

Social Network Analysis of the Stanton Fellowship Program

Conducted for

The Durfee Foundation

By



January 14, 2015

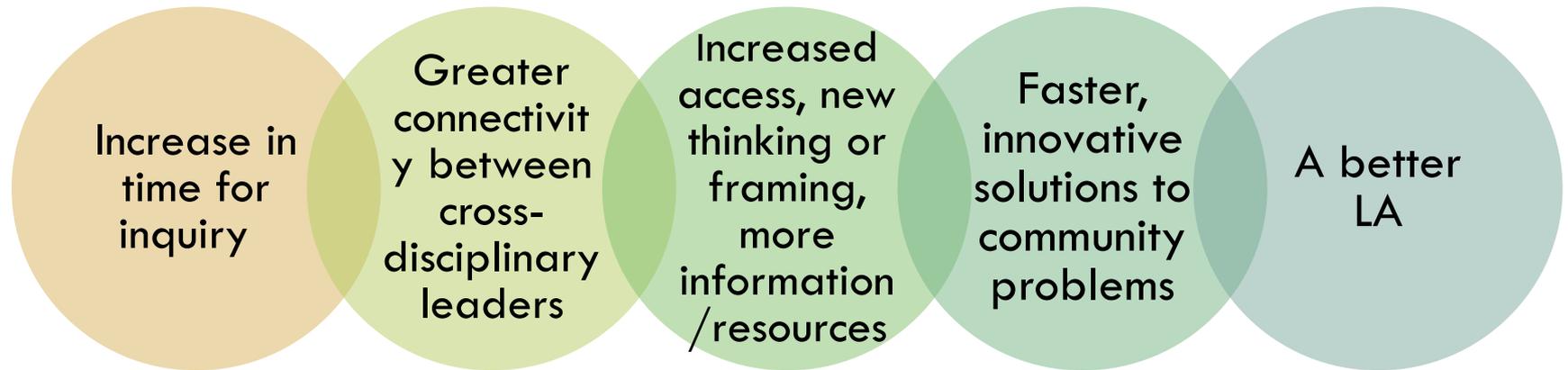
Goals of the Fellowship

Assessment looked at how network contributes to achieving goals.

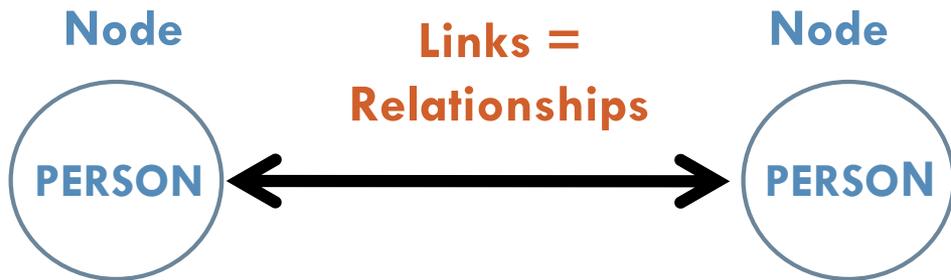
Stanton Fellowship is intended to:

- ▣ enable leaders to tease out solutions to intractable problems for the improvement of the quality of life in L.A.
- ▣ foster cross-disciplinary fertilization of ideas and resources among L.A. leaders

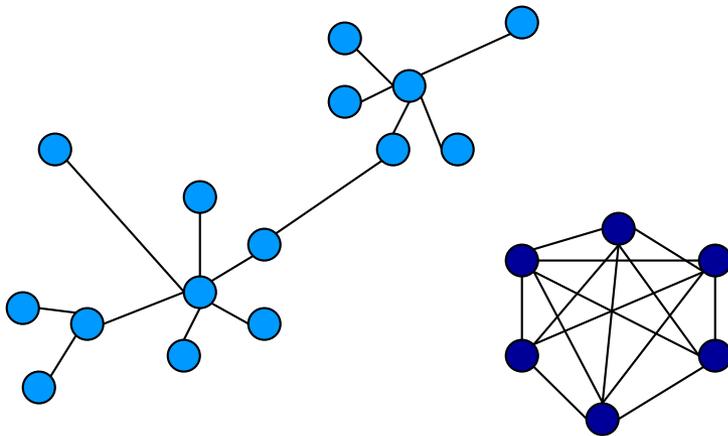
Hypothesis



What is a Network?



- Social impact networks, specifically generative networks - a set of relationships that are maintained **over time** to activate as needed.



What is a Social Network Analysis?

- Social Network Analysis (SNA) is a set of theories, tools and processes for understanding the relationships and structures of a network
 - ▣ Useful for understanding information flow, gaps, opportunities
 - ▣ Examine structure of network and types of connections that serve different purposes:
 - Hubs – highly connected nodes
 - Strong ties – bonds ideal for close collaboration, time and labor intensive, tendency toward connections with those similar to you (ex. Long standing organizational partnership)
 - Loose (“weak”) ties – best for accessing new resources and opportunity for innovation, tend to be episodic (ex. Connection made through mutual friend/colleague)

Key Questions

- To what degree are Fellows connecting? Across cohorts? Across disciplines?
- To what extent is cross-sector learning exchange, innovation and collaboration happening?
- What value is being generated for Fellows, and the communities they serve during their Fellowship and in the years after?
- How is the network of connections making LA a better place to live?

Methodology

- Social Network Analysis and Thematic Analysis
 - Survey Fellows in October 2014 (28 respondents 93%)
 - Focus groups with Fellows (14 Fellows participated)
 - Interviews with Fellows (4 interviews)
 - Interviews with Durfee staff
 - Observation

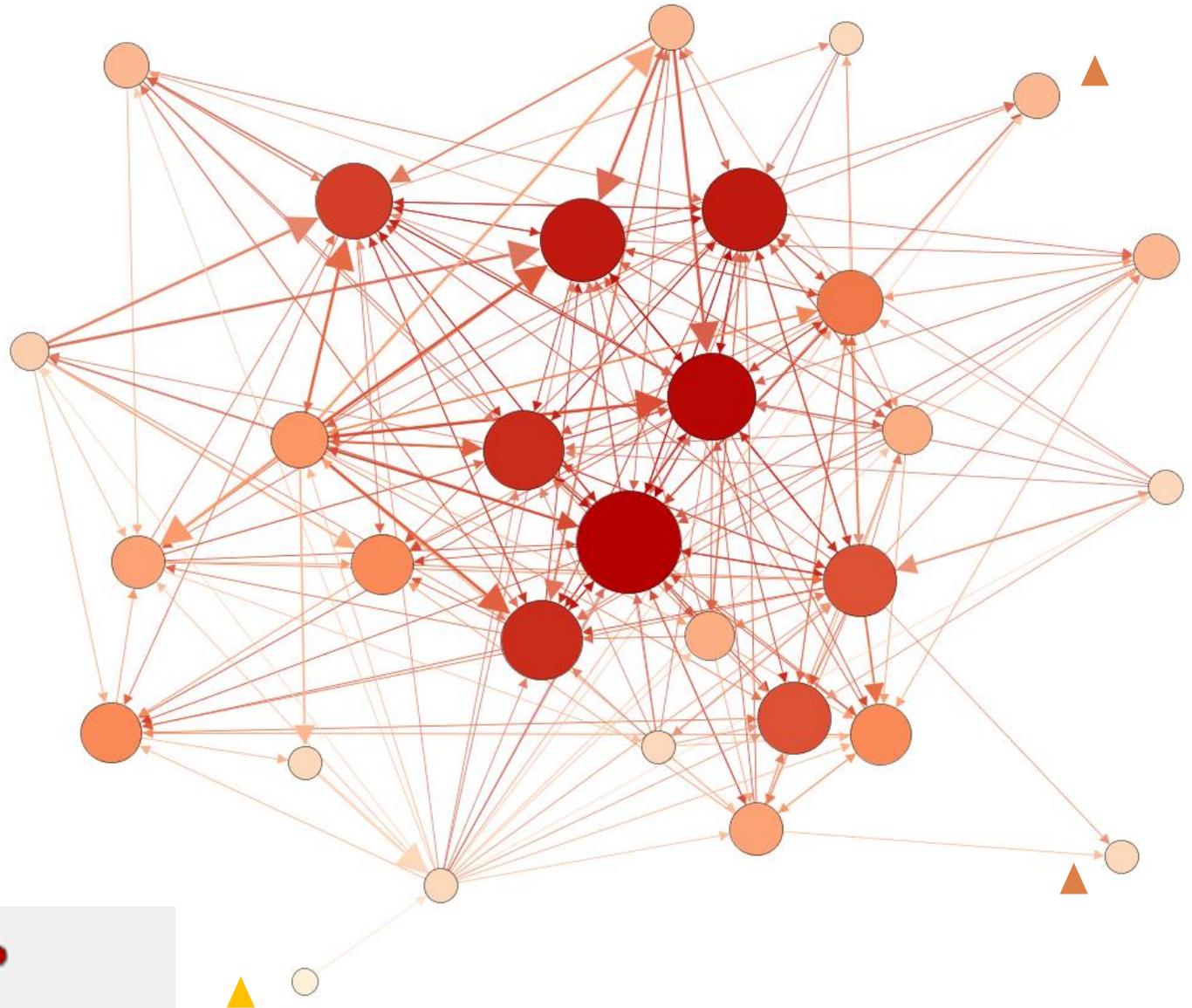
To what degree are Fellows connected?

- Expanded reach/connectivity of individual Fellows as a result of Fellowship
 - ▣ 137% increase in connections overall
 - ▣ 111% increase in average number of connections to other Fellows

“We had crisscrossed paths before but it was not until the fellowship that we really connected”

Total number of connections increased from 274 to 679
Average number of connections increased from 7.9 to 16.7

Before - Stanton Network Map



After - Stanton Network Map

Density
increased
>100%

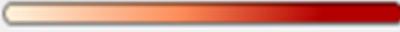
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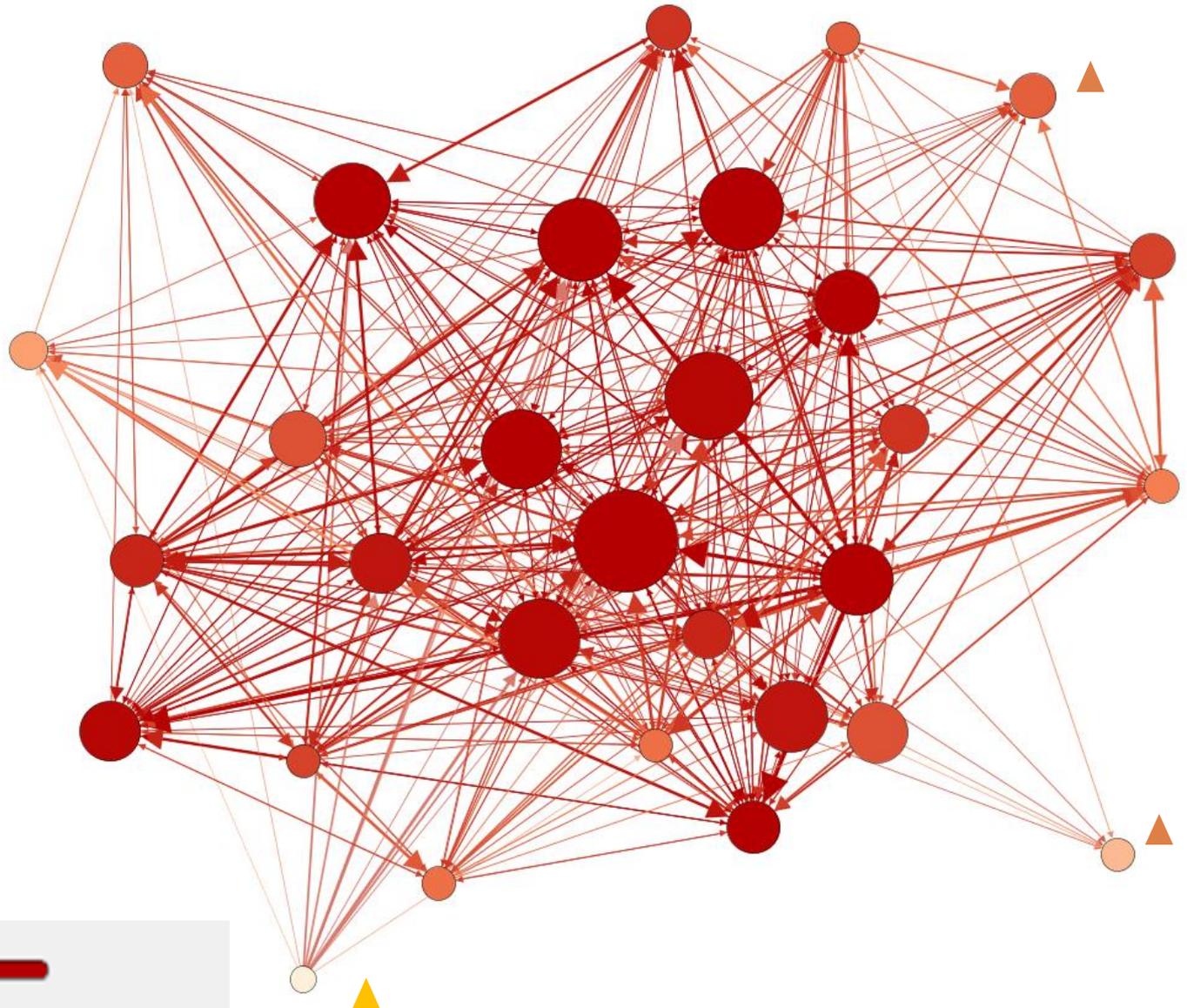
n=27

▲ Did not respond to survey

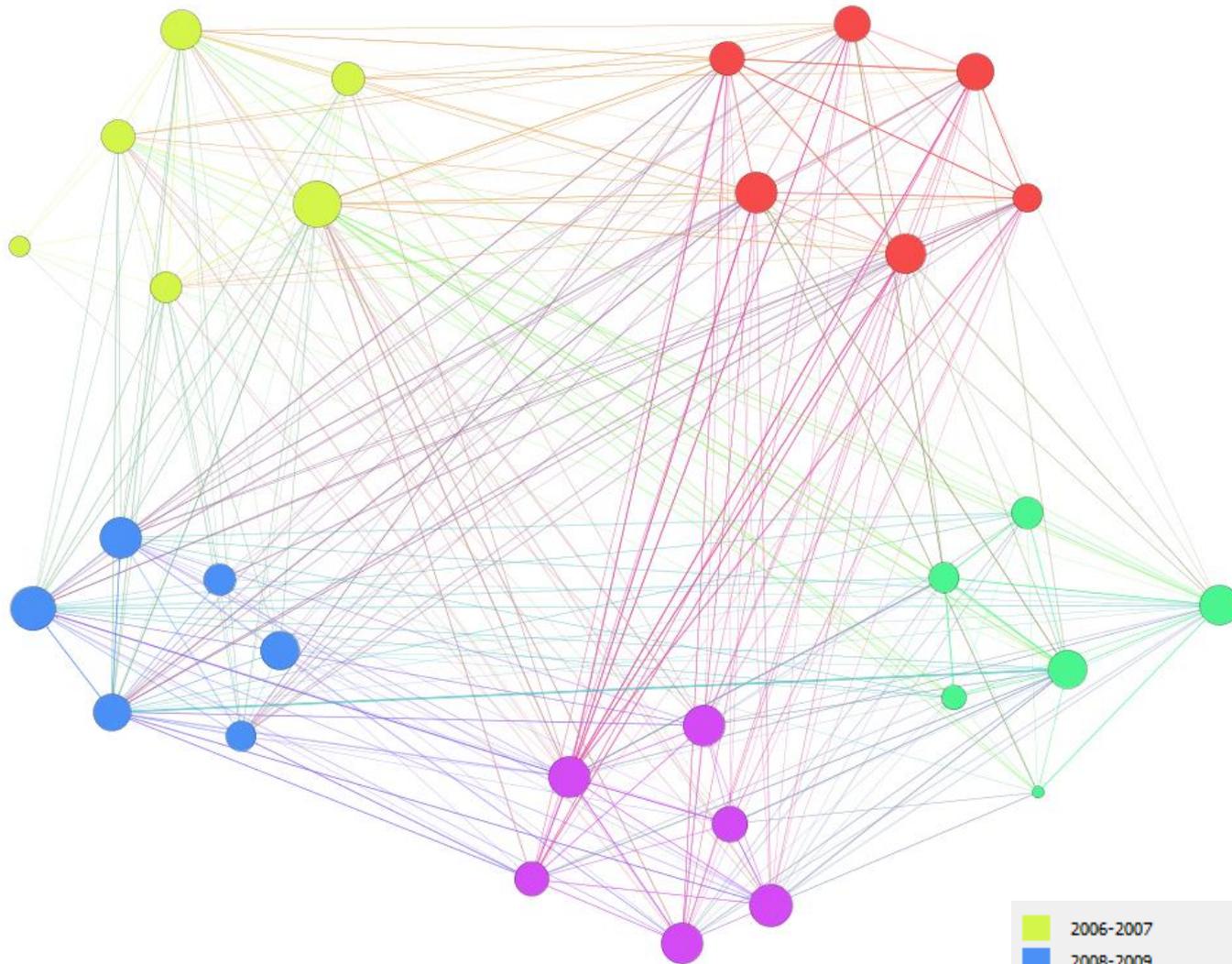
▲ Name was not available on survey

Degree of connectivity

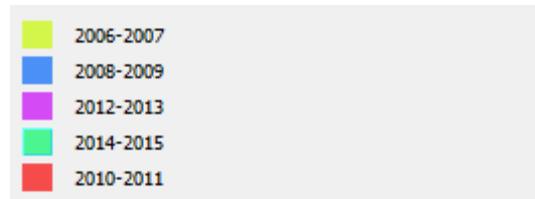
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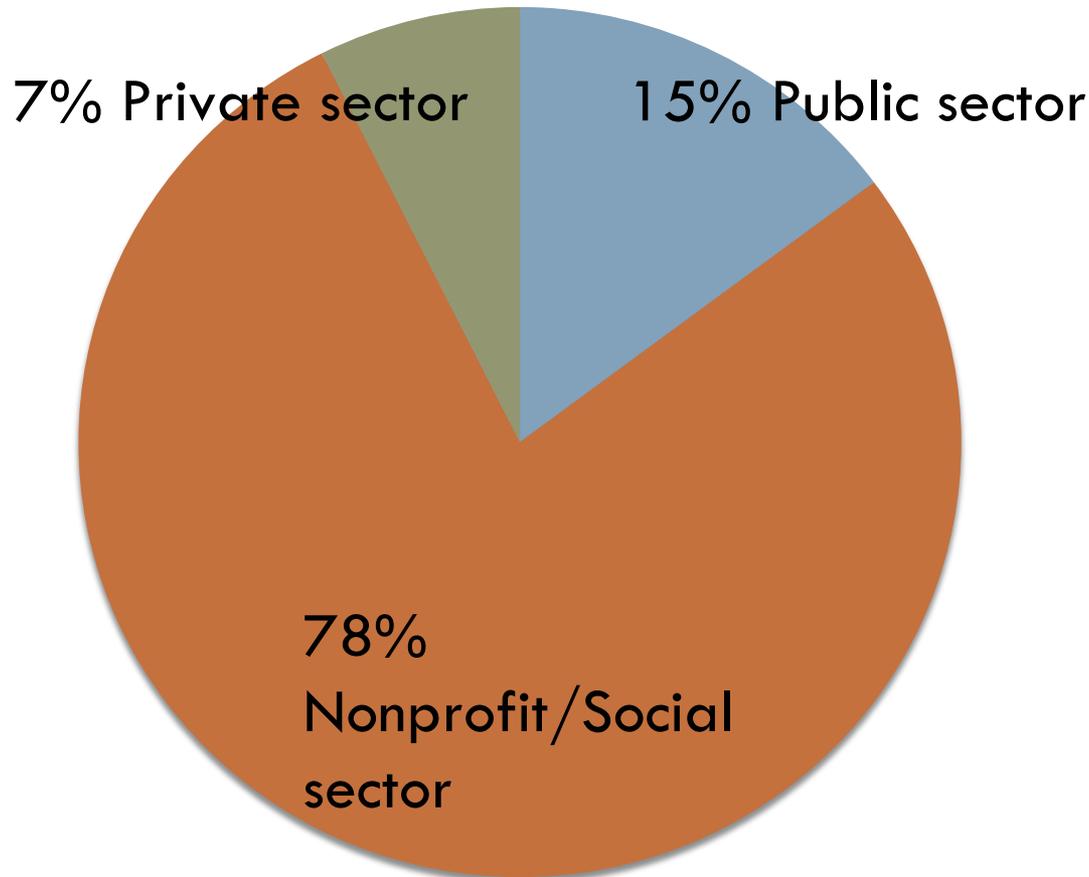
Post-Fellowship Connections By Cohort



- High level of connectivity between cohorts
- On average 70% of Fellows' connections were with Fellows from *other* cohorts.

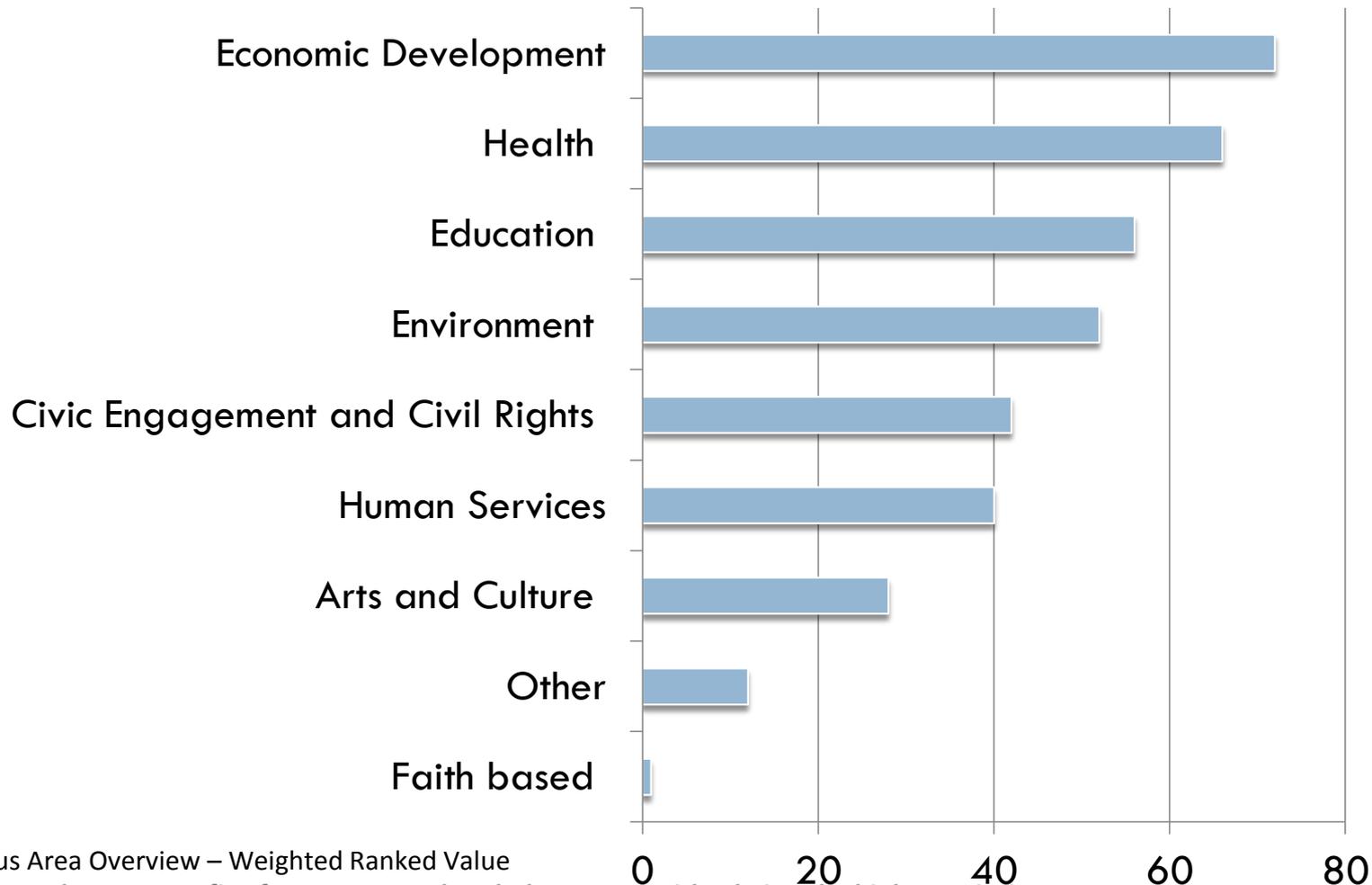


Sector Breakdown of Fellows



Based on survey responses. Recognition that lines between sectors are blurred so many people operate in more than one.

Reported Priority Issue Areas



Focus Area Overview – Weighted Ranked Value

(Please choose up to five focus areas and rank them 1 - 5, with 1 being the highest priority.

If you focus on fewer than five areas, please rank order the areas that are your highest priorities.) (n=27)

Types of Connections: Increased information flow

Increase in regular exchanges = Cross fertilization of information and ideas

- 285% increase in connections that “exchange information regularly”

“Fellows have been very collaborative in sharing information and offering advice. That has helped in everything from program development to better understanding all sides of various issues. “

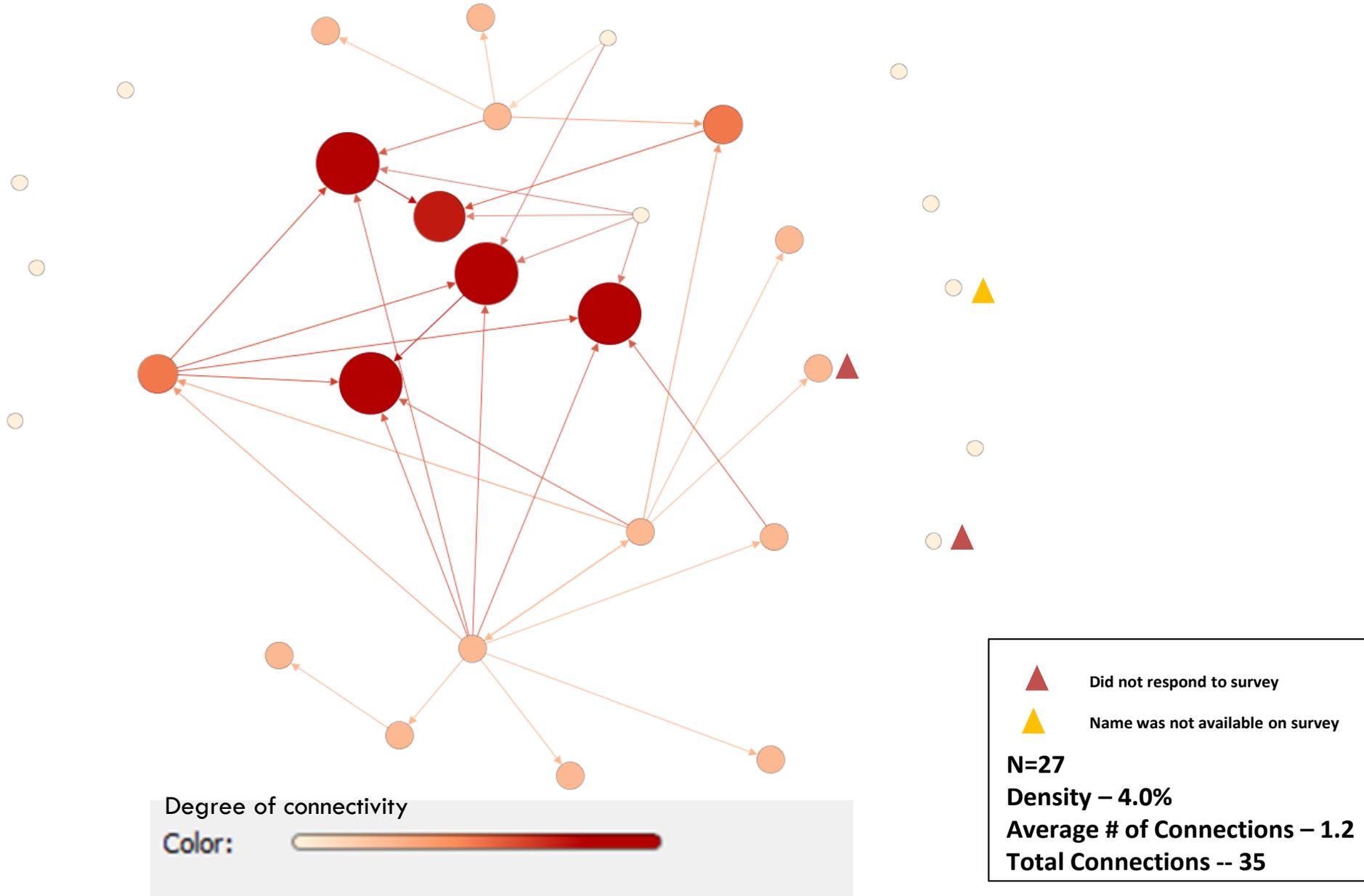
Types of Connections: Significant exposure to new thinking

Fellowship resulted in increase in cross-sector and cross-disciplinary connections and information sharing.

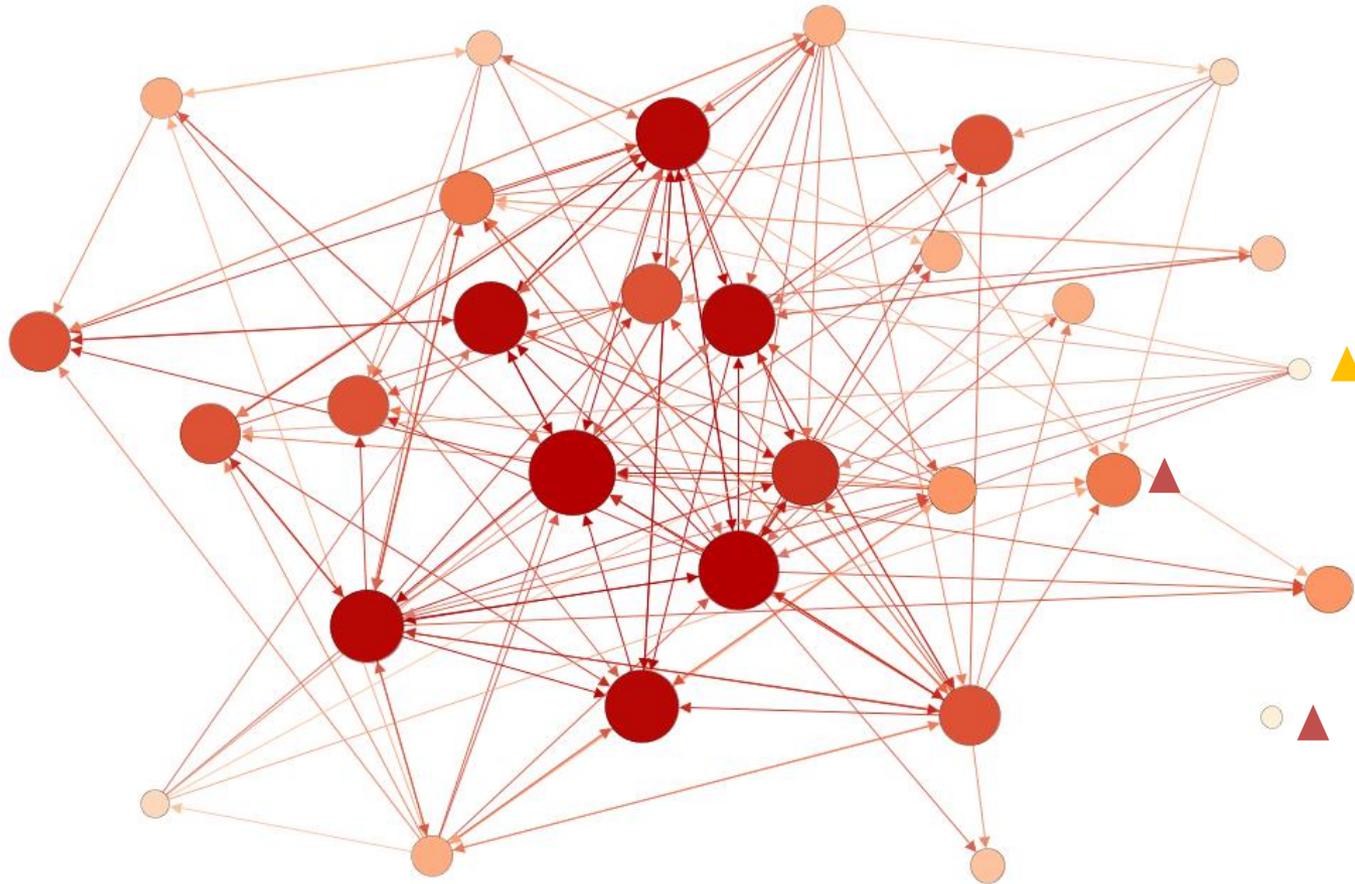
- On average 80% of Fellows' connections were with Fellows with a different #1 priority focus area
- Greatest increase, >300%, was in connections that provided “information that led to new thinking or framing that has been useful...”

“The whole process included challenging us with different perspectives and thinking about problems and problem solving through the eyes of our colleagues.”

Information Led to New Thinking – Before Fellowship



Information Led to New Thinking – After Fellowship



Degree of connectivity

Color:



- ▲ Did not respond to survey
- ▲ Name was not available on survey

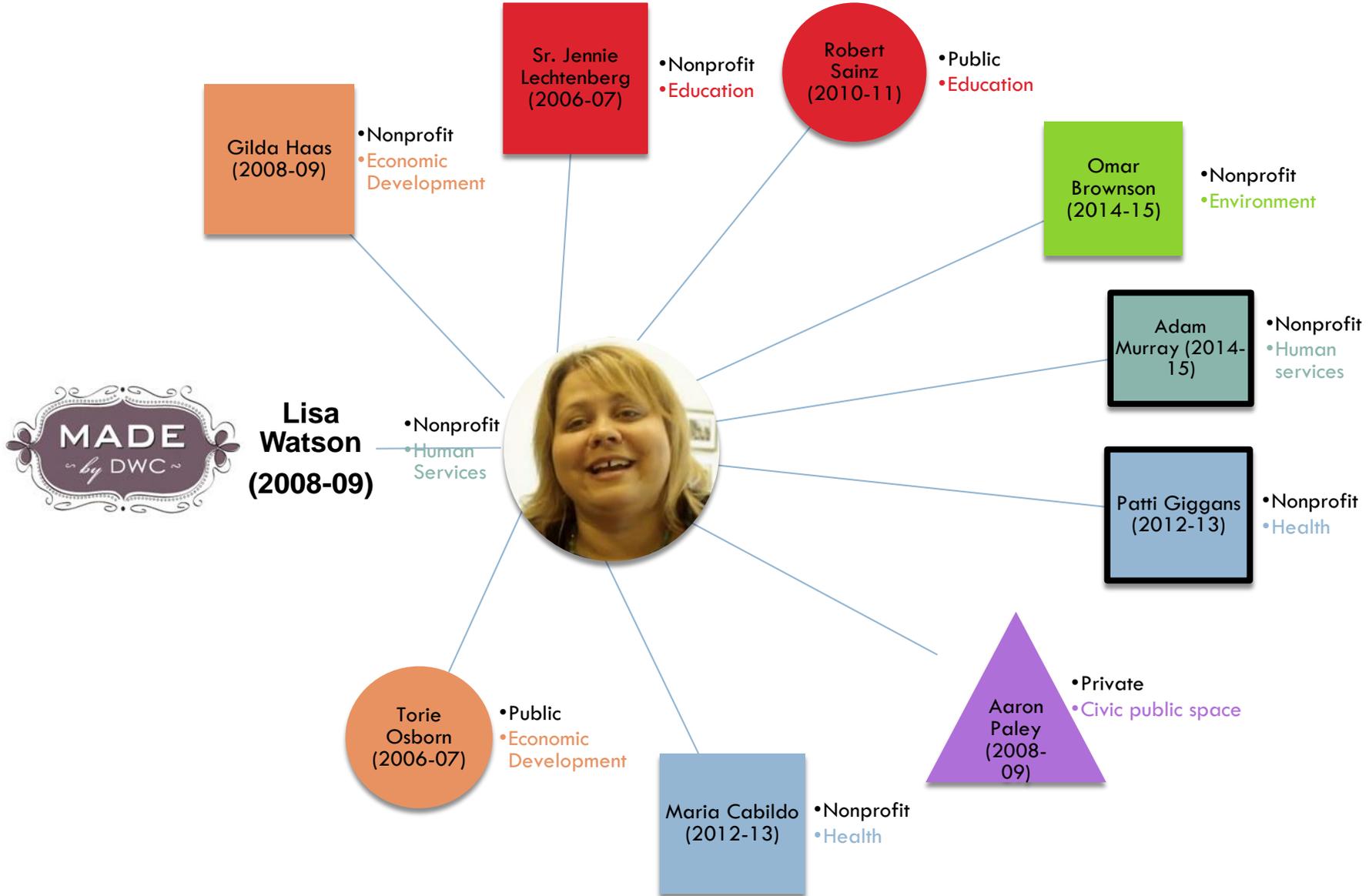
N=27

Density – 16.4%

Avg # of Connections –4.8

Total Connections

Cross disciplinary connections example: Lisa Watson



Key: Black outline = relationship prior to Fellowship
 Shape= sector ■ = Nonprofit ▲ = Private ● = Public
 Color = top issue

Types of connections: Collaborations emerging

More collaborative work occurring with other Fellows

- 75% increase in connections “worked/am working together on a community solution”

“As you get more people who are leading different organizations to think, and can join efforts... a lot of us have common goals that we are trying to reach.”

How has the Stanton Fellowship had an impact on its members and LA...

Personally?

Their professional work?

Their organizations and community?

During the Fellowship and post-Fellowship?

How has connecting helped you?

Top responses:

- 89% - Think about or consider a new approach or solution to a community problem
- 85%- Think about or consider a community problem from a different perspective or vantage point
- 82% - Have access that you would not otherwise have to a community leader, social entrepreneur or opinion leader
- 82% Access to new information

Cross disciplinary exchange = new perspectives infused into thinking

Exposure to new ways of thinking and approaching a problem that result in more innovative (better) solutions

“I think that the beauty of the Stanton experience is the release to consider our challenges in an environment and with people who are creative and innovative and already accomplished in many areas. This access results in approaches and solutions that are different from typical problem solving.”

Increased network reach

New connections to other Fellows and their networks aided work

“I have access and exposure to community leaders that I would never run into otherwise.”

Credibility enabled new connections through projects that has enhanced work

“My project dramatically accelerated my relationships around the arts and entertainment community, and expanded it into the economic development world. All of these are critical to my ability to continue in my role, as is the enhanced seriousness with which I am taken in each of those worlds.”

Peer learning & mutual support

Insights that supported change strategies

“I have learned an enormous amount from all my interactions with Stanton Fellows. Each time we get together I learn something new and unexpected which deepens my understanding about how to solve policy issues.”

Advice to improve organizational effectiveness

“Most of the fellows share responsibility in running their organizations. There was terrific help and tips given among cohorts about what we are face running our nonprofits.”

Good for LA: Strengthens fabric of LA change maker community

Expands awareness, knowledge and appreciation for work of others in LA outside own domain

- ▣ Increased opportunity for innovation, new ideas
- ▣ Network of connections can be activated quickly

“The Fellowship broadens the peripheral vision for Fellows - They know more about what is happening in LA, what others are thinking about and doing.”

Good for LA: New Collaborations

Fellows working together in different forms demonstrates alignment potential

- ▣ Aligned work on issues
- ▣ Board membership/referrals
- ▣ Projects

Example: Patti Giggans:

- ▣ *Peace Over Violence and Community Coalition worked to change the LAUSD school disciplinary policy*
- ▣ *Applied for a grant with Downtown Women's Center*
- ▣ *Founding board member at 1in6*

Good for LA: Stanton Projects

Project successes – some in short time frame, while others on longer horizon – bearing fruit for LA

“In sum, in 2010, there was no dedicated climate change advocacy organization operating in Los Angeles. Now there is - and the group is influential beyond LA's borders. Climate Resolve is widely acknowledged as a leader; there is only one other group in the US that resembles us (located in Seattle). Durfee made that happen in LA.”

Consistent response - project influenced work going forward

“The culmination of my project continues to stir up new opportunities, feedback and ideas that are helping keep the project concept itself alive as well as further the goals of my own role in my organization.”

In summary

Our research suggests that the Stanton Fellowship network helps Fellows access information, ideas and insights that lead to more innovative, faster solutions and better outcomes for LA.

- ▣ Established connections lowers transactions costs so information, new ideas and perspectives are obtained more quickly. Solutions take into account fuller picture.

“By bringing together smart people from various disciplines in Los Angeles, problems can be viewed through various prisms, rather than through a telescope. More importantly, solutions and strategies are developed by looking more richly at the problem from various perspectives and disciplines.”

Factors contributing to network development

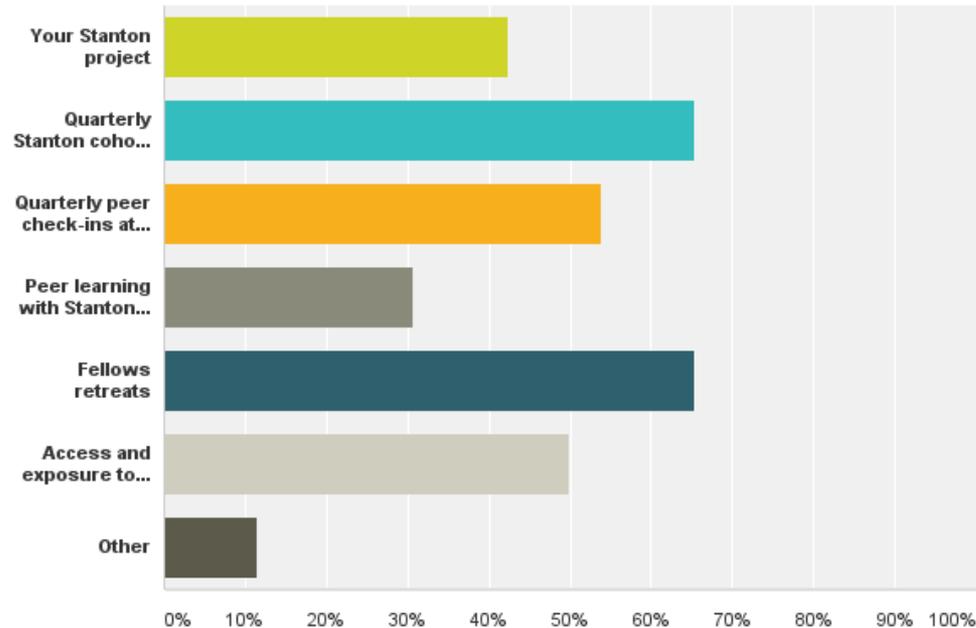
- Projects provided basis for discussion that fosters relationship development (an avenue for trust building, seeing motivation of a person)
- Program design provides opportunities for exchange

“A diverse fellowship cohort and the ability to spend a day doing a deep dive into individual fellow’s work really broadened my perspective about how others are working to make LA a better place.”

What factors contributed to network development?

Q11 What aspects of the Stanton Fellowship have most facilitated connections and collaboration with other Fellows?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 2



Trust: the glue of networks

Trust facilitates the flow of ideas, information and connections. Trust essential to network health.

“There’s a certain bond around thinking big, out of the box and wanting social change. It kind of bonds you ...there are personal work relationships that are created...”

Culture of Durfee

- Supportive, encourage risk-taking, true trust

“They are there to support the inventors and to make sure something valuable comes out of it, to give you latitude. They invite you to push the envelope and are not fearful of what other foundations might perceive as failure, which is a healthy environment to experiment.”

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Recommendations related to Important Dimensions of the Network

Strategic opportunities, points of discussion and
consideration

1. Edge of ice

Cross issue/sector/discipline exchanges yield new ideas, unexpected, better solutions related to projects (during fellowship) and influence thinking after

- ▣ Intentional diversity in cohorts

Recommendations

- ▣ Continue in cross-fertilization convening (network weaving) role
 - ▣ Consider more opportunities to keep connections warm - Post-fellowship charrettes, open space-type meetings, self organized quick consults,
- ▣ Continue emphasis on multi-sector Fellowship cohorts
- ▣ Consider strategic opportunity of more unique issue combinations and the “bridgers”

2. Loose ties/strong trust

Unusual combination. Keep in mind what factors already contribute to both – and how to sustain.

Recommendations

- Network Intentionality
 - ▣ Encourage network weaving by Fellows/alumni
 - ▣ Make more explicit network opportunities to incoming Fellows
 - ▣ Explore possible updates on projects post-Fellowship as a tool for connecting
- Codify and emphasize culture as an organizational asset
 - ▣ Values embodied by staff, AND part of organization
- Continue consideration of interest in network weaving/cohort participation as part of selection process

3. Good for LA

Some results already seen in collaborations and enhanced awareness. Potential opportunities to extend reach.

Recommendations

- Public sector awareness of Fellowship and projects
- Map extended network
 - ▣ Identify opportunities and gaps
 - ▣ New source for possible applicants
- Consider how to share projects and multi-dimensional perspectives with greater LA to extend impact
 - ▣ Ask Fellows to consider how to apply what they have learned in their work, their organizations
 - ▣ Public event

Fellows suggestions for network strengthening

- Annual retreat
- Additional opportunities to re-connect
 - ▣ charrette process
 - ▣ informal happy hours or small group dinners
 - ▣ career development opportunities
 - ▣ presentations or webinar by other Fellows - update on work
 - ▣ book club - reading together
- Greater use of digital tools and social media to connect Fellows
 - ▣ email listserv or private message board forum or shared calendar
 - ▣ social media group
 - ▣ Email digest of Fellows in the news sent out regularly
 - ▣ Webinars - Fellows share with each other

Fellows suggestions for network strengthening

- Archiving record of discussions for reference by Fellows later
- Encourage ongoing connections and innovation by Fellows
 - ▣ Small grants for collaboration with other fellows post-Fellowship
 - ▣ Fellowship 2.0 - akin to Stanford Distinguished Fellows Program - Use of Fellows skills in new settings to assist other social change efforts
 - ▣ Public event - Could liven up broader conversation about LA, build better relationships with people who care about LA deeply.

Discussion

- What strikes you when seeing these results? What takeaways do you have?
- How would you prioritize the network maintenance/network building suggestions?

- Email: Anne@NetworkImpact.org