

SO WHAT? THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL CREATED
BY THE FORD INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

by

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A THESIS

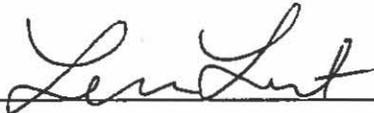
Presented to the Department of Planning, Public Policy, & Management
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

June 2014

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Aimee Fritsch for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Planning, Public Policy, & Management to be taken June 2014

Title: So What? The Impact of Social Capital Created by the Ford Institute Leadership Program

Approved:  _____

Laura B. Leete

This study investigates the impact of social capital, defined in this context as the personal or community benefits that comes from social networks, that participants formed by being a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program (FILP) a community leadership class sponsored by the Ford Family Foundation. FILP is a class designed to train emerging, existing and experienced leaders, and draws class members from individuals who live and/or work in the sponsored communities. The study asks the question, "What are people doing with the new or deepened relationships they formed because of these classes?". Research was done via in-person interviews with participants in three case study communities: Ontario, Hermiston, and Forest Grove, OR. The results of this research suggest that new connections are creating personal, professional, and community benefits, especially in increased access to resources. Findings from this study will be of primary use to the Ford Family Foundation, but would also be interesting and applicable to anyone interested in community development, rural studies, some sectors of sociology, and/or program evaluation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Leete for her belief in me, and her support throughout all stages of this thesis. Mentoring a student through this process is an exceptional commitment, for which I am very grateful.

I would also like to thank Max Gimbel and Yvette Rhodes, two key people at the Ford Family Foundation who opened the doors for me to make this thesis possible. Their wholehearted support and willingness to work with me, especially in contacting participants, was an incredible help, and without them this research could not have happened.

An additional thanks goes out to Professor Leete, Max Gimbel, and Professor David Frank of the Clark Honors College for forming my thesis defense committee.

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing support team, who loved me through late nights and early mornings for the past four years, up to and through this thesis process. To my family, my Newmanators, and the women and men of Christus House, thank you so much for being there for me, you are the best.

This thesis is dedicated to Grammie, who always knew I could do it.

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Background | 2 |
| Literature Review | 10 |
| Research Questions | 15 |
| Hypothesis | 16 |
| Research Methods | 17 |
| Findings | 22 |
| Limitations | 32 |
| Summary and Recommendations | 37 |
| Appendix 1 | 40 |
| Appendix 2 | 42 |
| Bibliography | 50 |

Introduction

John Donne's famous quote, "No man is an island" provides a foundational statement on which to understand the concept of social capital. Donne says that no human does or could exist independently of other humans, we are all connected to at least a small group of other humans. These connections to our greater community, and the value added for ourselves and the community as a whole from these connections make up the concept of social capital. It follows that the more social capital a community has, the stronger the community will be.

One program very interested in stronger communities is the Ford Family Foundation. Along with grants and scholarships, the Foundation operates a leadership program in rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County in California. These classes are designed to bring seasoned and new leaders together, to learn processes and complete a community project. Both the education and the tangible outcome of the project are intended to increase community vitality. Some of these effects are immediately recognizable, such as the community garden created by the class of 2007 in Ontario, OR, while others are more long-term, like the secondary projects that emerge from the social capital connections that would not have existed otherwise but were made through the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

This thesis investigates those projects and similar activities. What is being done with the social capital created by the Ford Institute Leadership Program? Personal experience as a participant in the classes gave me some ideas, but further research has enhanced my knowledge and provided some clear observations and recommendations for the future study of this topic.

Background

Social Capital

In his groundbreaking book Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam defines social capital as “connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2000). Social capital can be thought about in a similar sense as the terms physical or human capital as they are used in economics. However, while physical capital refers to objects and human capital refers to productive capabilities embodied in people themselves, social capital is something intangible, the unseen bond that exists between individuals and groups. It is often described as the norms of reciprocity between people. Like physical and human capital, Putnam says, when used correctly social capital has a strong influence on the productive capacity of individuals and groups.

Social capital is a distinct category from other types of resources though, and part of that distinction comes from the utility of social capital as both a private and a public good (Putnam, 2000). As a private good, an individual’s connections with others, their personal social capital creates opportunities that might not exist otherwise. This is the phenomenon of job hunting-it’s not what you know, but who you know. A well connected individual has more options and resources when looking for potential job leads-it is a perk of their higher levels of social capital. At the same time though, an individual’s social capital is also a public good in the benefit it creates for a community, as social capital is associated with increased safety and civic engagement. Connected individuals lead to connected communities, and, as Putnam pointed out “networks of community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity (2000). Here it is important

to point that community engagement can be as simple as porch sitting and talking with neighbors or as complex as community government involvement. Within any context, an engaged community leads to people looking out for each other. That is the meaning of norms of reciprocity, 'you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours'. In the context of a community with high social capital though, this norm can become generalized, and instead look more like 'I'll scratch your back, because I know when mine itches, there will be someone who'll scratch mine'. In this type of community, even someone who doesn't personally have a lot of connections still benefits from being a group where people are willing to help each other.

One other important distinction Putnam points out in relation to social capital is the difference in types of social capital. Not all connections are made equal and within the general concept of social capital there exists both bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2000). The names of both types imply the kinds of connections that exist within each form. Bonding social capital, like a molecular bond within a molecule, is the force that brings individuals together within one group. This type of social capital focuses on sameness, what you and I have in common. These bonds are what lead to trust and cohesive teamwork within an organization and are also the bonds that can lead to excluding others because they don't fit into our sameness. Bonding social capital simultaneously creates close-knit and exclusive communities.

The complementary form of social capital is bridging capital. Bridging capital does for a community what a bridge does for towns on opposite sides of a river-it brings them together. While bonding capital focuses on sameness, bridging capital is concerned with bringing together people and organizations that are different. Two

people or groups don't ever share the exact same network, rather they create value in the connection of two different cultures or subgroups. One criticism of bridging capital is that it often produces weaker ties than does bonding capital, however sometimes even weak ties are enough to open channels of communication and exchanges of ideas between two sub-communities. These forms of social capital are not mutually exclusive. As a general rule individuals have both types of connections within their social circle, and use the two types to different ends. For this research, I was looking at social capital, both bridging and bonding, in one specific context, that of the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

Organization and Program History

The Ford Institute Leadership Program is one program of the Ford Family Foundation, a 501c(3) nonprofit located in Roseburg, Oregon. In 1936 Kenneth Ford opened a sawmill in Roseburg, and over time that developed into the incredibly successful Roseburg Forest Products Co. It was in 1957 that he created a foundation to give back to the timber communities that Roseburg Forest Company was located in. Over time that foundation grew and in 1996 developed into the Ford Family Foundation that exists today with the three main branches of scholarships, grants and community building (Ford). It is the community building sector that includes the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

Since 2003 the Ford Institute Leadership Program has been operating in communities across rural Oregon and Siskiyou County in California. Interested communities submit an application to the Ford Institute for Community Building to be considered to host the FILP. Communities that get accepted participate in the program

for a minimum of five years, three cohorts of a Leadership Development class interspersed with shorter classes in Effective Organizations and Community Collaborations, in years two and four respectively. In-depth information about Effective Organization, Community Collaboration and the whole Ford Institute Leadership Program is included in Appendix 3, while more detailed info about the Leadership Development cohorts, follows here, since they are the focus of this study.

The Leadership Development cohorts are series of classes, 48 hours of instruction delivered during four Friday and Saturday sessions, one weekend a month for four months and cover topics including Meyers-Briggs personalities, conflict management, project planning and promotion, and volunteer management. Participants apply to be a part of the cohort, and while former participants and community leaders nominate individuals they think would be a good fit for the class, anyone in the community is welcome to apply. Class size is generally 22-30 participants, and includes all ages and levels of leadership experience, generally including 3-6 high school aged youth, all the way up to adults into their 70s and older. The classes are designed to give participants leadership skills that they simultaneously practice by completing a class project that improves their community. After the in-class portion is completed, cohort members continue working together to complete their project, so the whole process lasts approximately one year. In the first cohort, classes are delivered by RDI trainers, who are joined, in subsequent cohorts, by community members from previous cohorts that have chosen to volunteer their time to become Community Ambassadors and help facilitate the classes. Upon completing the fifth year with the third Leadership

Development cohort, communities have the ability to request funding from Ford for additional classes.

While the Ford Family Foundation is the sponsor and organizer for the program, they partner with Rural Development Initiatives to provide the classes. Rural Development Initiatives is an expert in the provision of rural leadership development. One of their original programs, the Rural Futures Forum, began under a grant from the Oregon Legislature based on the premise that “Training rural leaders is the key to building rural community capacity and creating community vitality” (RDI, 2010). Unfortunately, state funding for that program ran out in 2002. At that point they began a new partnership with the Ford Family Foundation and the Ford Institute Leadership Program (FILP) was born (RDI, 2010). The backbone of the program, the Leadership Development classes, are 48 hours of interactive, participatory, training provided over a four month period and draws on the existing knowledge of class participants who range from emerging to established leaders from all walks of life. Class members apply the skills they are learning in a real-world situation by planning and implementing a project in their community, made possible by fundraising and a \$5,000 matching grant from the Ford Family Foundation (Ford). From 2003 to 2010, the last year for which there is published data, the Ford Institute Leadership Program facilitated by RDI graduated over 4,000 leaders in 61 communities (RDI, 2010). Max Gimbel, the Associate Director of the Ford Institute for Community Building reports that as of 2014 that number has grown to 86 communities and over 5,000 graduates. This represents a significant investment in rural communities on the part of both Ford and RDI.

Case Study Communities

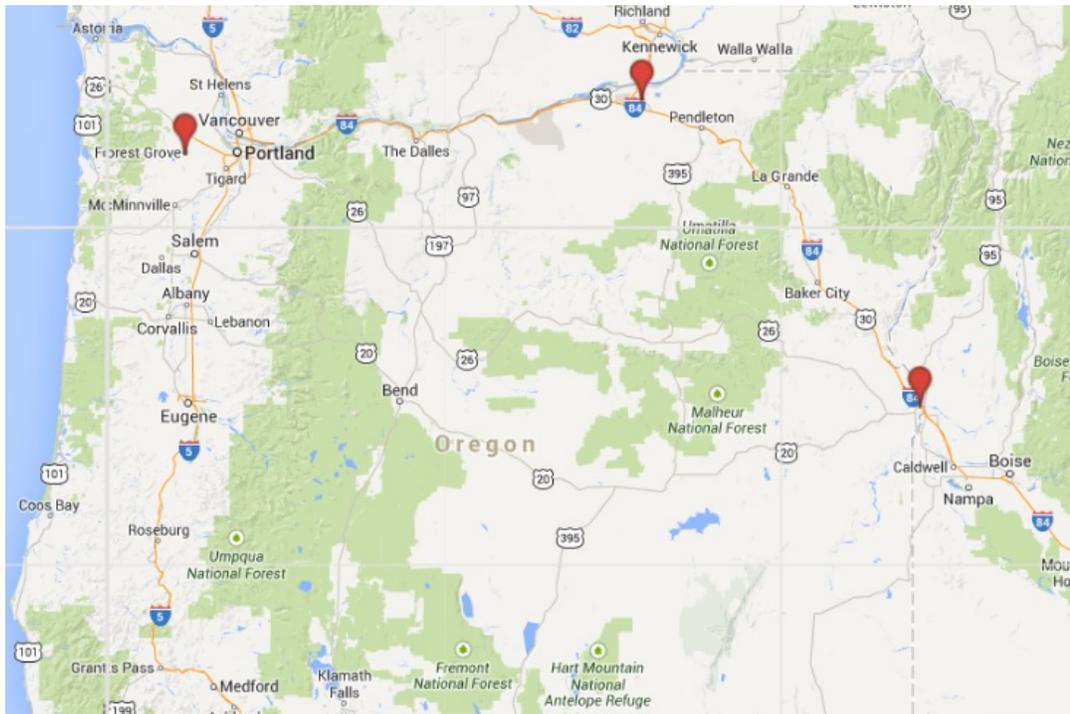
Out of the 86 communities that have hosted FILP cohorts, this study chose to focus on three: Ontario, Forest Grove, and Hermiston. These communities were chosen to examine the element of time associated with FILP as it affects the outcomes of increased social capital, holding as much else constant as possible. Since there are limited number of communities to choose from, the priority was given to first holding population as close as possible, then demographics, then economics. While all three are located in different geographic locations, the economy of each is based on similar factors, and the median income level in each is also similar.

Ontario is located on the eastern side of Oregon, where I-84 crosses into Idaho. The US Census Bureau reports the 2012 estimated population to be 11,143 people, with a median household income of \$34,433. Demographically, the community is about 41.3% Latino, and about 53.5% non-Latino White. Ontario has been a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program since Fall 2007, and has currently completed all three of its original cohorts. The Ontario Region is defined by Ford to also include the towns of Nyssa and Vale, which are both about 15 miles to the south and west, respectively. They have each had one community cohort, which differs from the original three cohorts in Ontario that it is primarily driven by community need and primarily facilitated by volunteer Community Ambassador Team facilitators, with some support and help from an official Ford/RDI trainer.

Forest Grove is located about 26 miles to the west of Portland, OR. Its 2012 estimated population was 21,961 people, with a median household income of \$49,034, as reported by the US Census Bureau. 23.1% of the population identified as Latino,

with 70.2% identifying as White (Census Bureau). Cohort 1 of the FILP took place in Forest Grove in the spring of 2012, and at the time of the interviews they were about to complete, and had just completed weekend two of Cohort 2. All the classes are located in Forest Grove and while most of the class members are from Forest Grove proper, some also come from the surrounding communities.

Hermiston is located in northern Oregon, near the Columbia River. According to the Census Bureau, it had a 2012 population of 17,111 and median income of \$44,023. The percentage of the population that identified as Latino was 34.9% and the percentage that identified as White was 60.5%. Hermiston also had their first cohort in the spring of 2012, but a delay resulting from a transition in RDI trainers, means they will begin cohort 2 this fall. The cohort is centered in Hermiston, and draws the most participants from that community, but the actual class location moves between Hermiston and several much smaller surrounding communities.



Map of Case Study Communities ©2014 Google

Left to Right: Forest Grove, Hermiston, Ontario

Literature Review

The literature on social capital is vast. Robert Putnam's reintroduction of the term launched the idea into national discussion and inspired thousands of articles and studies following in his footsteps. The concept has been applied on a domestic and international level in a wide variety of issues. Thanks to the expanse of the literature this review will focus on the definition of social capital, and the utility it creates for communities.

Before Robert Putnam even entered the stage, however; there was another sociologist looking at the concept of social capital, Pierre Bourdieu. His definition of social capital was something entirely different than what it would later become under Putnam. Bourdieu looked at social capital on a micro level, at what individuals gained from relatively formalized social relationships. For him, different types of capital are fungible, with the ultimate outcome being economic. This capital, be it economic or social capital needs is developed intentionally by an individual for future use (Portes, 1998).

Social capital then, has its roots in an economic perspective, alongside the more traditional physical and human capital. With Bourdieu's framework in mind, it is much less surprising to see businesses take the step of transition from intentional social capital development for personal use into development for business use. In his article "Social Capital, Strategic Relatedness and the Formation of Intraorganizational Linkages", Wenpin Tsai discusses the connections between organizational units in a company. He discusses these 'units' in the context of departments within an organization, but the same concept could be applied to the Ford Institute Leadership Program on a smaller

scale. The participants in the Ford Institute Leadership program come from all different backgrounds and then proceed to work together, learn together, and form relationships with one another within the micro organization of Ford, and the larger organization of the whole community. Tsai states that “By providing a shared context for social interactions, social capital facilitates the creation of new linkages in the organizational setting” (Tsai, 2000). The social capital individuals come into the Ford Institute Leadership Program which provides a context for creating new relationships and, following this logic, creating more social capital. This new social capital would be bridging social capital, as it is linking individuals and by extension organizations that previously had no connection.

Moving from the more business-centric model, in Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam measures social capital primarily by engagement in community activities (Putnam, 2000). His metric of evaluation is how many people participate in various aspects of public life and how often they do so. Following up on Putnam’s research, other investigators have examined the effectiveness and accuracy of measuring the impact of social capital by civic engagement. Some research in the field pointed out major problems of just looking at the effects of social capital through this one lens. A criticism held by many is well voiced by Alejandro Portes in his article “The Two Meanings of Social Capital” when he said; “causes and effects of social capital as a collective trait were never disentangled, giving rise to much circular reasoning” (Portes, 2000). His argument is that if Putnam’s reasoning is followed completely, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Communities have good governments because they have a lot of social capital, which is developed by people participating in good government. While

Putnam's conceptual framework is indeed helpful, it can be even more useful to look at other measurements and effects of social capital in communities.

A researcher interested in this field is Ralf Lillbacka. He did extensive evaluation of how to measure social capital so that it is not influenced by cultural context or the self-fulfillment paradox. Putnam's method of looking at group membership worked well to evaluate the social capital of certain sectors of the U.S. in the past few decades but it isn't applicable to all communities, as Lillbacka points out. "Membership in voluntary organizations appears to be a highly problematic indicator, e.g. being highly dependent on demographic factors" (Lillbacka, 2006). So he looked at other methods, ultimately determining that the best measures of social capital include "the respondent's social ties, his/her trust toward other individuals, as well as a sense of self-efficacy" (Lillbacka, 2006). This adds in an additional element from previous discussions, self-efficacy, but also reinforces the importance of social ties, something that this thesis will focus on when looking at what good new social capital does for a community. Lillbacka's research in this area, and the supporting theory of others such as Bourdieu and Tsai provide an important framework for the specific research of this thesis.

Before moving into actual primary research however, it is important to come to an understanding of what specifically has been done already to research social capital and the Ford Institute Leadership Program. Since the FILP began in 2003, evaluation data has been collected from various communities as they moved through the cohort process. This has mainly taken the form of surveys, asking participants a wide range of questions in order to get measurements on the effects and effectiveness of the program.

Surveys have queried about their growth in specific leadership skills, how they feel about their skills before and after the program, how they've applied said skills. Along with personal skill growth and change, there have been surveys questions that evaluated how community attitudes have changed, looking at before and after FILP classes occurred in a community. These surveys have been administered in a variety of different ways, before and after classes, in person, through mail, and, as technology has developed, online as well. At some points throughout the years, special focus groups have been held as well, when some the Ford Family Foundation was interesting in gathering data that lent itself better to a more interactive setting. All data collected about the program is processed by Oregon State University Extension Services in Corvallis, OR.

In the data sent to me by Lena Etuk, a social demographer who is one of the chief researchers of this program, the 2009 and 2010 Ford Institute Leadership Program Evaluation reports contained information specific to social capital creation and use. The report chapter "Evaluation of Networking for the Ford Institute Leadership Program" from 2009 breaks personal networks into three types: Social, Work/Professional, and Organizational/Community Work, which will be used consistently throughout this thesis as well. These codes were determined by OSU Extension researchers and are defined as follows:

"Social networks describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances. Professional or work networks describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work. Organizational or community work networks describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards."(pg. 51)

Information about these networks was gathered from focus groups, and participants in these groups reported that through their involvement with the FILP, their social networks grew and diversified, as well as strengthened with those individuals they already knew. In the Work/Professional network area, participants' new relationships benefited both them personally in terms of mentoring relationships and new job opportunities, and their work organization as a whole. The change in Organizational/Community work was consistent with that of Social networks, with many participants reporting larger, stronger, more diverse networks.

In 2010, the report went even more in depth in looking at social networks, and began some preliminary case studies on how people use them. It states that both bridging and bonding capital are created (pg. 111) and this capital is influenced by different interactions individuals have, and for how long they participate in the program. This study also mentions some of the activities that come out of social networks that have been affected by the FILP, including personal benefits, like finding a job or starting a friendship (pg. 104), civic benefits, like increased public participation, and filling other community needs, like the creation of mentoring relationships between adult and youth participants (pg. 109). For the most part though, this study focused more on the social networks themselves than the activities that resulted because of them. That is where this research comes in, to explore the actions and activities that have come out of that new social capital.

Research Questions

There are three questions that this thesis primarily focuses on, all getting at the heart of the question of what people are doing with the social capital they are clearly creating, social capital that would not have existed without their participation in the FILP. First, what kinds of activities result from the social capital that participants develop through the Ford Institute Leadership Program? This could be anything from friendships, to partnerships between organizations, to increased awareness of fundraising opportunities or client bases. Did events occur put on by former Ford participants? What are individuals as part of communities doing with this new resource that has been created? Secondly, what kinds of social capital are actually being created? Previous reports have noted both bridging and bonding networks are being produced, but what exactly do they look like in these communities? Perhaps what is happening is bridging along some lines and bonding along others, creating connections primarily with people who identify in similar categories as themselves, for example, affluent old-timers creating relationships with affluent newcomers, leaving less affluent newcomers out of the network of resources. Finally, how is this social capital influenced by time spent in the program? Do participants from Cohort 3 use social capital differently than participants from Cohort 2? What impact does the positioning in the sequence have on the results of social capital in the community?

Hypothesis

In answer to each of the research questions raised above I have a hypothesis, which I will then examine with research data. First, I hypothesize that activities participants use the social capital that they developed through the Ford Institute Leadership Program for personal gain, in terms of friendships and other social relationships, to find and advance their own employment, and to locate new resources in their communities. I also hypothesize that they use this social capital to benefit groups they belong to, both professionally and in unpaid community organizations.

Secondly, I hypothesize that the social capital created by the Ford Institute Leadership Program is primarily bridging social capital, linking individuals across differences in background.

Finally, I hypothesize that the longer an individual and community are a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program, the more activity will come out of their new social capital.

Research Methods

In order to investigate these questions, I interviewed individuals who had participated in the FILP. This was done in accordance with the policies & procedures of the Internal Review Board (IRB) of the University of Oregon, which dictate very specific practices regarding research methods and confidentiality of participants. All steps of the process, from contacting individuals, conducting the interviews, storing the collected information, and even how to analyze and report the data were guided by IRB standards.

The first contact with all individuals who participated in this program was through Yvette Rhodes of the Ford Family Foundation. As the Program Manager for the Ford Institute for Community Building, FILP participants are used to seeing and reading e-mails from her on a variety of official Ford topics. Yvette sent out an e-mail explaining the study I was doing to all the individuals on record who had participated in any Leadership Development cohort of the FILP from Ontario Region, Hermiston, and Forest Grove, calling for interested participants to contact me. These communities were chosen because I am from Ontario, so I had access to the community, and then chose Hermiston and Forest Grove for their similar demographics and differing length of time of involvement with the program. For Ontario Region, the e-mail from Yvette, which mentioned my name, was sufficient to have enough participants. For both Hermiston and Forest Grove, I sent a follow-up e-mail, and for Hermiston I also called individuals from the contact list of these same individuals given to me by Yvette, all in order to have a greater number of participants. In every e-mail and phone call it was made clear to participants that this study is voluntary, and they had the freedom not to participate

without an impact in their relationship with the Ford Family Foundation. When participants did respond saying they were interested, we set up a time and location for the in-person interview.

In total, there were 17 individuals who participated in an interview, 7 from the Ontario Region, 6 from Forest Grove, and 4 from Hermiston. All respondents were over 18 years of age, as per the IRB requirement mentioned above, and although I didn't ask for their ages, I'd place most of the respondents between 35 and 55. For the most part, interview respondents were of established and working in white-collar careers, mostly for others, although a few were entrepreneurs. One respondent was a student and two were retirees. The majority of the interview participants were female, for a total of 11 women and 6 men.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, and were held in a variety of locations, although the two most common were individuals' offices and coffee shops. Regardless of where the interview took place however, all interviewees read and signed the Informed Consent Form included in Appendix 1, stating that they understood they were voluntarily participating in this study, and they understood the risks and benefits associated with the study. One copy of this form was kept for my records, and each participant also kept a copy for their records.

Once consent had been given, the interview could proceed. Appendix 2 includes the base list of guiding, open-ended questions used to begin the interview. This is not a comprehensive list of all questions asked, as the information the participants provided lead to clarifying and expanding questions about their experience with the program and in their community. Several questions got added my common repertoire as I got

feedback from participants, and those are noted in Appendix 2, but the most notable included asking about the youth/adult dynamic of the class. All responses were recorded by hand, taking notes on a printed sheet of the base questions as well as notebook paper. No type of electronic recording was used, and even on the notes participant's names were separated from the answers they gave, and instead notes were marked with the participants code ID.

There were two instances where interviews were not completely confidential, and that was at the request of the interviewees. One set of study participants was a married couple, and it was more convenient for them to speak with me together. They requested this in advance, and signed a modified version of the Informed Consent Form, stating that they understood the partial loss of confidentiality by speaking with the other person present. In another instance, a participant who was to be interviewed later one day came into the store of a participant I was currently interviewing. They also requested to be interviewed together, to save time, and while this is not reflected on their Informed Consent Form, they both gave verbal consent to being interviewed together, with the knowledge that it would be a partial loss of confidentiality.

During and after the interviews, at no point was a participant's name recorded in the same space as their interview responses. Once the interviews were finished, all notes were stored in a private location that only I, as the primary researcher had access to. On the notes, the participant is always identified by their code, and this process was held consistent when the data was entered into the computer for analysis. The only place where names of participants recorded electronically, the schedule of interview times and locations, was password protected, and only stored on one, private computer. All data

was entered into a spreadsheet using only participant IDs (eg. O1, FG3, H2) to mark who made what response.

In analyzing the data, responses were condensed and coded with key words, which were then used to look for patterns in results. For the most part, these trends were organic, although I was looking specifically for answers to the previously stated research questions. Analysis of the data was done on one spreadsheet, and examined each community, looking at individuals and at how long they had been involved, as well as across communities, investigating how individuals who participated in the same cohort in different communities responded. In looking at all interactions, one guiding qualification was whether or not interactions and actions would have taken place without the FILP. This was generally signified by an explicit statement by the interview participant saying that they would not have met a certain person or done a certain thing had they not been a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program. That was the crux of this research, exploring what activity happened because of this new social capital that would not have otherwise occurred without the intervention. Bridging and bonding capital followed a similar criteria. The metric for deciding if social capital created was bridging or bonding depended on whether or not they interacted previously outside of the class, and in a less exact manner, whether or not the interaction after the class appeared to be exclusive.

The results of the data analysis are summarized and explained in the findings section of this thesis. It is important to note, that since this was an exploratory study, and all the communities I interviewed had all been a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program, there was no control group. Without a control group, this research

cannot prove outcomes, but it does have the possibility to discover information that is either consistent or inconsistent for a given hypothesis.

Consistent with IRB standards, no information that could potentially identify a participant is included. In some cases, this means omitting details about the participant, or what community they are a part of, in order to ensure that they could not be recognized even by other members of their cohort. The only exceptions to this standard that appear in the following section are where written consent has been provided by the participants to use their story.

Findings

The most basic question this research was asking was “So what?” Previous studies done in conjunction with the Ford Family Foundation and OSU extension have concluded that social capital is built through the Ford Institute Leadership program, but what is that social capital good for? What do individuals who participated in the Ford Institute Leadership Program together go on to do after they complete the program? I hypothesized that individuals would use this social capital to benefit themselves and organizations they are a part of, in the social sphere, workforce, and in the community. What I observed in speaking with past participants, this was confirmed and clarified. Three answers emerged as a common voice. They used their newfound social capital in their personal lives, professional lives, as well in organizations and community activities.

Personal Lives

When asked, almost everyone mentioned personal relationships either forming or being strengthened by being a part of this class, though the levels of relationship were incredibly varied. Sometimes, the personal relationships only really extended on a causal basis, where individuals will greet each other and catch up when they see each other in the grocery store, or out and about. It might not happen very often, but they feel comfortable enough talking to one another, when prior to FILP, they were strangers. This was especially beneficial for those who had not lived in the community long when they began the FILP. Somewhere in the middle of the road there are reignited friendships. Individuals who had known each other previously reconnected through FILP, and went hiking together, or had each other’s families over for dinner. On the

most extreme end of the spectrum, for two individuals that participated in this study, the FILP was one thing that led to their eventual marriage. They had already known each other, but spending time learning and working together was a contributing factor to their relationship.

Professional Lives

Use of new social capital to enhance professional lives was the second most common response when asked what part of their lives this FILP social capital had impacted. What was interesting about this type of social capital was how it was used. For some, the professional connections built here were completely new. Connecting with others led two participants to consider going into business together. One was already a small business owner, and the other came from a completely different background and thus had access to a market that the business owner previously had no access to. They met in their cohort, and at the time of the interview, the small business owner was contemplating bringing the other participant in to be a consultant for his business. This connection, that most likely would not have occurred without FILP is now expanding business as well as extending services to a new population.

An additional example of FILP professional social capital creating exponential opportunities occurred in the Ontario Region. An adult and youth formed a bond of friendship while they were classmates. After the class was over, the youth was part of a group that goes on a tour and to some workshops at Treasure Valley Community College. It turns out that the experience coordinator was the adult from the FILP class. With this connection of FILP adult & youth, the dynamic of the group, which was formal and a little intimidated, suddenly becomes much more relaxed. The youth feel

more comfortable asking questions, and the adult is able to reach out and communicate much better the resources and opportunities that are available to the youth, all thanks to the bond that was formed between the two individuals during their shared leadership class.

Another important aspect of development that has come from professional social capital development occurred with those who connected in a deeper way with those they already saw at meetings and other shared events prior to FILP. Participants reported this firsthand, but this was also one area where research participants noticed other class members' interactions with each other as well. They sometimes noted that these interactions often reflected equal partnerships as well as growth and mentorship that wouldn't have happened otherwise. However, this was not always the case. While FILP did create deeper connections and create more opportunities for some, for others, being in the FILP class with people they already knew meant only that pre-existing work bonds were strengthened. As one participant put it "If you're a leader in the community, you're already doing 2-3 things". In that case, while being around those you know is nice, the extra time spent learning and working together was not a significant influence to alter already existing relationships.

Organizations/Community Networks

There was also activity in another field, one that does not neatly fall into personal or professional life, and that is connections that benefited the community or civic engagement aspect of participants' lives. Often, this meant the contribution of new resources or ideas to something the participant was already involved in. Sometimes

though, the connections made by the Ford Institute Leadership Program opened brand new doors for individuals.

People participate in the FILP often because they have been identified through some kind of community activity as existing leaders, who are already active in the community, or emerging leaders, just entering community leadership. It makes sense then, that by participating in this class, and connecting with other leaders they are able to secure additional resources or opportunities with the organization they participate in. Stories that those interviewed told me about this aspect of the program. A participant that got involved with Ford because of her advocacy work for public transportation in Forest Grove then found herself meeting more members of the city leadership and getting involved more deeply in both transportation and other city committees. Others cited even broader examples of this benefit in gaining ideas and information for band boosters, the parent club that supports music programs, in a neighboring town, and in recruiting fellow class members to serve with them on boards of nonprofits.

While this kind of re-investment was common, there were some stand-out stories of cases where social capital built through the FILP opened completely new doors for individuals and cities. The best case study example of this comes from Forest Grove. Something that developed in that class was a practice of individuals inviting other class members to events or meeting they were a part of. In this case, an individual took up the offer, and attended a meeting they otherwise wouldn't have. At that meeting, the individual met a third person, a professional urban planner. This individual then persuaded the urban planner to come and visit their hometown, Galescreek, a smaller, unincorporated community located just outside of Forest Grove. Not only did

the urban planner come and visit, they even donated their services to provide a growth plan for the community. This whole series of events, which ultimately has the potential to benefit hundreds of people, would not have existed without the social capital built through the FILP.

Types of Social Capital

One concern with social-capital building programs, especially those focused on smaller, rural towns such as those studied here, is that the connections that bring people together can also be used to keep others out. Putnam talks about this when he discusses ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ social capital, one that links different groups together, and another that strengthens bonds within one specific group. My hypothesis for this research question was that the FILP primarily created bridging social capital in communities.

One of the main indicators this study used to examine bridging versus bonding social capital was the frequency of interaction between class participants. If participants were connected in such a way that it became exclusionary, one would expect to see them spending more time together, and in such creating a kind of insular community. However, this was resoundingly not the case. To the contrary, often after the participants finished both the FILP class and the project, they seemed to lose touch with the majority of people they had learned and worked with. When asked how often they saw other members of the class, the answers were surprisingly low. The most common response was that participants would see one or two other people on a regular basis, professionally or socially, ten or so in a very informal public way, around town, or at a community event, and then there was a large portion of the class that they never saw at

all. However, even when they didn't see each other regularly, participants still reported a level of relationship with others in their cohort, enough to be comfortable calling them up if they ever needed anything. This was an effect that can best be described as a "Brain Bank". The social capital built in the class bridged differences, and while the bond between individuals wasn't always tight, it was still in existence, and available to be accessed for social, professional or community reasons. While few reported actually using it, many talked about this phenomenon of knowing they could call up anyone from their FILP cohort and ask for advice, or a favor about whatever that person was an expert in. This Brain Bank was clearly not a tight enough network to be exclusionary, and was so interesting because it was a loose, linking connection to others that led individuals to feel comfortable calling others up, making the most of their different experiences and backgrounds.

This slightly bonding, but mostly bridging creation of social capital can work to break down pre-existing exclusionary bonding capital in communities. One anecdote from a participant suggests that the program helps newcomers to a community get a foot in the door of communities run by an 'old boys club', or at the very least the FILP creates new bridging capital to help mitigate its effect. This particular participant lives in a community that she describes as very closed. The majority of its residents have lived there for generations, so everyone has known everyone since they were in diapers, and a few families really dominate the political landscape of the town. As someone who moved into the area, the participant felt like an outsider for years after her relocation, and wasn't the only one. Speaking with them, they mentioned that many people who chose to participate in Cohort 1 of the FILP were newcomers to the community. The

class gave them all some connections and leverage that those native to this town had experienced all their lives. Ford facilitated the building of bridging social capital, which brought disconnected people into the community proper.

Along with looking at how FILP creates bridging social capital along the axis of time spent in the community, there was another this study was interested in; bridging social capital along the axis of the generation gap. Since the FILP recruits from both existing and emerging community leaders, there are a variety of ages in the class, with potentially the most visible jump in skills and connections happening between the youth of the class, and all of the adults. It is a fluid dynamic, however, since numbers and personalities influence whether or not the youth of the class become an insular group, or whether they integrate and form connections with others in the class. In speaking with participants, I heard of both cases. Some participants stated that the youth of the class clumped together, didn't participate and spoke mostly amongst themselves. However, many more reported a very positive experience with youth in the class, that they fully participated and created many connections between youths and adults. Existing leaders also often mentioned that the ability to connect with youth, and the opportunity to be somewhat of a mentor to them was a real strength of the program. While my research did not include speaking with those under the age of 18, the adults I spoke with mentioned anecdotes of youth finding scholarships or job shadow opportunities through the connections with adults in the class. On more than one occasion, a youth member of the class made connections and then went on to become a Community Ambassador, volunteering to help facilitate the next cohort of FILP classes.

Effect of Length of Time in Program

Continued active involvement in the program by any participant, youth or adult may open up a whole new set of opportunities for the creation of social capital. Another area of interest for this research was to see how the results of social capital creation change over time after a community has been a part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program. I hypothesized that the longer an individual and/or community had been involved with the FILP, that is, the more they'd been exposed to the program, the more activity would be seen as a result of program generated social capital. Communities were selected for participation in this study partly on this basis, in order to have a cross section of communities after their participation in Cohorts I, II, and III.

On a community level, the longer a specific town had been involved in the FILP process, the more likely the participants were to have experienced activity resulting from program generated social capital. In communities completing one cohort, the participants had generally noticed the connections, but hadn't seen much come of them. Often, instead of being driven by social capital created exclusively by the FILP, the results participants described were activities that would likely to have happened anyway, albeit were aided by the connections individuals made through FILP. For example, one class member ran for office, and used the support of the other members of the cohort in their campaign. Another class member suffered from a serious illness, and the cohort, along with the rest of the community rallied around them for support. Both activities would have happened anyway, but their new social capital was an additional support.

As communities get farther into the series of FILP classes though, there appeared to be an increasing number of events that could be directly attributed to increased social capital brought on by the program. With increased exposure to the program and to those who continued to stay connected with it, there were more opportunities for people to reach out, creating increased crossover between organizations. One of the most interesting comments someone made was about how the FILP has been a catalyst for a mutual understanding of community development and how it can best be accomplished. What she noticed was that the "Language of collaboration and collective impact becoming more common" across different organizations in the community. As people from different places more and more speak the same language, this allows for more progress to be made on the issues the community is facing.

There is one additional important note to make regarding the effect of years in the program on community-level impact. All of the previous years of classes must have taken place in the same town. For example, the Ford Family Foundation uses the classification 'Ontario Region' for the cohorts that include Ontario, Nyssa, & Vale, but the retention effect described above only appeared to be felt in Ontario, where three cohorts of FILP classes have taken place. Moving the classes to another community appears to greatly weaken the effect of multiple years in the program, even though the towns are only approximately 15 miles apart, and the classes continue to draw participants from several different towns, just as previous classes did. Each town is sufficiently autonomous in terms of leaders and programs that work together that each community must build this understanding for themselves.

This is true on a community level but not necessarily on the level of individual people. Individual participants responded differently to being a part of a FILP class that happened in their region, but in a town other than the one they were living. Those with less time with the program often said that the class occurring in another town was a hindrance for developing social capital, and thus consequently creating impact. Those that had been with the program longer, and branched out to other towns as Community Ambassador Facilitators mentioned the new location with increased availability of social capital. One participant mentioned that the deeper connection made by the FILP strengthened the relationship between the Chamber of Commerce he helps lead, and the Chamber of Commerce of the next town over. On a related note, another participant mentioned how the class drawing on all the small towns in the area helped alleviate some of the ‘big brother’ attitude the hub community often expressed towards the smaller, surrounding communities.

In conclusion, what comes of social capital and connections made as a part of the Ford Institute Leadership program is diverse yet classifiable. Individuals use these connections towards activities strengthening their personal, professional, and civic lives. In all of this, it is a social capital that bridges different groups, and can even help overcome barriers in more insular communities. The generation gap is sometimes a factor in FILP classes, but it doesn’t have to be, and youth-adult connections are often meaningful for both groups. The impact of time spent in the program depends on the individual for personal connection, but for the overall community, the longer they are a part of the FILP, the more conducive the culture becomes to actually doing things with connections formed through these leadership classes.

Limitations

These findings, while interesting and important must be put into the context of the study they were gathered in, including the potential limitations and biases inherent in the data. Sample size, as well as some aspects of the study design, create a situation where the results gathered from participants might not accurately reflect the true impact of the FILP.

One of the original goals for this research study was to have a total of thirty participants, roughly ten from each community. However, this goal was not reached. This shortcoming was a result of cost and time consideration. Since all the interviews were done in person, and the communities were scattered around Oregon, it meant that I needed to travel for the interviews. Between my schedule and that of those I was interviewing, it often became difficult to line up as many interviews as desired. The other major restriction on sample size was the voluntary nature of the process. In Hermiston, where they have had only one cohort so far, it was very difficult to get people to respond. No one responded to the original e-mail sent by the Ford Family Foundation sent out, and very few responded to my e-mails and calls. This, combined with travel cost limitations means that the sample size is significantly smaller than what I was hoping for.

Another aspect of this problem is that individuals who are very involved in their communities, potentially because of Ford-influenced social capital, lacked the time to respond to me. This hints at another major factor that must be considered when looking at the results of this research: the way the personality of the participants might have an influence on both their willingness to participate in this study and the way they

responded to study questions. People who had a positive experience, who got something out of the program are more likely to want to talk about that experience. For those for whom this experience was negative, if it lessened their social capital or harmed networks they previously had in place, they are likely to be less willing to talk about it to an outsider. These two factors lead me to believe that my results have a positive bias, something that is hard to avoid with a voluntary interview research design.

Underlying all of this is the fact that individual personality does influence the level and type of social capital that individuals create. The Ford Institute Leadership Program by its nature tends to attract individuals who are invested in their community and interested in meeting others, which will then lead them to be more willing to get out of their comfort zone and create strong, diverse networks, a limitation that is inherent in the program design. Out of those outgoing individuals, it is then the most outgoing that are willing to talk with a stranger about their experience with the program, so the interview respondents were likely the most outgoing of the outgoing individuals who signed up for the study, meaning that there was a double positive bias along that axis as well.

There is one other factor that should be pointed out as a limitation in this study, and that is that the study did not include all the voices of the community, or even the whole FILP class. One missing voice was that of participants under the age of 18, due to the human subjects research protocol constraints discussed above. Another missing voice was Latino participants. This was also not a focus of the study, but was something that became obvious in its absence. All three communities are reported by the Census bureau of having more than 30% of the population who identify as Latino, and that was

definitely not proportional in this study. However, it is worth noting that several individuals who work with the program mentioned that FILP itself is not an accurate representation of the overall demographics of the community.

All of these limitations impact the results of the data gathered by this study. Not enough voices, or only a certain type of voice, limits the full understanding of the impact of social capital created. The small number of participants is probably the most troubling limitation of this study. If it were a stand-alone research project, the small sample size would call into question the validity of any of the results. There simply weren't enough participants to be able to say with any certainty that this is a typical experience of an individual who participates in this program, or that the impact they see is actually the total impact in the community. This is very similar to the issue the personality limitation creates. The correlation between the type of person who gets this kind of benefit out of the program and the type of person who responds to a study like this likely indicate that the results of this study are positively biased. While their stories are all valid, taken without the consideration of how they as individuals operate within their communities, the impact of social capital created by the FILP could seem greater than it actually is.

However, this research is not a stand-alone study. It was designed from the very beginning to build upon work that has already been done, and to set the stage for more quantitative work to come. The study was not concerned with finding some kind of numerical measure of impact. Rather, the focus was on discovering what kind of impact the social capital created by the program might have. With that in mind, the low numbers are still of concern, because it does limit opposing view and additional stories

that might exist. However, as a study to be built off of, it provides many excellent examples that the Ford Family Foundation could measure across all communities and participants in a follow-up study. Even in a more quantitative study, the personality bias would be important to take into consideration. It will exist even in a larger study, and while it is possible to get a measure of the impact of social capital created by the FILP without taking into account negative experiences, it will be impossible to generalize the experience of every participant, or every community without taking this bias into account.

One of the other advantages to a larger study is that there are more opportunities to include the youth voice, if desired. With a different study design, and with the knowledge that this limitation existed in this study, it will be possible to include how youth use the social capital created by the FILP. There was still some information generated by this primary study, so that knowledge, plus the discovery of the interesting aspect of youth will provide some starting ground for future work in potential future studies.

Given the opportunity to pursue this research free of any time or resource constraints, I would conduct the research differently. On the academic side of an ideal situation, I would read more about what kinds of factors influence how individuals use networks, in order to get a better idea of what questions to ask to get to the heart of how social capital is used in these communities. Then, I would secure IRB approval and go through all the necessary hoops be able to also speak with the youth participants of the FILP. When it came time to do the primary research, I would take enough time in each community to be able to interview to saturation, to the point where I am hearing the

same information over and over. Part of that listening would be finding ways to make sure I was hearing from all backgrounds, especially Latino program participants. Then, ideally, I would make this a longitudinal study, following up with participants and communities as whole 1, 3, 5, and 10 years down the road, to see what kind of impact the social capital created by this program has long-term. That is a large investment of research, but would give a better picture of the total effects of FILP and the wide range of activity stemming from social capital created by the program.

Summary and Recommendations

This research involved interviewing participants in the Ford Institute Leadership Program from three different case study communities. Keeping in mind the limitations of size and personality discussed above, I still found that social capital created by this program facilitates activity in various areas of a participant's life that would not have existed without the Ford Institute Leadership Program. The social capital created is primarily bridging social capital, and its impact varies with the length of time an individual and community are part of the program.

For the most part, the findings of this research support the hypothesis presented at the beginning of this thesis. Individuals used the social capital they created to facilitate activities in the social lives, work and professional lives, and in their work for organizations throughout the community. Their stories also supported the hypothesis that this social capital they created and are now using is primarily bridging social capital, linking them with others of different backgrounds and experiences. Finally, the data also suggested that both individuals and communities show more activity initiated by program generated social capital the longer they have been involved with the program.

I have found one main recommendation resulting from this research, that is to continue this research, to carry it out in a quantitative fashion throughout all communities that have participated in FILP. This would probably work best in the survey format that they have already used previously. In that survey, I would recommend they specifically ask about some of the activities that were most commonly found in these case studies, including some of the following areas: how often they

interact one on one with friends met or developed through FILP, did connections through FILP lead to new business opportunities (if so, what), did connections through FILP lead to opportunities to extend services in the community, have they participated in a mentoring relationship that developed because of FILP, have they used a connection met in FILP to help/improve a community group they are a part of (if so, how), have they served on a board because of a connection they made through FILP, and did they get more involved in an activity because of a connection they made through FILP? All of these questions should also be put into context by asking some demographic questions, including how long they have been in the program, what community they are from (to determine how long it has been a part of the program), how old they are, what is their racial/cultural identity, do they live in the same town as the cohort was based in, do they identify as outgoing or more reserved, and how many organizations they were involved with before/after Ford. These would be in an effort to cut down on biases based on personality, and to help filter and analyze results based on time associated with the program.

This research then has the possibility to benefit the Ford Family Foundation directly, to help them maximize the FILP so that participants are able to get the most out of the program, possibly even including more specific examples in the class lessons that will prepare participants for activities that are likely to occur because of their new social capital. Having this data, this record of longer term consequences of the program can also be used as marketing, to encourage communities and/or individuals to participate in the FILP.

Even beyond the Ford Family Foundation, further research has the potential to benefit the whole field of leadership development intervention programs. FILP is focused on Oregon and Siskiyou County, CA, but there are more leadership and community development programs around the country. Further exploring this research could allow those programs to cite the example of the Ford Institute Leadership Program research as precedent for investing in their own rural communities. The implications for further research in this field are potentially very broad and very powerful.

Appendix 1

**University of Oregon Department of Planning, Public Policy, &
Management**
**Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in *FILP Social Capital Impact
Study***
Investigator: Aimee Fritsch
Adult Consent Form

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the impact of the Ford Institute Leadership Program.
- You were selected as a possible participant because of your experience with the Ford Institute Leadership Program, and your expressed interest in the study.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study:

- The purpose of this study is to understand more about what happens due to the connections individuals make with others through the Ford Institute Leadership Program.
- Participants in this study are 18 years or older, from rural Oregon communities that have hosted Ford Institute Leadership Program Classes. There are approximately 30 participants total in this study.

Description of the Study Procedures:

- If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to participate in an approximately one hour interview regarding your experience with the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in the Study:

- There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. If the interview includes any questions which you are uncomfortable with, you are free not to answer those questions or to end the interview.

Benefits of Being in the Study:

- The purpose of the study is to create greater understanding of program consequences for the Ford Institute Leadership Program.
- There are no expected benefits to individuals who participate in this study.

Payments:

- There will be no payment for participating in this study.

Costs:

- There is no cost to you to participate in this research study.

Confidentiality:

- The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, unless you explicitly give your consent. Research records will be kept in a locked file.
- All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file.
- Access to the records will be limited to the researchers; however, please note that the Institutional Review Board at the University of Oregon (the office charged with protecting research subjects) and University of Oregon auditors may review the research records.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

- Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University or with the Ford Family Foundation.
- You are free to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason.
- There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not taking part or for stopping your participation.

Contacts and Questions:

- The researcher conducting this study is Aimee Fritsch. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her at 208-741-1910 (or afritsch@uoregon.edu).
- If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact: Research Compliance Services, University of Oregon at (541) 346-2510 (or ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu) or my thesis advisor Professor Laura Leete at (541) 346-0834 (or leete@uoregon.edu)

Copy of Consent Form:

- You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records and future reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

_____ **Study Participant (Print Name)**

_____ **Participant or Legal Representative Signature**

Date

Appendix 2

For how long have you been involved with the Ford Institute Leadership Program?

What cohort(s) were you a part of?

Please describe your experience being a part of the FILP. What roles have you played?

When you began FILP, did you know many people in your cohort?

Could you describe any new personal or professional relationships you developed as a part of this class?

What kinds of interactions have you had with these new connections?

As a part of this class, have you seen other personal or professional relationships develop between other classmates? If so, could you please describe them?

To the best of your knowledge, have you seen visible results of others' new relationships?

Added Questions

"What was the youth/adult dynamic like in your class?"

Is there anything else I should know about social capital and your community?

Appendix 3

Ford Institute Leadership Program





Ford Institute Leadership Program

The purpose of the Ford Institute for Community Building is to promote vitality in rural communities. The Institute's programs are based on the belief that vital rural communities develop from:

- ♦ A broad base of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated local leaders
- ♦ A diversity of effective organizations
- ♦ Productive collaborations among organizations and communities

The Institute's primary method for achieving community vitality is through a series of training classes called the Ford Institute Leadership Program (see timeline at left). The Institute also provides assistance grants and a variety of other resources (see page 5).

TRAINING CLASSES

All classes are held in the selected community. The Institute covers the cost of the program and materials, and provides food and beverages. Participants are responsible for travel to and from the trainings.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

The Leadership Development training consists of 48 class



hours held over four Friday-Saturday sessions. The classes focus on developing the community leadership capacity of individuals. The training emphasizes an interactive and facilitative style rather than lectures. It draws on the knowledge and skills of those in the room, augmented by the lessons in the curriculum.

A typical class consists of about 25 individuals (high-school students to retired seniors) with leadership experience ranging from emerging to seasoned. This training is designed for a diverse mix of citizens representing business, government and non-profit sectors.

Curriculum concepts include:

- ♦ Community capacity and social capital
- ♦ Personality types and leadership styles
- ♦ Community development models
- ♦ Catalytic Leadership Model
- ♦ Asset mapping
- ♦ Group development
- ♦ Models for group decision-making
- ♦ Communication strategies
- ♦ Volunteerism

Each class selects a project that they work on together (for example, a local park improvement). The project helps focus the course content on a real-world situation. The Institute provides up to a \$5,000 match in support of the project. Participants are expected to volunteer outside the class to complete the project within one year.

EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS



Effective Organizations is 20 to 24 class hours designed to develop skills for the successful leadership and management of community organizations.

The core topics are:

- ♦ Strategic planning
- ♦ Organizational leadership
- ♦ Resource development (human and financial)

The training provides many tools to assist in the hands-on application of the material covered. Participants have a chance to network with leaders of other organizations in their community. Follow-up coaching is available to participants to better integrate class learnings into their organizations. This training is most beneficial for directors, board members, and staff and volunteers who work with non-profits and service organizations; it also has proven helpful to local government, service districts and institutions such as schools and clinics.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Community Collaborations is designed to enhance the



capacity of rural community leaders and organizations to leverage the power of working together. Actual community collaboration opportunities will be explored. Coaching is provided to help

participants initiate a collaboration, sustain it and end it as appropriate.

The goal is to help communities build collaborations that "get things done" and which—in the process—infuse rural communities with vitality. This training is for Leadership Development graduates, participants of the Effective Organizations training, and all others in the community who are inspired to work together to identify shared areas of interest, develop ongoing networks, coordinate projects and activities, share and leverage resources, and promote cooperation and collaboration.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Rural Development Initiatives (RDI), a nationally recognized, Oregon-based non-profit, partners with the Institute in recruitment, curriculum development and delivery of the Leadership Development classes. For more information

visit www.rdiinc.org. The second and subsequent Leadership Development classes are delivered in part by community members. RDI certifies a core group of Leadership Development graduate volunteers to help deliver future classes.

The Effective Organizations and Community Collaborations trainings are conducted by several organizations. Human Systems serves Southern Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif.; Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (RDI) serves Eastern Oregon; and Technical Assistance for Community Services (TACS) serves Northwest Oregon.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can my community become a “Ford Institute community”?

The Institute selects four communities to enter the program each spring and each fall. Individuals may promote their community with letters to the Institute. The Institute selects communities based on an internal process that looks for “readiness” — where the community is already demonstrating a willingness to work together for positive change. The Leadership Program is available to communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., with populations under 30,000 and that are not adjacent to or part of a metropolitan area.

How do I apply for a class?

A nominating committee of known community leaders identifies and invites possible participants. During the recruitment period, Leadership Development training applications are accepted online at www.tfff.org. If there are more than 30 applicants (the maximum class size), the Institute will select a mix of participants from the pool of applicants. Those not selected are considered for a subsequent leadership class. Effective Organizations and Community Collaborations trainings have an open registration process. Registration forms can be completed online at www.tfff.org.

What is my obligation if I want to participate in a class?

You are encouraged, but not obligated, to participate in the entire program series. If you sign up for a class, the Institute strongly encourages participation in all sessions. Leadership Development classes include participation in completing the class project.

What is the cost?

There are no fees for class participants; the Institute covers all program costs. Catered meals are provided during the training. Participants are responsible for getting to and from the classes.

OTHER RESOURCES FROM THE FORD INSTITUTE

Leadership Program participants are encouraged to draw on other resources provided by the Institute including:

Community Vitality: A twice-yearly digest of success stories, best practices, tools and resources for community leaders. *Community Vitality* is a way to keep abreast of what other communities in the program are doing and to learn about other programs from The Ford Family Foundation.

Select Books: A list of around 30 titles organized in four content areas: Leadership Development; Effective Organizations; Community Collaborations; and Youth, Families and Schools. These books are available to anyone in Oregon or Siskiyou County, Calif., at no cost. The list and order form are available online at www.tfff.org.

RIPPLE: An online resource for rural communities to connect with the knowledge and resources of their peers.
www.ripplenw.org

Conferences and Gatherings: Occasionally the Institute hosts regional conferences and gatherings for Leadership Development graduates. These events provide networking and learning opportunities beyond the classes.

www.tfff.org: The Ford Family Foundation Web site

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