Old Concept, New Generation:
Millennials and Community Leadership Programs

Aimee Fritsch
Graduate Research Assistant
Extension Center for Community Vitality
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN
Frits042@umn.edu

Catherine M. Rasmussen
Associate Extension Professor
Extension Center for Community Vitality
University of Minnesota
Mankato, MN
rasmu035@umn.edu

Scott A. Chazdon
Evaluation and Research Coordinator
Extension Center for Community Vitality
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN
schazdon@umn.edu

Abstract

Current research on millennials primarily focuses on their behavior within an academic or workplace setting. This study expands on previous analysis by exploring how millennials respond to community leadership efforts, particularly cohort leadership programs. Participant outcomes from University of Minnesota Extension's County Bridging Leadership Program revealed that millennials—particularly those without a four-year degree—experienced significantly higher gains in several skill areas relevant to community development than non-millennials. Recruiting more millennials to participate in community leadership programs is critical not only to keep younger people in rural communities but also to strengthen future community vitality.

Introduction

In recent years, social and political discourse has increasingly focused on millennials and the impact of this generation on the nation's workforce and economy. Current research on the millennial generation has largely focused on workforce interactions, and little is known about how millennials engage in community life or respond to community leadership efforts. While a growing body of research highlights the benefits of community leadership development for both program participants and the community as a whole, (Rasmussen, Armstrong & Chazdon, 2011; Apaliyah, Martin, Gasteyer, Keating, & Pigg, 2012; Pigg, Gasteyer, Martin, Apaliyah, &

Keating, 2015) substantive information about different generational impacts is not available. In this study, we seek to fill this knowledge gap by using data from University of Minnesota Extension's county bridging leadership programs to test hypotheses about differences in the millennial generation's program outcomes.

Our research begins with a literature review of the millennial generation and how their interactions compare with those of other generations. We then provide the history and design of county bridging leadership programs, the measures used to assess participant outcomes, and several hypotheses about outcome differences among millennials and non-millennials. We conclude with findings and recommendations for communities that want to better retain and engage millennials within their organizations, as well as provide strategies for educators and practitioners who design and facilitate community leadership programs.

Literature Review

Millennials have been caricatured in the media as a generation of highly entitled individuals accustomed to "participation trophies" simply for showing up. Born between 1980 and 2004, this generation gained their name as its oldest members came of age at the beginning of the new millennium. They are the largest generation since the baby boomers, with an estimated 50 million members (Pew, 2010). Popular discourse and observation of other generations suggests millennials share individual traits and cohort features that inform how they experience and interact with the world. The following literature review will highlight some of these unique characteristics and explore how they might influence millennials as leaders and participants in county bridging leadership programs.

One of the most common traits mentioned in both public discussion and academic research is the self-confidence of millennials. Whether or not this is attributed to the trend of receiving participation trophies as children, it is well documented that millennials objectively display higher levels of self-esteem than previous generations. As Myers and Sadaghiani report in their 2012 article "Millennials in the Workplace," research shows millennials are "unusually and extraordinarily confident of their abilities" (p. 228). Not only is their self-esteem high, it is higher than that of previous generations in their youth. Twenge and Campbell (2008) found millennial men and women in college had higher self-esteem than members of Generation X or the baby boomers.

Along with increased self-confidence, millennials also exhibited a high degree of both pressure and desire to be high achievers (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2012). Literature from various fields, including higher education and human resources, notes this ambition and how it displays itself in different contexts. For instance, millennials entered secondary education with all-time high test scores and qualifications as compared to previous generations (Howe & Strauss, 2003)—a product of the expectations and socialization provided by parents who expect high academic achievement in college. These expectations drive millennials to pursue advanced levels of education at higher rates than previous generations. Gallup reports indicate millennials are on track to meet these high achievement expectations by becoming the most educated generation yet, with 21 percent of the generation older than 21 attaining a four-year degree by 2016. Millennials were also more likely to continue their education beyond a bachelor's degree. The

Pew Research Center (2010) reported that more than half of millennials currently pursuing secondary education plan to complete a graduate or professional degree. This ambition and expectation of achievement is demonstrated in the workplace as well. Employers reported unrealistic expectations by millennials regarding the role they want to play in the organization (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Coworkers of millennials also noted their impatience for recognition at work and their overall dismissal of a valuation system based on time in a position (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2012). These findings suggest a generational desire to achieve status, recognition, and make a difference.

Workplace tensions also reflected another distinctly millennial trait—the desire for open, frequent communication with peers and superiors (Balda & Mora, 2010). Previous generations also shared this desire, but research and popular media explore the differences among age groups. Myers and Sadaghiani found that "Millennials expect communication with supervisors to be more frequent, more positive, and more affirming than has been the case with employees of prior generations" (2012, p. 229). They also discovered this desire is one of the most important workplace factors for millennials. More than location or position, meaningful relationships with peers and supervisors matter most to millennials.

Despite a desire for sincere workplace relationships, millennials also demonstrated a lack of attachment. Gallup recently reported that a shared trait among millennials is a lack of personal and professional attachments, noting "They do not feel close to their jobs or the brands to which they give their money" (Gallup, 2016, p. 08). Engagement with coworkers and managers, however, makes a difference, as "47 percent of actively disengaged millennials strongly agree that they will switch jobs if the job market improves in the next 12 months, compared with 17 percent of engaged millennials" (Gallup, 2016, p. 20). Knowing this information, organizations can take steps to retain millennial employees.

Current research helps provide context for understanding common traits among the millennial generation. Most of the research, however, is either academic or workplace-related, which provides an opportunity to study how millennials respond to community leadership programs, such as University of Minnesota Extension's county bridging leadership programs. In this article, we seek to bridge the gap between the present research on millennials and their experience participating in community cohort leadership programs.

Background on County Bridging Leadership Programs

The county bridging leadership program model began in 2002 when University of Minnesota Extension partnered with Brown County to address a divide between the county's eastern and western communities. (Rasmussen, Armstrong & Chazdon, 2011). County officials knew they needed to invest in leadership development to successfully respond to current social, political, and economic situations. Research shows communities intentional about strengthening local leadership experience more effective local governance and dynamic local economies (Heartland, 2002).

Extension convened a small group of individuals from Brown County to design and lead the program. Its purpose was to bring residents of diverse backgrounds together to establish a

common commitment to the county's future vitality and to focus on engaging new and young residents. The program created a network of people from both public and private entities to lead initiatives addressing local issues. Participants gain the knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully be catalysts for change in their communities.

Since the development of Brown County's first leadership program, Extension has been invited to replicate it in several other Minnesota counties. Currently, McLeod, Nicollet, Kandiyohi, Sibley, and Redwood counties have developed similar county bridging leadership programs (Krause, 2017).

Program Design

The program operates as a cohort model, with 20-25 participants meeting once a month for nine months. Each session is held in a different community throughout the county. This allows participants to learn about community assets and network with local community leaders. The morning session is spent in a classroom setting with leadership seminars taught by Extension leadership and civic engagement educators. The seminars help build skills in 10 core competency areas: motivating others, group dynamics, mapping the environment, utilizing processes, decision making, critical thinking, valuing diversity, effective communication, ethical principles, and visioning. The afternoon session includes site visits led by local community members. The site visits allow participants to build their knowledge of county assets and resources, as well as apply the morning's leadership training.

A local steering committee representing key county stakeholders ensures the program's sustainability. Alumni of the county bridging leadership program also continue to engage with the program, both formally by planning and leading the following year's program and informally through social media and working together on community projects. Alumni are often the some of the program's best recruiters, and local employers now often send new hires to participate in the program. This opportunity allows new employees to learn more about the county and to develop useful workplace leadership skills.

Bridging Generations

The county bridging leadership program helps community members better understand themselves and where they live, where they would like their community to be like, and how to get there. It intentionally builds both *human capital* (the skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals), and *social capital* (the collective power of relationships, connections and networks). Building these two types of capital, however, is sometimes challenging in rural communities with long-standing residents, insider groups controlling decisions, and strong local heritage and pride. When young, new residents move to these communities, they often struggle to fit in and feel a sense of belonging. This means communities must be intentional about building *intergenerational social capital.* County bridging leadership programs address this challenge by engaging both long-term and new residents from diverse backgrounds. The program provides participants with the needed skills and resources to address individual, organizational, and community issues.

To engage both younger and older program participants, and to build intergenerational social capital, several key components are part of the program's design.

a. Selection of cohort participants. Program participants are selected based on geographic diversity within the county and demographic diversity, such as ethnicity, gender, and age. Ensuring a mix of diverse participants leads to a more successful cohort experience. It also inspires participants, as one millennial noted:

> "I thought I was open-minded when I started this class and quickly learned that I wasn't as open-minded as I thought. This was a good class for me to take to learn about different perspectives from others and how you can work together with this perspective to achieve the goal."

Another criterion for selecting participants is diversity in occupation, including both private and public sector experience within the community. The long-term impact of the cohort results from intentional diversity among program participants.

Figure 1 shows individuals under the age of 30 comprised a relatively small percentage of participants. In recent years, however, these percentages have increased. While changing demographics in rural communities and more people retiring may explain part of this change, another factor may be millennials' increased interest in leadership and professional development programs. Recruitment efforts focusing on social media outreach and online registration options successfully attract younger applicants. Additionally, businesses and nonprofits that struggle to retain quality, young workers often encourage new employees to participate in the leadership programs.
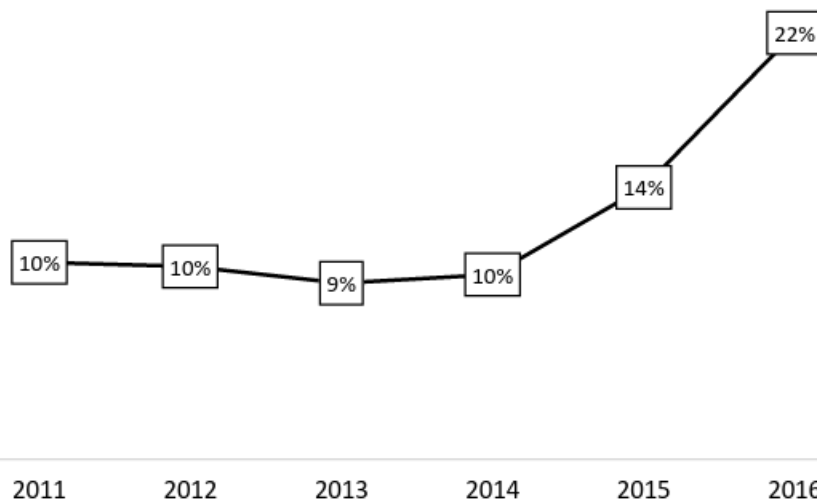

Figure 1
Percent of cohort participants under age 30, by cohort year

b. Learning methodologies. Monthly sessions help deepen participants' learning experience through interactive workshops, small group discussions, team building activities, interaction with local leaders, and site visits—each component with a focus on building both human and social capital.

c. Broad level of knowledge and range of skills. The leadership development component involves several skills that apply to both younger and older generations. These skills include facilitation, leading effective meetings, decision-making, problem solving, managing conflict, ethical leadership, critical thinking, visioning, building teams, and developing cultural competency.

d. Generational differences workshop. Early in the program, participants attend a session about generational similarities and differences both in the workplace and in communities. They learn about current research detailing who these generations are and how they may differ (or be similar) in their values and workplace views. Participants discover how successful organizations have been able to tap into and leverage the strengths of their intergenerational workforce.

e. Ice breakers and mixers. Sessions begin with activities that provide opportunities to learn about each other, build relationships, and create a team environment. They encourage both listening and sharing, meeting and networking with new people, and exploring ways to inspire creativity. Examples of icebreaker questions that help build understanding between younger and older generations include asking about a favorite childhood game, a family tradition during the holidays, or an important lesson learned from parents. Mixers also occur during bus rides and encourage participants to discuss a topic with someone of a different age, community, or occupation.

f. Reflection and application. Participants learn the value of taking time to reflect and have the opportunity to practice this skill at the close of each session. Reflection encourages cohort members to sort through observations and experiences, consider multiple perspectives and interpretations, and create meaning. The most useful reflection involves the conscious consideration, and analysis of, diverse beliefs and actions to gain knowledge. One participant noted, "I have learned to take a step back and listen to others' opinions—keeping in mind that their actions/thoughts are typically based on their values, morals, and past experiences." This "meaning making" is crucial for both younger and older participants' ongoing growth and development. Establishing meaning results in learning, which can then inform a participant's future mindset and actions in the community.

g. Shared ownership. The program's design intentionally focuses on shared ownership—by both younger and older generations—of future cohort programs. Alumni continually engage with each other and their new networks through the planning and leading of next year's cohort. Alumni are also invited to serve on the leadership team that oversees the program in their county. Involving alumni of all ages ensures the ideas of both younger and older generations are considered during program planning and when identifying leadership topics and site visits.

Research Design

To examine generational differences in program outcomes, the research team used pre-existing evaluation data from county bridging leadership programs during a six-year period in three counties—McLeod, Brown, and Nicollet. The data set included 340 valid participant surveys from 18 cohorts. The Extension Center for Community Vitality has developed many evaluation tools for its leadership development programs, including post-workshop surveys to measure knowledge gain, pre- and post-cohort surveys to measure skill changes, and Ripple Effects Mapping (Chazdon, Emery, Hansen, Higgins & Sero, 2017; Kollock, Flage, Chazdon, Paine, & Higgins, 2012) to measure long-term condition change. Results from post-cohort surveys included two types of outcome data relevant to our analysis— leadership skills data and social capital data. These measures were derived from earlier research on community leadership development (Pigg, 1999; Day, 2000; Emery & Flora, 2006; Rasmussen, Armstrong, & Chazdon, 2011; Apaliyah et al., 2012).

Leadership skills data. Based on research by Pigg (2001), a retrospective pre- and post-survey method measured participants' self-reported changes in five categories of community leadership skills: civic engagement, self-efficacy, self-awareness, cross-community knowledge, and shared vision for the future (see Table 1 for a list of survey items). As noted by Hill and Betz (2005), a retrospective pre-post survey method works well when measuring subjective experiences of program-related change. The retrospective pre-post survey method has received criticism for overestimating program effects, but this bias is less severe than the one associated with actual pre- and post-surveys, in which participants have little understanding of the skills being surveyed (they don't know what they don't know) and greatly overestimate their knowledge during the pre-survey.

Table 1

Bridging Community Leadership survey skill categories and items

Skill Category	Survey Items (Likert-scale)
Civic engagement	I seek out different perspectives as a means of generating ideas or resources. I am tolerant of political differences among people when I'm working on a public issue. I understand how to work with diverse interests or interest groups in my community to get things done. I understand the importance of how an issue is framed or presented to the public. I understand the importance of public participation in community decision making.
Self-efficacy	I believe I can make a difference in my community. I believe I have knowledge of the issues that face my community. I believe I have self-worth in my community. I am comfortable with accepting other perspectives in order to gain a well-rounded approach. I know how to leverage resources in my community in order to accomplish necessary tasks.
Self-awareness	When I am under pressure, I can prioritize tasks in order to successfully deal with the most urgent situation confidently. I understand my strengths and weaknesses. I understand how my personality type affects my decision making. I can predict needed strengths and skills to solve a problem. I understand how my history shapes my perception.
Cross-community knowledge	I am aware of the needs of communities across the county. I am aware of the resources of communities across the county. I am aware of the history of communities across the county. I understand the political structure and dynamics of communities across the county. I am aware of cultural differences within communities across the county.
Shared vision for the future	I talk optimistically about the future of my community. I envision exciting new possibilities for my community. I can articulate our community's vision for the future. I am able to lead an action planning group process. I am able to unite people around our community's vision for the future.

Social capital data. Literature on social capital highlights three distinct types of social networks that each play a crucial role in community development: bonding, bridging, and linking networks (Chazdon, Allen, Horntvedt, & Scheffert, 2013). While bonding networks refer to

strong connections among individuals and groups with similar backgrounds, bridging networks refer to weaker connections among individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds. It is critical for community leadership programs to emphasize the importance of bridging social capital. Building bridging networks helped minimize the prevalence of "old boy" networks that exclude new or non-traditional leaders (Rasmussen, Armstrong, & Chazdon, 2011; Apaliyah et al., 2012; Zacharakis & Flora, 2005). Emphasizing the significance of bridging networks was a core objective of county bridging leadership programs.

Social networks are vertical connections between people and elected officials or government institutions. According to Szreter and Woolcock (2002), linking networks are defined as "networks and institutionalized relationships among unequal agents" (Szreter, 2002, p. 579). While bridging networks connect individuals who are not alike—yet more or less equal in terms of status or power—linking networks are based on explicit vertical power differentials. These types of connection help residents access resources and influence change within organizations and systems.

Extension's evaluation survey measured two types of social network activity— bridging and linking (Table 2). Since the survey questions pertained to actual behaviors, actual pre- and post-surveys collected the data. Participants rated the frequency of each behavior during the past year, selecting "not at all," "about once per year," "about quarterly," "about monthly," or "weekly or more often."

Table 2
Social network activity survey items

| Network type	Survey items
Bridging network activity	I worked or collaborated with people in other communities in the county. I worked or collaborated with people outside the county. I attended a community event or activity in another community in my county (other than the one in which I live in). I patronized a business in another community in my county (other than the one in which I live).
Linking network activity	I attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of school or town affairs. I attended a political meeting or rally. I joined together with others in my community to address an issue. I tried to get my local government to pay attention to something that concerned me. I organized a community effort (like collection of food for a food shelf, fundraiser for someone in need).

Hypotheses

Current literature on millennials, Pigg's research on evaluation data, and overall program design informed our hypotheses. We expected to see the following trends in leadership skills emerge from pre- and post-program surveys.

1. *Millennials will exhibit lower levels of change in self-efficacy and self-awareness than non-millennials.* As research suggests, millennials tend to possess elevated levels of confidence and personal expectations. We anticipated these perceptions would lead to less change during the course of the leadership program.

2. *Millennials will display higher levels of change than non-millennials in civic engagement, cross-community knowledge, and shared vision for the future.* Building these skill sets was a crucial part of creating the county bridging program. Current literature, however, does not address how they relate to millennials. Therefore, we hypothesized millennials would experience more positive program impacts in these areas than non-millennials because of their youth and relative lack of community leadership.

3. *Millennials will experience stronger gains than non-millennials in the two categories of social network activity.* Current literature suggests millennials respond well to ample interaction and feedback, even as younger members of an organization. As a result, they are more likely to benefit from interactions with other leaders and generations throughout the program.

Results

Self-reported leadership skill changes. To simplify the analysis, we created a skill increase variable for each of the five categories of leadership skills by subtracting each participant's retrospective pre-score from their post score. We then calculated the percent change by dividing the increase by the retrospective pre-score.

The data initially showed millennials had significantly greater improvement in outcomes across three of the five skill areas measured by the retrospective pre-post survey. As seen in Figure 2, millennial participants had significantly higher increases than non-millennials in self efficacy, cross-community knowledge, and shared vision for the future. This finding is contrary to our first hypothesis in which we thought millennials would exhibit lower levels of change in self-awareness and self-efficacy. It does, however, support our second hypothesis regarding millennials' greater growth in the other three categories. As one millennial noted, one of the most important aspects of the program was "Gaining a better understanding of my surrounding communities—its history, resources, politics, events. The training in general helped fill some of the voids in my collective self through networking and leadership training."
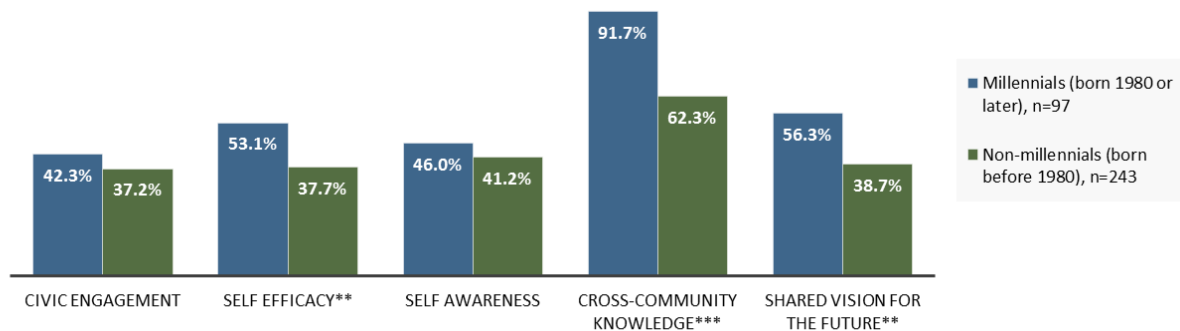
*p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 2
Percent increase in self-reported leadership skills, by generation

Education was also a critical factor in skill change outcomes. A multivariate regression analysis of the percent increase in leadership skills was conducted, with dummy variables created for education (0=less than a four-year college degree, 1=a four-year college degree or beyond) and generation (0=non-millennial, 1=millennial). Regression results indicated generation and educational attainment combined were significant predictors of skill change in all skill categories, except self-awareness. Regression analysis findings are shown in Table 3. Interestingly, educational attainment had a stronger impact than generation on the civic engagement skill category, while generation had a stronger impact than educational attainment on cross-community knowledge.

Table 3
 Regression model results

Skill category	R squared (Percent of variance explained by the model)	Significance level of the model	Significance level – Educational attainment	Significance level – Generation
Civic engagement	.047 (4.7%)	.000***	.000***	.064
Self-efficacy	.061 (6.1%)	.000***	.002**	.000***
Self-awareness	.017 (1.7%)	.056	.027*	.185
Cross-community knowledge	.060 (6.0%)	.000***	.013*	.000***
Shared vision for the future	.063 (6.3%)	.000***	.002**	.000***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Figure 3 shows participants grouped based on both generation and educational attainment. Millennials without a four-year college degree had much higher levels of skill change in civic engagement, self-efficacy, cross-community knowledge, and shared vision for the future. This pattern of change, however, was different for each skill type. For civic engagement skills, millennials without a four-year degree experienced the largest increase in competency, followed by non-millennials without a four-year degree. For cross-community knowledge, millennials without a four-year college degree had the largest increase, followed by millennials with a degree. During the final survey, one millennial without a four-year degree noted:

> "I have never been one to consider my impact on my own community. I would have much rather blended in, been unnoticed. However, since this program, I am becoming more involved. I am joining the Rotary program in my community this summer and, while I am still not sure I will ever be a community 'leader', I do know that I will be more involved and participate in the ways that I can."

Other participants also emphasized the importance of using the skills and confidence they gained in the program to positively impact their communities. One millennial said:

> "I am a coach for St. Peter High School, and I have learned brainstorming and meetings skills from the program and applied them to my coaching style. I have become more confident in my skills and have improved knowledge on understanding of peoples' differences."
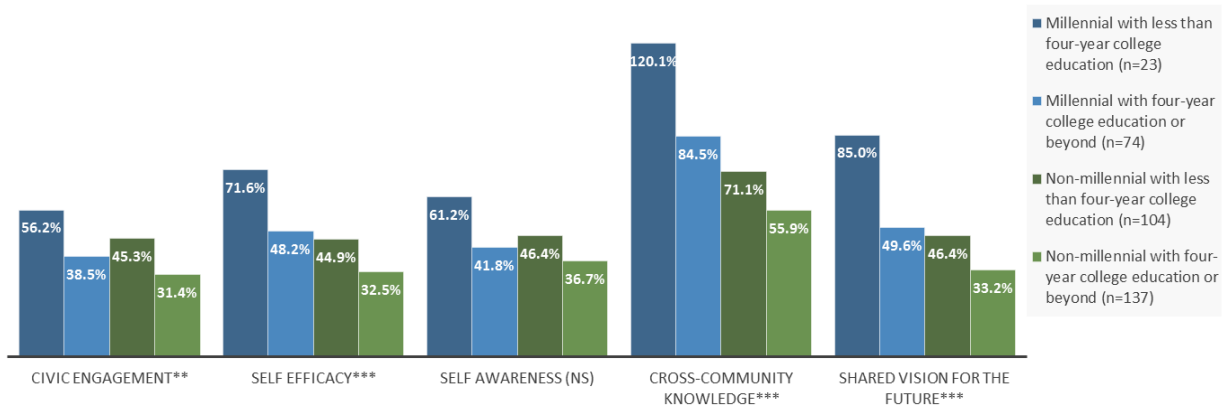

Figure 3
Percent increase in self-reported leadership skills, by generation and educational attainment

While the program most impacted millennials without a four-year degree, it is important to emphasize millennials tend to have higher educational attainment than previous generations, as noted in the literature review. In our study, more than three-fourths of (76.3%) of millennial survey respondents reported having a four-year college degree or higher, while 57.2% of non-millennials reported having a college degree.

Social network activity changes. Unlike the data on leadership skills, data for the two social capital scales were only available for six of the 18 program cohorts, those held in 2015 and 2016. This resulted in a smaller dataset, making it more difficult to attain statistically significant

results. Of all participants in these six cohorts, there was an increase of 24.4% in bridging network activities and an increase of 53.7% in linking activities. Results of the comparison between retrospective pre- and post-data are displayed in Figure 4. Millennials with a four-year degree made more significant gains than any other group, but millennials without a four-year degree did not. While this finding suggests a pattern of greater increase among millennials with a college education, a regression analysis similar to the one conducted on skill increases found the results were not significant. This may be, in part, because of the smaller amount of data available. However, while not statistically significant, it is worth noting the increase in linking social capital was a common theme that emerged in participants' open-ended comments. One millennial with less than a four-year college education noted, "There was so much knowledge gained by speaking with people who are so similar and so different than me." This sentiment was echoed by many peers.
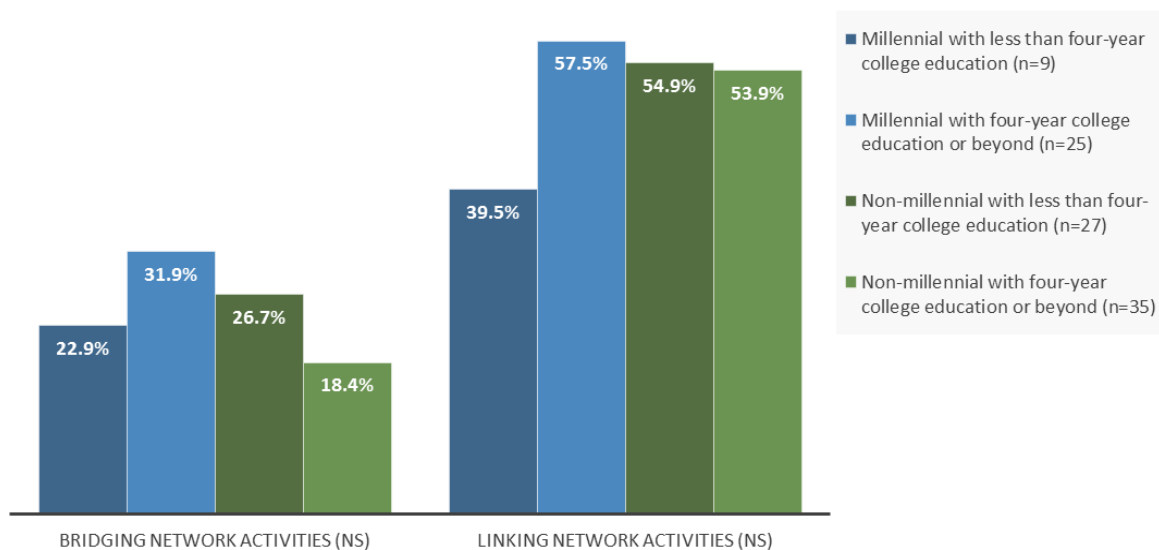

Figure 4
Percent increase in bridging and linking network activities, by generation and educational attainment

Conclusions/Lessons Learned

Our analysis of evaluation data, based on generational differences, yielded partial support for our three hypotheses and highlighted the importance of education as an explanatory variable among generational differences. Our first hypothesis stated that *millennials would exhibit lower levels of change in self-efficacy and self-awareness than non-millennials*. This hypothesis was supported for self-awareness but not for self-efficacy. Millennials, especially those without four-year college educations, had significantly greater changes in self-efficacy.

Our second hypothesis stated *millennials will have higher levels of change than non-millennials in civic engagement, cross-community knowledge, and shared vision for the future*. This hypothesis was supported for cross-community knowledge and shared vision for the future.

For civic engagement, however, educational attainment was a more accurate predictor of differences between millennials and non-millennials.

Our third hypothesis was that *millennials will experience more significant gains than non-millennials in the two categories of social network activity.* This hypothesis was not supported by findings, perhaps because of less data available for the analysis. Another reason may be participants reported actual behavior before and after the program. While significant differences did not exist between millennials and non-millennials for these measures, millennials did show a pattern of increased bridging network activity. For linking network activities, an interesting pattern of large increases emerged among college-educated millennials and non-millennials, but a smaller increase among millennials with less than a four-year college degree. As previously mentioned, however, these differences were not statistically significant.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Beyond individual personal development, millennials' participation in a community leadership program impacts the wider networks to which they belong. Their involvement increases intergenerational social capital during a time of changing demographics within communities and organizations (Day, Hays, & Smith, 2016). As more millennials continue to cultivate community leadership skills and enter the workforce, having already established intergenerational social capital eases knowledge transfer and culture change.

As these generational and demographic shifts occur, communities and businesses still struggle to retain young employees (Fry, 2017). Knowing this, how do you keep these young, qualified employees from leaving? Our research suggests a solution to this problem is to develop a bridging leadership program. This strategy is worth the investment, because it fits millennials' needs. As research shows, this generation desires the following:

- Opportunities to achieve and learn
- Frequent communication with peers and supervisors
- Meaningful relationships with others

The design of community bridging leadership programs intentionally focuses on these desires. While they weren't specifically designed for millennials, our research and participant feedback indicate the outcomes millennials experience from the program reflect a strong value add. When considering human capital and community bridging leadership programs, it is important to note millennials without a four-year degree experienced the most significant skill outcomes. This group is often referred to as "the stayers" in rural economic research. (Carr & Kefalas, 2009). These are likely individuals who may have lacked access to certain leadership opportunities, or who weren't able to take advantage of them. This program helps develop them as leaders and empowers them to make a difference in their community, which by nature also includes their workplace. Rather than create a new tool or strategy to recruit and retain millennials, communities are encouraged to use the model described in this study. Aside from providing benefits to millennials and their workplaces, previous evaluation shows a county bridging leadership program also has a direct connection to community vitality and success, making it a multi-level benefit to rural communities (Rasmussen, Armstrong, & Chazdon, 2011).

While bridging county leadership programs offer benefits to both participants and their respective communities, they also offer opportunities for millennials to suggest curriculum and design changes. Feedback from recent participants has resulted in increased classroom time and leadership trainings. The curriculum is also more rigorous and includes more practical applications and social media networking opportunities to increase participants' access to additional leadership tools and resources.

Finally, it is worth noting the strongest leadership skills millennials gained during the bridging community leadership program were not related to self-awareness. As more millennials participate in the program in the future, it may be important to adjust the curriculum to focus less on self-awareness. As research suggests millennials already possess high levels of this skill it could be worthwhile to, increase the program's emphasis on social and community-level skills.

References

Apaliyah, G. T., Martin, K. E., Gasteyer, S. P., Keating, K., & Pigg, K. (2012). Community leadership development education: promoting civic engagement through human and social capital. *Community Development, 43*(1), 31-48.

Balda, J. & Mora. F. (2016). Adapting leadership theory & practice of the networked millennial generation. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 5*(3), 13-24.

Carr, P. J., & Kefalas, M. J. (2009). *Hollowing out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and what it means for America*. Beacon Press.

Chazdon, S., Allen, R., Horntvedt, J., & Scheffert, D.R. (2013). Developing and validating University of Minnesota Extension's social capital model and survey. University of Minnesota Extension. Retrieved from http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/research/reports/docs/Validating-Social-Capital-Report.pdf

Chazdon, S., Emery, M., Hansen, D., Higgins, L. & Sero, R. (2017). *A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping*. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, http://hdl.handle.net/11299/190639.

Day, D. V. (2001). Leadership development: A review in context. *Leadership Quarterly, 11*(4), 581-613.

Day, J. C., Hays, D., Smith, A. (2016). A Glance at the Age Structure and Labor Force Participation in Rural America. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/12/a_glance_at_the_age.html

Emery, M., & Flora, C. B. (2006). Spiraling-up: Mapping community transformation with community capitals framework. *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society 37*(1), 19- 35.

Fry, R. (2017). Millennials Aren't Job Hopping Any Faster than Generation X Did. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/19/millennials-arent-job-hopping-any-faster-than-generation-x-did/

Gallup, Inc. (2016). *How Millennials Want to Work and Live.* Retrieved from http://news.gallup.com/reports/189830/e.aspx?utm_source=gbj&utm_medium=copy&utm_campaign=20160511-gbj

Heartland Center for Leadership Development. (2002). *Clues to Rural Community Survival.* Retrieved from http://zippy-iron.flywheelsites.com/what-we-do/clues-to-rural-community-survival/

Hill, L. G., & Betz, D. L. (2005). Revisiting the retrospective pretest. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *26*(4), 501-517.

Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2003). Millennials go to college. *American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices.*

Kollock, D.H., Flage, L., Chazdon, S., Paine, N., & Higgins, L. (2012). Ripple effect mapping: A "radiant" way to capture program impacts. *Journal of Extension, 50*(5). Retrieved from https://www.joe.org/joe/2012october/tt6.php

Krause, T. (2017). "LINC Redwood County focused on closing the leadership gap." *Redwood Falls Gazette.* Retrieved from http://www.redwoodfallsgazette.com/news/20170418/linc-redwood-county-focused-on-closing-leadership-gap

Myers, K. & Sadaghiani, K. (2012). Millennials in the workplace. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies, 2*(2), 225-238. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7

Pew Research Group. (2010). Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://assets.pewresearch.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/3/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf

Pigg, K. (1999). Community leadership and community theory: A practical synthesis. *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society, 30*(2), 196-212.

Pigg, K. (2001). *Excel: Experience in community enterprise and leadership*. University of Missouri, Columbia, MO: University Extension and Outreach.

Pigg, K., Gasteyer, S., Martin, K., Apaliyah, G., & Keating, K. (2015). *Community effects of leadership development education: Citizen empowerment for civic engagement*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press.

Rasmussen, C., Armstrong, J., & Chazdon, S. (2011). Bridging Brown County: Captivating social capital as a means to community change. *Journal of Leadership Education*, *10*(1), 63-82. Retrieved from https://www.leadershipeducators.org/Resources/Documents/jole/2011_winter/Rasmussen_Armstrong_Chazdon_2011.pdf

Szreter, S. (2002). The state of social capital: Bringing back in power, politics, and history. *Theory and Society, 31*(5), 573-621.

Szreter, S. & Woolcock, M. (2004). Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health. *International Journal of Epidemiology, 33,* 650-667.

Twenge, J. & Campbell, S. (2008). Generational differences in psychological traits and their impact on the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *23*(8), 862 - 877. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02683940810904367

Zacharakis, J. & Flora, J. (2005). Riverside: A case study of social capital and cultural reproduction and their relationship to leadership development. *Adult Education Quarterly, 55*(4), 288-307.

Author Biographies

Aimee Fritsch is a graduate student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, in the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program. She was a graduate research assistant for the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality where she worked on an analysis of the Bridging Community Leadership Programs.

Catherine Rasmussen is an Extension Professor in Leadership and Civic Engagement for the Center for Community Vitality at University of Minnesota Extension. Rasmussen is the primary designer of "bridging" leadership program initiatives for Minnesota counties. Her work focuses on building leadership capacity and enhancing collaboration skills of local organizations, elected officials, and communities to collectively address public issues.

Scott Chazdon is an Evaluation and Research Specialist for the Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota Extension. In this role, he has developed tools for measuring community social capital and community readiness, and has developed a range of methods for measuring outcomes and impacts of the Center's community development programming. Chazdon earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Denver and a M.A. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Florida.