees reported improved behaviors in leadership roles. In particular, interviewees experienced increasingly engaging in diagnosis and analysis. In multiple cases, these alumni behaviors translated to the civic arena. Survey data support this finding.
- **More high-dosage respondents experienced improvements, compared to low-dosage respondents.** Analysis indicated there were significant differences in outcomes for high-dosage versus low-dosage individuals, indicating KLC alumni need iterative reinforcement on a “ladder of engagement.”
- **Many alumni receive support, fewer provide support to others.** The most recent survey findings indicated a minority of alumni frequently work with other alumni to increase their understanding of the competencies. However, many survey respondents receive support and feel they are supported.
- **Those that do provide support to others feel somewhat comfortable teaching, coaching, or facilitating leadership development on KLC concepts.** Approximately one-third of alumni engage in coaching and teaching, and those that do have experienced increasing quality of the support they provide. Site visit findings were also able to reveal some cases of increased coaching and facilitation.
- **Alumni still have difficulty managing their time in civic activity roles.** This theme of difficulty managing time persisted across all years of this evaluation. Survey respondents scored poorly on the degree to which they were overextended with volunteer work. A similar theme rose to the

top of findings in site visits related to interviewees available time to participate in KLC in the future.

- **There is slight evidence of improvement in civic activity as a result of KLC.** Consistently across site visits, there was little connection found between participating with KLC and becoming more involved in the civic arena.

Network Outcomes

- **Alumni interactions are infrequent.** Survey results indicated very infrequent formal alumni interactions. A slightly higher percentage report interacting with alumni in informal settings. Additionally, many Konza Clubs are inactive.
- **Alumni interactions are medium-to-high quality.** Survey results indicate the quality of interactions between alumni is often judged to be good. Many alumni feel they have opportunities to socialize and contribute. A smaller percentage agree that they make tangible accomplishments at meetings.
- **Different alumni place importance on different alumni gathering characteristics.** The productiveness ratings described above are comparatively lower than the socialization ratings. This finding may be acceptable. However, it is important to note that KLC has received verbal feedback from many alumni indicating a desire to work on their communities on specific issues rather than going to alumni meetings.
- **Alumni desire a variety of formats for convenings.** Consistently, interviewees have been able to describe the multiple supports available, including emails, calls, and The Journal. They were often described in a positive context. Differing feedback on the socialization component reinforces the idea that different alumni consider different alumni engagement formulas to be the “right fit.”
- **A majority of alumni feel they have a support structure.** A majority of alumni feel they have at least three other alumni they can turn to for support. The fact that interviewees frequently found KLC support to be applicable to their daily lives indicates KLC provides relevant support.

Community Outcomes

Feelings of Civic Efficacy & Civic Participation

- **Kansans appear to feel a “half-hearted” feeling of civic efficacy though the efficacy of alumni is much higher.** Poll results indicated “half-hearted” confidence that local communities will actually make progress on top issues. Among surveyed and interviewed alumni, there was a great deal more confidence. Overall, these mixed results indicate a lack of confidence in the state as a whole.
- **Kansas’ political climate is leading to increased pessimism in some communities.** Site visits revealed increased pessimism related to the processes in their civic arena, and those issues have

persisted over time. Alumni perceived statewide politicians were responsible for impeding the success of communities across the state. In particular, interviewees mentioned budget and funding difficulties. They also reported sensing a negative tone in statewide politics.

- **Kansans' civic awareness has improved somewhat.** There was a significant increase in Kansans' awareness of local and statewide policy issues. This increase may be due to a range of factors, including the timing of when the questions were asked and the prominence of budget issues.
- **KLC alumni experienced somewhat high civic participation rates.** A majority of survey respondents feel they are personally and actively involved in efforts to address key community challenges.

Personal Leadership Capacity

- **Kansans as a whole are doing relatively well at diagnosing and managing self.** Poll findings revealed a majority of Kansans statewide could name areas where they could improve their leadership. Additionally, more than half of Kansans agree they can easily “step back” to diagnose a situation.
- **A sizable minority of Kansans are doing well at energizing others.** When asked about their ability to energize people who are working together on a task, nearly half of polling respondents provided positive self-assessments.
- **Polling results on targeted engagement differ from alumni findings.** Across the state, few Kansans agree they are overextended with the volunteer work they currently do. As a whole, those who elect to participate in KLC may be systematically more likely to volunteer for a wide variety of community roles, compared to the rest of Kansans.
- **For the most part, Kansans' self-assessments of their personal leadership qualities do not vary much by place of residence.** For most indicators of personal leadership capacity, findings were consistent across locations in Kansas.

Local Leadership Capacity & Community Processes

- **KLC communities of interest experienced some significant improvements in comparison to other locations.** Almost half of the respondents from the communities of interest experienced improvement on local leadership engagement in leadership training. This may relate to KLC focusing more programming in these communities and indicates, at least to some degree, the KLC theory of change is working. Many respondents from the communities of interest perceived improvement on the transparency of local leaders and the degree to which leaders engage in relevant partnerships.
- **A greater percentage of individuals who are and who have been community leaders experienced positive change on community outcomes.** There were significant differences on perceptions of the community depending on whether survey respondents had been community leaders. It is understandable that someone who has held a formal position of leadership is more likely to offer a positive interpretation of outcomes.

- **In 2015, when asked specifically about those in formal positions of authority, residents expressed more negative views on those in local leadership roles than they did in 2013.** These findings may seem contradictory to the more general finding above. However, these assessments focused on formal community leaders and touched on various leadership activities like going through a set of specific steps in a thoughtful way and knowing how to energize people.
- **Though poll numbers seemed to decrease, alumni had a more positive view about the direction of their leadership over time.** Survey findings show that, for all indicators on the topic, only about one-third of survey respondents perceived improvement in their local leadership over the years. These alumni perceived improvement despite the fact that statewide non-alumni did not perceive improvement.
- **Alumni have noticed lack of unusual voices at the community level.** Consistent with survey findings, site visit interviewees have continued to bring this up as an area of difficulty. Especially excluded were those voices that had been historically marginalized. There has been little positive movement on this important aspect of the KLC theory of change, however interviewees also expressed optimism.

Local Community Capacity

Comparing assessments of various types of community resources side-by-side can inform findings on leadership capacity in various locations. Overall, findings highlighted that there are multiple barriers to progress across Kansas, including aspects that fall within the KLC theory of change (initiative) and aspects that do not (monetary resources).

- **Monetary/funding resources:** Fewer Kansans believe their community has enough money or funding to make progress on the major issues it faces. In polls and site visits, residents of Garden City are more likely to say their community has enough money or funding to make progress.
- **Qualified staff and volunteer resources:** This assessment of a community's human resources appears to be stable. Lawrence appears to be a standout location on this indicator.
- **People taking initiative to make progress:** This assessment of leadership appears to be on the rise. Over time, an increasing percentage of Kansans have said there are enough people taking initiative to tackle the community's important issues. One of the standout communities on the poll was Lawrence.

Change in High-Priority Issues over Time

- **Poverty remains a main area of concern across Kansas, though concern may have decreased.** Based on qualitative analysis, poverty is a major concern among survey respondents. However, polling results indicated concern over poverty has decreased across the state over the years.
- **Poverty is of particular concern in Pittsburg and Hutchinson.** One of the major trends in site visit analysis is on the issue of poverty, and how it has been perceived over time by

interviewees. Though there was not an uptick of statewide concerns related to poverty, polling results indicated the challenge of poverty remained a concern in Pittsburg and Hutchinson.

For some of these issues, changes may reflect national trends or other larger demographic shifts outside the scope of local leadership influence. However, for some of these issues, the shifts may be due to leadership roles in either addressing issues or elevating issues in conversations.

- **Garden City residents seem less concerned about issues of poverty and the economy, instead remaining concerned over issues of diversity.** This polling finding is similar to recurring findings from KLC alumni site visit interviews, where Garden City residents frequently mention issues of diversity as a top challenge.
- **Concerns over local leadership increased significantly in Lawrence.** Lawrence residents expressed a great deal of concern about ethics challenges that have occurred, beginning in 2015. Few in Lawrence mentioned poverty or housing as key concerns, likely because they were eclipsed by recent scandal.
- **Issues of the economy and poverty remain challenges in Hutchinson, though difficulties around housing are easing.** This trend may be linked to their strong local housing groups that work on the issue. Over multiple years of site visits, members of these housing groups have participated in interviews and reported on the progress they have made.

Reputational Outcomes for KLC

- **Alumni have expressed largely positive opinions of KLC over the years.** Various survey and site visit questions indicated alumni found KLC to be effective. Similar across both years, the areas where KLC received the highest percentage of respondent agreement related to the quality of program implementation. A smaller percentage of respondents perceived actual change in their behavior and efficacy as a result of KLC.
- **Generally, KLC is doing well on best practices in adult education.** KLC scored well on a series of survey questions about the degree to which programming was in line with best practices in adult education. In addition to these positive findings about implementation, a subset of alumni felt KLC content leaned toward the theoretical.
- **Alumni see KLC as a “go-to” organization for support, tools, and answers.** Across both years of surveys, a large percentage of respondents “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with positive statements about KLC in this regard.
- **Non-alumni are not familiar with KLC.** Statewide polling uncovered a large percentage of non-alumni that were unfamiliar with KLC. However, the percent who report being “very” or “somewhat” familiar with KLC has improved over time. Alumni opinion on KLC’s visibility differed from that of the larger population, with a very large percentage of alumni believing KLC is at least “moderately well-known” in their communities. This disparity is likely due to a perception bias on the part of alumni.

- **Non-alumni opinions of KLC have declined slightly over time.** Positive opinions among Kansans are not particularly high. Positive word of mouth generated after programming may drive differences based on location, and respondent error may also drive low numbers.
- **A large percentage of interviewees saw the value in their KLC experiences, while survey responses were slightly less enthusiastic.** A large percentage of individuals offered an enthusiastic “yes” in response when asked about their satisfaction with KLC. Many described having learned important things in KLC. Survey respondents offered more measured responses to questions on whether or not they would recommend KLC to others.
- **Many participants appreciated the unique value of KLC programming.** Survey respondents indicated the KLC experience was “eye-opening” and introduced them to theories they had not considered before. Often, respondents differentiated KLC from other leadership programs in that it focused on civic leadership rather than professional leadership.
- **It is important that alumni perceive content to be applicable.** Many survey respondents indicated the KLC content was relevant and immediately usable. Though a large majority of respondents were able to recognize the relevance of KLC programming to their lives, a smaller subset did not perceive much relevancy, often indicating the material did not apply to their businesses or would not apply to their colleagues’ lives.
- **KLC programs have challenged participants over the years, and alumni increasingly appreciate the challenging nature.** Survey respondents appreciated the positive way in which their sessions challenged them to consider new ideas and concepts. Though some individuals respond well to this challenging nature, others did not. Comments like these had been frequent in many of KLC’s previous evaluation reports. Since that time, those types of critical responses those have tapered off, suggesting a tailoring of programming to address respondents’ concerns.

Recommendations

Findings laid out in the report informed the following select recommendations with regard to the implementation of KLC programming.

Based on individual alumni findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Incentivize attendance at more than one program.
- Offer time management solutions to alumni.
- Continue to offer refreshers of varying size and intensity.
- Continue to strategize about KLC frameworks that resonate most.
- Continue to prioritize the act of preparing attendees for the KLC experience.

Based on network outcomes findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Continue to define the purpose of formal alumni interactions.
- Raise awareness of alumni supports, when possible.

Based on community outcomes findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Model and provide support on ways unusual voices can be brought to the table.
- Explore evaluation activities at an organizational level.

- Regularly review the KLC logic model and make sure all strategies are aimed at achieving the articulated outcomes.
- Strategize on the most effective strategies for moving from leadership development to an improved civic environment to ultimately improving health and wellness indicators.

Based on KLC reputational findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Continue to pay attention to participants' comfort levels.
- Regularly review marketing strategies

