

## **Bridging Brown County: Captivating Social Capital as a Means to Community Change**

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### **Abstract**

As our communities strive to support community change efforts for survival and vitality, the importance of social capital has become evident in leadership development. Many researchers and practitioners realize that tapping into the inherent power of relationships and social networks is crucial. This paper provides an overview of the design and evaluation of Bridging Brown County, a county-wide community leadership development program that was explicitly designed to build social capital as well as human capital. By integrating social and human capital constructs into the program design, impacts have been measured in domains of other community capitals. The results of the impact study provide insight into developing and measuring the success of community leadership programs.

## **Introduction**

Community leadership educators have long known that leadership development is much more than building skills of positional leaders. The real work of leadership is to move toward community goals through building relationships and tapping the power of those connections. Therefore, successful leadership programs must pay attention to increasing both human capital and social capital.

Human capital refers to the collective power of individuals' knowledge, skills, abilities, and social competencies. Communities can enhance their human capital through training that focuses on improving the skills of individual leaders. Social capital refers to the collective power of relationships, connections, and networks among and between people. Individuals and communities acquire social capital through relationship-building among people who are similar, people who are different, and people with varying levels of political power.

This paper provides an overview of the design and evaluation of Bridging Brown County, a county-wide community leadership development program that was explicitly designed to build both social and human capital.

Aspects of human and social capital are central to the distinction between "leader" and "leadership" development. Day (2000) asserts that leader development emphasizes human capital – the skills and abilities of individuals associated with formal leadership roles. Leadership development focuses on resources that are embedded in relationships – bearing more resemblance to social capital. Day noted, "The primary emphasis in leadership development is on building and using interpersonal competence" (p. 585). According to Day, interpersonal competence has two distinct skill sets: (a) social awareness which includes empathy, political awareness, and service orientation and (b) social skills, which includes the ability to collaborate, manage conflict, and catalyze change.

Within the leadership literature the relationship between human capital development and leader ability is established, whereas understanding of the relationship between social capital and leadership development is still emerging. In an extensive review of the relationship between leadership development and social capital, Van De Valk (2008) noted while these factors are certainly related to each other, the direction of the cause-effect relationship between them is unclear. One implication of Van De Valk's research is that those interested in leadership development should look to social capital theory for guidance. Accompanying this implication is a need by researchers to develop new

evaluation methods to measure the social capital-enhancing qualities of leadership development programs.

Emery, Fernandez, Gutierrez-Montes, and Flora (2007) have studied how social capital cultivates leadership and the ability of social capital development to accelerate improvements in all community capitals. Using the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) as an analytical tool, Emery and Flora (2006) identified critical investments in social capital as the entry point in initiating and sustaining a process of community change – a process they called *spiraling-up*. With spiraling-up, “as one capital is increased, it is easier for increases, instead of declines, in the community capitals to occur” (p. 23). We believe that Emery’s approach is a promising way to measure the relationship of social capital and leadership development. Our impact study builds on this approach.

Before describing Bridging Brown County’s (BBC) historical context and program design, we provide a brief overview of the relevant literature on the relationship between social capital and community leadership education. While the primary focus of BBC is on building human and social capitals, our study revealed program impacts also can be measured in other domains of *community capital* (Flora, 2004; Emery & Flora, 2006) including financial, building and infrastructure, political, cultural, and natural environment impacts. The results of the impact study provide insight into developing and measuring the success of community leadership programs.

### **Community Leadership and Social Capital**

The literature on community leadership development has strongly emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships rather than intrapersonal knowledge or skills. In a review of community leadership and theory, Pigg (1999) suggests that community leadership programs err in focusing on leadership as if it were a status assumed or ascribed to a person. Rather, community leadership is an *influence relationship* (Pigg, 1999; Rost, 1993) that emerges based on the collaborative action of leaders and followers.

The distinction between individual and social levels in leadership development literature runs through the social capital literature as well. Putnam (1993) defined social capital as the “features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 35).

The social capital literature has organized around two poles – one that emphasizes the benefits of social capital for individuals and one that emphasizes its group benefits. In the first camp authors such as Lin (2001) argue that social resources

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and connections are even more important for individuals than personal resources such as education or wealth. The second camp, including Putnam (1993) and Bourdieu (1986), emphasizes that social capital is a collective asset produced and shared by members of a group.

**Figure 1. Community Social Capital Typology and Change**

		Bridging Social Capital	
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Bonding Social Capital	-	Wealthy solve problems with financial capital; the poor have few options	Community change dominated by local or extralocal bosses or power elite
	+	Community resists externally initiated change or infighting negates community change efforts	Locally initiated change driven by community defined goals, with links to external resources

Adapted slightly from Flora et al., 2004, p. 64.

Building on the collective benefits of social capital, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) examine rural communities. They created the typology in Figure 1 which links effective community action to two aspects of social capital – bonding and bridging networks. Bonding networks refer to strong connections among individuals and groups with similar backgrounds, while bridging networks refer to weaker connections among individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds. Flora et al. argue that communities with high levels of both bonding and bridging networks engage in more effective community action, an ability defined as “entrepreneurial social infrastructure” (p. 66). Communities with weak bonding and bridging networks suffer from extreme individualism and find it difficult to engage in any sort of collective action.

In addition, communities with imbalanced bonding and bridging networks experience a variety of problems. For example, communities with strong bonding but weak bridging networks, a common pattern in rural communities, tend to have conflict among separate insider groups vying for control of decision-making. It is especially important in this situation that community leadership programs promote bridging social capital without further unbalancing bonding social capital. Attention to this can minimize the danger that community leadership education produces high levels of bonding social capital which can reinforce old boy networks that exclude new or non-traditional leaders (Zacharakis & Flora, 2005).

## **Bridging Brown County**

Brown County clearly illustrated a community that was disproportionately strong in bonding networks and weak in bridging networks. As a result, the BBC program was designed to prioritize bridging social capital development over human capital development. The program format provided both social and contextual interactions as well as formal training (Day, 2000).

### **Historical Context**

Brown County is located in southwestern Minnesota, a primarily rural agricultural area. One-half of the county's population of 26,000 lives in the county seat on the eastern border. This has contributed to longstanding tension and mistrust between the east and west sides of the county around political power and distribution of public resources.

The startling depth of the east-west county divide was revealed in 1998 when a devastating tornado hit the county. Extension staff had difficulty recruiting volunteers from the east end of the county to help with clean-up efforts on the western border. Meanwhile, the mistrust of outsiders was severe on the west end, with some farmers refusing to allow volunteers on their property. The incident illustrated the lack of social capital in the county such as needed networks, norms, and trust to facilitate such a coordinated and cooperative effort for the benefit of the entire county (Putnam, 1993).

One year after the tornado the primary author convened an informal meeting of five individuals – one from each of the main communities in the county. The purpose was to discuss the east/west and urban/rural divide and what could be done. The group determined that Extension should sponsor a workshop to gather input from residents on issues needing to be addressed in the county. Seventy-five people attended. Over two-thirds of those present identified as a top concern communication issues among communities in Brown County. This demanded a leadership program to build *bridges* and increase social capital across the county. To date, seven cohorts have completed the program since it began in 2003 with a strong social network of 144 alumni throughout the county who impact community change.

### **Program Design: Developing Human and Social Capital**

The mission of the Bridging Brown County Program was simple: *Strengthening the Brown County community by bridging relationships of communication and*

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*understanding*. However, this was a delicate challenge in a county where local heritage and pride play an important role, where deep-seated rivalries between communities existed, and where long-standing insider groups controlled the decisions made. Therefore, the program was explicitly designed to engage new or young residents of diverse backgrounds from the communities across the county.

Similar to other University of Minnesota Extension community leadership programs, the curriculum emphasized multiple leadership types (Boyce, 2006; Terry, 1993) and developed human capital by increasing participants' personal knowledge, self awareness, and personal growth (Day, 2000). Training in the understanding of personality types, team work skills, and techniques for facilitating group decision-making are among the activities intended to cultivate leader development.

To develop social capital and leadership development, a variety of activities were embedded into the program's design to build trust, mutual respect, commitment, and political awareness among the program participants and communities (Day, 2000). Specific examples of activities aimed at strengthening social capital include:

- Informal meetings with elected officials from county, cities, schools and townships to enhance political awareness.
- Panel discussions with community members and civic leaders on relevant local issues to encourage communities to learn from each other (e.g., one community's bike trail spurred BBC alumni to work for a countywide trail).
- Mixers during bus rides that have individuals sit with people from different communities, occupations, generations, etc.
- Sessions conclude with reflection and sharing on how participants will use the networks in their personal or professional work.
- Program alumni plan and lead the activities for next year's class to continue building and reinforcing networks.
- Measuring Bridging Brown County Impacts.

To measure the impacts of BBC, our evaluation was based on the CCF (above) developed by Flora et al. (2004) and applied to evaluation of community leadership programs by Emery and others (Emery & Flora, 2006; Emery, et al., 2007). Six community capitals were originally described by Flora et al. (2004) – cultural, human, social, financial, natural, and political. These six community capitals were insufficient for emphasizing the type of social capital that would establish bridging networks in this study.

Extension's Outcomes and Impacts Framework (Chazdon, et al., 2007) refers to seven community-level domains of impact – social, health, civic, cultural, economic/financial, building and infrastructure, and natural environment. The slightly altered definitions of Emery and Flora's (2006) community capital areas reflect a more specific purpose for identifying the end results of Extension programming. Human capital and behavioral changes at the individual level are considered outcomes and are therefore measured separately from the impact domains. While some questions addressing human capital or leader development were included in our alumni follow-up interview, most of the data addressing changes in human capital were collected in retrospective pre-post surveys at the end of each cohort program.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized data gathered from three sources: pre-post assessment, alumni interviews, and stakeholder interviews. The capacity for understanding and utilizing of Social Capital was measured by the Likert scaled Community Leadership Survey, a 28-item survey based on the work of Pigg (2001). The survey measures the knowledge and attitude change in various aspects of leader development. Data from these surveys were combined for the two most recent cohorts of the BBC program as measures of human capital growth.

Interviews were also used to capture the qualitative responses. Alumni from two years prior (cohorts 2003 and 2006) were interviewed using a random selection process. Five alumni from each cohort with an additional five alternates were recruited. In total, 20 interviews were conducted. The respondents represented nine communities in or near Brown County and two-thirds were female. The interview protocol used a simultaneous mixed methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) to triangulate quantitative and qualitative methods (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 2002). Stakeholders were also interviewed – those who were knowledgeable of the program but had not participated. Engaging community stakeholders in the evaluation allowed us to triangulate data sources (Patton, 2002) to increase the validity of our findings. A snowball (non-random) sampling method was used to identify these individuals. Areas measured include:

- Human capital outcomes were measured first.
- Social capital impacts were measured second.
- Finally, all other community capital impact areas.

First, respondents were asked to quantify the degree to which a given statement is true. To measure economic or financial impacts participants were asked to what degree (on a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = to a great degree) they had become

involved or increased their participation in economic development activities in the county, including agricultural and tourism projects. Then, they were prompted to explain their ratings in narrative form with the use of examples. This mixed approach led to greater accuracy in both qualitative and quantitative responses because the side-by-side comparison effect often led to verbalized reconsideration of quantitative responses. The interplay of a number rating and stories elicited through the mixed methods approach deepened the quality of the narrative while providing numbers for practical evaluation needs in communicating the program's impacts to stakeholders.

### **Findings**

This study documented BBC's ability to develop both human and social capital with a *spiraling* impact on the other community capitals. Results of the retrospective survey indicated significant changes for participants to their leadership skills and attitudes.

Table 1 lists the 10 specific survey items (out of 28 items total) with the largest percentage of improvement from the beginning to the end of the nine-month program. In general, survey items measuring an increased understanding of community context and a more optimistic future orientation had the biggest percentage change while items pertaining to personal growth, more traditionally known as *leader skills* had smaller increases among BBC participants.

Self analysis of leadership was evaluated by *perspective* questions in which participants gauged the change in how they see themselves as leaders. Fifty-five percent of alumni interviewed believed the program changed their perception of themselves as leaders (as indicated by a rating of four or higher on a one to six scale). Fifty percent of alumni interviewed believed the program changed the perceptions others hold about them as leaders (also indicated by a rating of four or higher).

**Table 1. “Leader” knowledge and attitude change (n=31)**

Survey Item	Pct. Improvement (based on scale of 1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree)	Significance level*
I envision exciting new possibility for my community	30.8	p<.001
I understand my community’s structure and dynamics	28.5	p<.001
I am aware of all the needs in my community.	26.7	p<.001
I talk optimistically about the future of my community	26.6	p<.01
I know how to change things in my community.	24.8	p<.001
I endeavor to improve my credibility as a leader.	24.6	p<.01
I strive to improve the quality of life in my community	23.5	p<.01
I feel I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.	22.7	p<.01
I am likely to participate in community meetings.	22.1	p<.01
I seek out different perspectives as a means of generating ideas, resources, etc for my community.	21.3	p<.01

Significance level from paired samples t-test of retrospective post and retrospective pre responses.

General feelings of empowerment and a deepened interest in civic life were reported by participants. Several alumni articulated increased confidence for participating in political or community activities was articulated. One person commented, “We ran a mini election...and I was elected! Learning about county government, being out in front of people...and public speaking...those little activities can help you develop into not being so fearful of being put out there and on the spot.”

### **Impacts in the Domains of Community Capital**

Mean scores for both alumni and community stakeholders for each impact domain are presented in Figure 2. Means are based on the combined scores of participants and stakeholders for all questions related to each impact. Not surprisingly, social capital impacts were rated the highest by both respondent groups, followed by health and civic related community impacts.

**Figure 2. Participant and Community Stakeholder Ratings of Their Contributions to Community-Level Impacts**

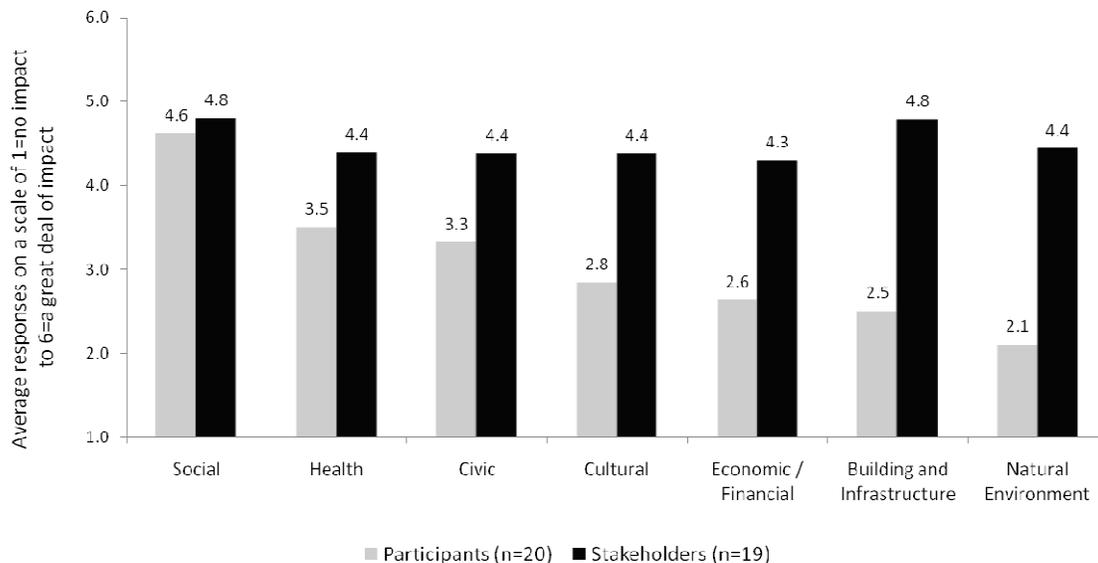


Figure 2 also illustrates a prominent difference between the ratings given by BBC alumni and those of community stakeholders. Stakeholders had higher, more consistent ratings for community-level impacts (4.5 stakeholder average compared to 3.0 participant average). This is not surprising because participants sign up for BBC to increase their county connections and this understanding of the program's objectives focuses participants on social capital impacts. From an outside perspective community stakeholders observed much more program impacts. The difference in ratings was interpreted as partly due to social desirability bias. Alumni often stated a reluctance to take credit for their role in community-level activities, yet community stakeholders were able to use an objective lens in recognizing the program's impact.

The triangulation of data from both participants and community stakeholders confirmed the strong impact of the program on social capital as the strongest capital growth. Because community stakeholders were often less familiar with the details of participants' labors and because of the humility of alumni, it is likely that impacts in other capitals lie somewhere between the scores given by the two groups. Survey responses highlighted the resounding social impact of relationships that have been established across the county. An alum states, "There's certain key people from Bridging Brown County that will help back and

forth. I'll help them, they'll help me. We've maintained those very close relationships."

Analysis of participant and community stakeholder narratives revealed increased community involvement and progress on community projects, including a heart health initiative, an underage substance abuse coalition, and improved Medicare provisions. One participant on a county-wide effort stated, "I was able to network beyond just the [BBC] group that I was in to other people that I might contact. And one of them became the chairperson of a [community] campaign and helped me a lot."

A community stakeholder echoed the belief that these connections resulted in advancing community projects. "[Alumni] saw the real benefit of this program when they needed to get a hold of their county commissioners or needed to connect with people in order to get support for a project, and they actually had those relationships because of Bridging Brown County."

The civic impacts of the program are illustrated by alumni's increased self-efficacy as civic actors. Many participants reported improved political savvy through relational experiences (e.g., meeting political leaders) and confidence built through leader skill development. Their increased political activity was often directly associated with bridging social capital that helped emerging leaders find their place among a wide range of community members. Participants indicated that this diversity of participation – particularly in terms of the level of political prestige of participants – created a non-intimidating atmosphere for new leaders to enter the political scene. Community stakeholders especially noticed the prevalence of BBC alumni in the county's political life. A stakeholder reported, "We have people from across the county on our advisory board...[they] have been willing to participate, I think, based upon some awareness that they've gained through Bridging Brown County, and willingness to participate." Another community stakeholder observed, "I see a lot more [BBC] folks involved in city issues...I think that people who have been through Bridging Brown County are more politically astute."

As a county with a rich cultural heritage it is not surprising that many participants went on to invest energy in community cultural events. BBC alumni took on issues of access for new community members of lower socioeconomic class and minority ethnic groups. In one instance the community impact was greater consideration of low-income and minorities in the process of housing development. In another case of institutional leadership a BBC participant stated, "When I was president [of a local organization], I looked around the table and

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saw white, Anglo-Saxon males...And raised the subject of diversity on our council, and we did change our bylaws to establish two at-large positions.”

The social capital built by BBC also impacted the county’s economic and financial capital. Several alumni reported an attitude shift towards county-wide collaboration that inspired greater interest in combining economic development activities in the county. One example was changing a community United Way to a county-wide organization because of the director’s participation in BBC. Likewise, a participant explained it was BBC that helped launch a first ever county-wide substance abuse organization – a group that has brought money into the community for fighting youth drug use. She commented, “During [BBC], I did get to know some people in other cities...We wouldn’t have had the success we did in the county...I wouldn’t have even known who to talk to. We were able to transform ourselves into a county-wide [organization]...in order to get this very large federal grant...It’s a Drug-Free Communities grant of \$625,000.”

Impacts on the county’s built and natural capitals were also identified. BBC participants reported forming new organizations or joining current efforts to create trails, preserve environmental areas, and historical and cultural buildings. Many community stakeholders remarked on the prevalence of former BBC participants in successful projects. “Folks [that] have been involved in Bridging Brown County are on the Historical Society, the Foundation Board, the trail project, the aqua center, the lake improvement board. [I]t increases the awareness of the existence of structures, historic sites, and parks, and raised it to a county level.”

## **Conclusions and Implications**

The results of this impact study of BBC have shown a clear link between the development of human and social capital within a leadership program. Van De Valk (2008) questioned whether participation in a leadership development program leads to enhanced social capital. It is evident that BBC created networks, norms, and trust that facilitated coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993) throughout the county. The interviews with BBC participants and community stakeholders revealed strong impacts in communities with roots in the bridging networks and human capital skills developed during the program’s year-long activities.

Another implication is the ability to measure the success of leadership development programs in the context of social capital. Based on our study, we found the interview protocol organized around CCF provided a useful evaluation

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method. It teased out powerful narratives of how networks were built during and beyond the program. The analogous stories provided by participants and stakeholders substantiated the relationship between human capital, social capital, and investment by participants in other community assets. We agree with scholars who caution on the difficulty of evaluating leadership development (Van De Valk, 2008) and acknowledge that much more needs to be done in evaluation research of social capital. Practitioners looking for causal substantiation that their programs enhanced community change efforts should consider using the CCF Framework.

Organizations wishing to instigate the *spiraling-up* of community development should consider both leader and leadership development in designing community leadership programs. The joint influence of human capital and social capital in triggering investment in community assets adds greater understanding to the *spiraling-up* process described by Emery and Flora (2006). Our study illustrated that this relationship for *spiraling-up* is key in community development.

However, the study by Emery and Flora (2006) falls short by not distinguishing the type of social capital needed for sustained, positive efforts. We found the need to emphasize bridging capital as being of particular importance. The stories of new community members gaining a place in their community's political scene through BBC indicate that the program successfully counteracted the close bonding between established powerful community members that can reinforce political domination by elites. Instead, the links of bridging social capital among community members with a variety of political statures encouraged an open political environment where newcomers feel valued for their perspectives and personal assets. This openness enabled BBC alumni to take leadership roles in community development across all capitals thereby furthering the *spiraling-up* process.

Recent trends in communities and the need for collaborative partnerships will likely increase the demand for programs like BBC. The potential for these programs to be a mechanism for community change is high. As the demand increases, so does the need for additional research and information on the relationship of social capital to leadership development, especially bridging networks. Community leadership educators need the knowledge and tools for developing effective programs based on explicit leadership theories and results.

## **Appendix: Alumni Interview Protocol**

Italicized items used to report leader development outcomes or community-level impacts

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, what community do you live in, and what do you do?
2. What were your expectations for participating in the Bridging Brown County program and how did you see yourself using this training?
3. Why did you choose to be part of the program? Was there a specific event or situation that motivated you to participate in Bridging Brown County?
4. Can you tell me about an activity or part of the program that best helped you to develop as a leader?
5. *Leader development.* To what degree did your experience in the program change how you see yourself as a leader? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
6. *Leader development.* To what degree do you feel that others in your community or organization think of you more as a leader after completing the program than they did before you entered the program? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
7. Before participating in the program, what organizations – including work organizations – were you involved with and what types of roles and responsibilities did you have?
8. Since the program, have you taken any new informal or formal leadership positions within your community or within your work organization? Had you not participated in the program, would you have taken on these new roles?
9. *Social impacts.* To what degree did your experience in the program help to expand or deepen your personal, social or professional connections within your local community and the county as a whole? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
10. *Social impacts.* To what degree did the program strengthen networks among organizations in your local community and in the county as a whole? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
11. Since the program, have you shared the knowledge and learning gained from your experience with others (this could be formal sharing such as making presentations, or informal sharing such as discussions or conversations with family, friends and coworkers)?
12. *Civic impacts.* Since the program, to what degree are you more comfortable voicing your opinion to political or public leaders? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.

13. *Civic impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you increased your participation in organizational or community decision-making? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  14. Did your participation in the program impact consideration in running for public office?
  15. *Economic/financial impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved or been more successful with fundraising efforts or grant-writing projects for the benefit of your community or organization? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  16. *Economic/financial impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved or increased your participation in economic development activities in the county, including agricultural and tourism projects? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating and give examples.
  17. *Building and infrastructure impacts.* This question is regarding building and infrastructure projects that benefit the public, such as historic preservation, community beautification projects, park and recreation projects or infrastructure development. Since completing the program, to what degree have you become involved or increased your participation in projects that focus on enhancing or preserving this “built environment”? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  18. *Natural resource impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved or increased your participation in conservation efforts aimed at protecting natural resources? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  19. *Cultural impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved or increased your participation in community cultural events such as celebrations, museum exhibits, festivals or county fairs? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  20. *Cultural impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved in or increased efforts to promote diversity in your community or organization (e.g., people of different ages, different cultural backgrounds, different economic backgrounds, etc.)? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  21. *Health impacts.* Since the program, to what degree have you become involved in or increased efforts to promote the physical and mental well-being of youth or adults in your community or organization? (Use a scale of 1 = not at all to 6 = a great deal.) Please explain your rating.
  22. Are there any other impacts of Bridging Brown County that have not been mentioned, that you would like to add?
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23. Could you suggest the names of 3-5 community stakeholders (in other words, community members, who are not Network Brown County alumni) who are familiar with the Bridging Brown County program and its alumni, and may be willing to complete an online survey regarding impacts of the program on the community?

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## **Biographies**

**Catherine Rasmussen** is an Associate Extension Professor in Leadership and Civic Engagement with the University of Minnesota. She develops and presents leadership programs for elected officials, state and federal agencies, and community groups across the state. In her work with Extension's Center for Community Vitality she has created "bridging" leadership program initiatives in three Minnesota counties. Her current research interests include strategic leadership development strategies to enhance emotional intelligence.

**Jessica Armstrong** is a graduate student at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota. She was a graduate research assistant for the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality where she worked on a long term impact study of the Bridging Brown County program.

**Scott Chazdon** is an evaluation and research coordinator for the Center for Community Vitality, University of Minnesota Extension. He develops and strengthens performance management, evaluation, and applied research for Community Vitality programs. He has demonstrated experience in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, participatory evaluation strategies, and in conducting evaluation and research with diverse cultures. Trained as a sociologist, Dr. Chazdon has developed a particular interest in using the community capitals framework to measure the community-level impacts of Extension programs such as leadership development.