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Measuring Dimensions of Network Functioning: The KnowHow2GO Network Survey

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Key Points

- As foundations more often encourage networks and other interorganizational strategies, they need tools to measure network effectiveness and outcomes. Gathering network members' perspectives on their engagement with the network can provide insights and avenues for improvement.

- This article describes a network survey that was created for Lumina Foundation's KnowHow2GO initiative, which focused on strengthening college access networks.

- The network survey measures five dimensions of effective networks: network management; sustainable service systems; data-driven decision making; policy and advocacy; and knowledge development and dissemination.

- The network survey provided useful information for the foundation, initiative partners, technical-assistance providers, network leaders, and network members to plan technical assistance and professional development and allow networks to monitor network health. With minor changes, the survey can be applied to network efforts focused on different content or service areas.

Introduction

An understanding of the power of networks (Barabasi, 2003; Buchanan, 2002) has led grant-makers to encourage collaborative efforts that bring together organizations with compatible interests and diverse skills and resources to engage in coordinated or networked efforts. These types of collaborative efforts support a wider scope of influence and more impactful outcomes than can be achieved by single organizations or actors (Easterling, 2012; Gajda, 2004; Innovations for Scaling Impact, 2010; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Scearce, n.d.; Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2011). Grantmakers, including the World Bank; the Global AIDS Alliance; the Climate Works Foundation; the Ford, Annie E. Casey, MacArthur, Mary Reynolds Babcock, Robert Wood Johnson, and Lumina foundations; and others are supporting networks as a part of their national and international grantmaking strategies (Connolly, 2011; Innovations for Scaling Impact, 2010; Easterling, 2012; Jobin, 2008; United Nations Office for Partnerships, 2009; Wilson-Grau, 2007). Collaborative approaches have been used in many content areas and organization types – education, school-university partnerships, nursing, public-private partnerships, health promotion, and early intervention (Woodland & Hutton, 2012).

Networks, partnerships, collaborations, cooperatives, and coalitions are all forms of interorganizational efforts that include at least two organizations or actors working to accomplish goals that could not be accomplished independently (Steelman & Mandell, 2003). Each of these structures implies different types and levels of interdependence and engagement among the participating organizations. In this article we focus on networks, a term that refers to sustained efforts around which autonomous organizations voluntarily work together as equal partners to

achieve a common purpose (Ramsey & Fulop, 2011; Vandeventer & Mandell, 2011; Wilson-Grau, 2007). Effective networks are created when organizations identify a shared purpose, establish priorities, and engage in critical activities that will achieve their stated goal. In effective networks, members discuss and agree about their work and governance structure, and anticipate and plan how to manage conflicts that may arise in their work together (Scherer, 2006; Vandeventer & Mandell, 2007, 2011).

As foundations more often promote network and other interorganizational strategies, the evaluation of collective action and networked efforts is becoming more critical. Evaluations of networks require different processes and tools to address the unique qualities and complexity of network arrangements (Mandell & Keast, 2008). The challenges of measuring network functioning and outcomes include the complex, open, and dynamic nature of networks; capacity of networks to measure performance; the effectiveness of the coordination of network activities; a generally long incubation period before network efforts lead to outcomes; and potentially unexpected outcomes (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Easterling, 2012; Jobin, 2008; Mandell & Keast, 2008; Scearce, n.d.; Wilson-Grau, 2007). Network members change, as does the context in which the network functions. These contextual factors affect the network, participants' engagement in the network, and the ability of an evaluation to connect network actors and activities with outcomes (Wilson-Grau, 2007).

Although growing, the number of practitioners working in the field of evaluating networks is still relatively small (Innovations for Scaling Impact, 2010, Wilson-Grau, 2007). Similarly, the number of tools and frameworks available to measure network functioning and outcomes is also relatively small but growing (Jobin, 2008; Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2009). Several frameworks for evaluating networks focus on the partnership process (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Mandell & Keast, 2008; Scherer, 2006; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). Others use theory-based (Stern, 2004), cost-benefit (Klitgaard, 2004), and transaction cost-based methods (Jobin, 2008).

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Key to network evaluation is gathering evidence to assess whether the network strategy helped to increase the capacity of network participants and the network itself, and whether the network's efforts have influenced outcomes (Easterling, 2012). In order to provide valid and useful information about a network to a foundation sponsor and other stakeholders, network evaluation frameworks must assess a network's progress against expectations for the network's life cycle in terms of network vibrancy (health of the network, participation and leadership), connectivity (communication, nature of relationships), and effects (feedback loops and adaptation, progress in achieving intended outcomes (Innovations for Scaling Impact, 2010; Raynor, 2011; Scearce, n.d.). An effective network evaluation strategy should gather information from a wide variety of stakeholders, including network participants (individuals and organizations) and the target populations (Wilson-Grau, 2007).

Typically, tools used to assess network functioning measure a specific aspect of network development but do not address all relevant aspects. For example, social network analysis techniques measure connections and relationships among

members and organizations, but do not provide nuanced information about the system that the network has created or identify the extent to which the network has the attributes and organizational structure needed for effective, sustainable, and accountable collective work. The Network Mindset Survey (Zerounian, Shing, & Hanni, 2011) determines a network's readiness for funding. The Network Sustainability Tool (Zerounian et al., 2011) assesses the ability of trained staff to advance network interests and foster members' efforts. The Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric (Gajda, 2004) provides a way for members of collaborations to reach consensus about current and projected levels of integration.

This article describes the development and use of a network survey that informed network-building activities in Lumina Foundation's KnowHow2GO initiative and that can be readily adapted for evaluation and self-assessment by other collective-action efforts. The article provides information about the survey, discusses its development and theoretical underpinnings, describes its use in the initiative, and offers lessons learned that can be applied to other network evaluation efforts.

KnowHow2GO Initiative

A joint effort of Lumina Foundation, the Advertising Council, and the American Council on Education, KnowHow2GO was established in 2007 to inform low-income and historically underrepresented middle and high school students, as well as their parents and guardians, about the steps necessary to prepare for college, and to motivate and assist students through college acceptance.[1] The initiative began as a national multimedia campaign with television and radio public-servi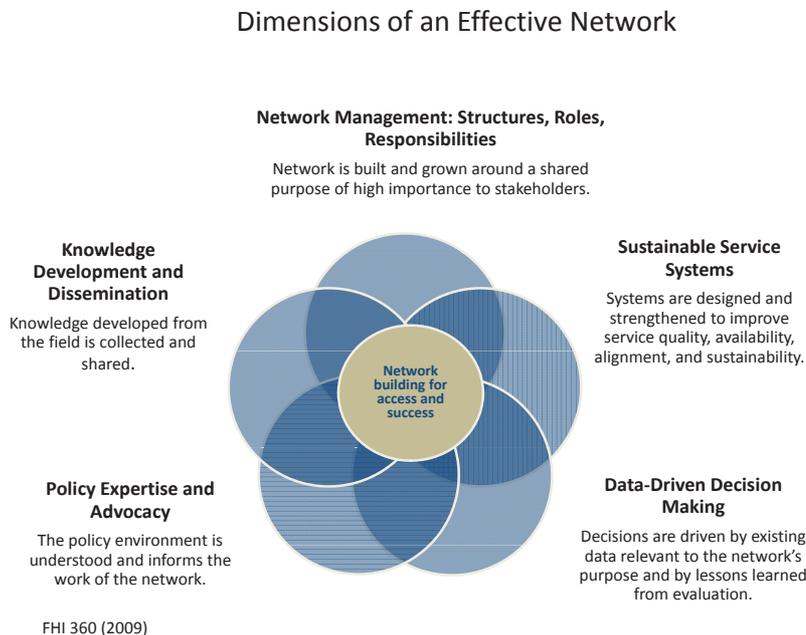ce announcements, advertising, and an interactive website. Lumina granted funding to five states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Washington) and two regions (Los Angeles and Tampa Bay, Fla.), to expand the campaign by engaging local stakeholders to spread three rounds of KH2GO college-going messages. Six states that did not initially receive grant funding (Connecticut, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Wisconsin) were offered the opportunity to obtain KnowHow2GO media and collateral materials, adopt website features, receive technical assistance, and participate in learning-community events. Three states (Idaho, Louisiana, and Michigan) were added to this group in 2009. To support grantees' college access efforts, Lumina also provided grants to local education funds in five KnowHow2GO states/regions and funded projects in selected national youth-serving organizations and initiatives (e.g., What Kids Can Do, YMCA of the USA, and College Goal Sunday).

After two years, it became clear to Lumina staff that the media campaign could have greater impact with improved collaboration among grantees, college access providers, the secondary and higher education systems, and public- and private-sector stakeholders. In September 2009, the foundation encouraged grantees to establish, or in the case of several grantees, to strengthen, regional or statewide college access networks to fill service gaps, reduce redundancies in services, improve practices, and address policy gaps. KnowHow2GO's network-building effort applied Vandeventer and Mandell's (2007, 2011) research and experience in supporting and engaging networks in communitywide efforts.

Network-Building Framework

Based on Vandeventer and Mandell's work and their own experience planning and providing assistance to networks, the KnowHow2GO technical assistance team members from the Academy for Educational Development and the Public Education Network identified five dimensions of effective networks to support the work of KnowHow2GO's grantees. (See Figure 1.) These characteristics – network management, sustainable services systems, data-driven decision-making, policy and advocacy, and knowledge develop-

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[1] The KnowHow2GO Network Survey was developed by the Academy for Educational Development KnowHow2GO evaluation team with input from the Academy for Educational Development/Public Education Network technical assistance team members and Paul Vandeventer, president and chief executive officer of Community Partners. (In July 2011, FHI 360 acquired the programs, expertise, and assets of AED.) A copy of the network survey may be obtained from the National College Access Network (http://www.collegeaccess.org).

FIGURE 1 Dimensions of an Effective Network

Dimensions of an Effective Network

Network Management: Structures, Roles, Responsibilities

Network is built and grown around a shared purpose of high importance to stakeholders.

Knowledge Development and Dissemination

Knowledge developed from the field is collected and shared.

Sustainable Service Systems

Systems are designed and strengthened to improve service quality, availability, alignment, and sustainability.

Network building for access and success

Policy Expertise and Advocacy

The policy environment is understood and informs the work of the network.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Decisions are driven by existing data relevant to the network's purpose and by lessons learned from evaluation.

FHI 360 (2009)

ment and dissemination – enable organizations within a network to work collaboratively toward sustained change. The characteristics expand on three features of networks that Vandeventer and Mandell (2011) describe: (a) members "invest in and build new types or relationships … and acknowledge their mutual independence" (p. 18), (b) networks require a degree of risk taking and require members to trust each other, and (c) network members are equal partners with shared authority.

The dimensions articulated a common understanding of the elements that could strengthen the KnowHow2GO collective work. The technical assistance team also developed a rubric based on these dimensions to inform current and potential network members about effective networks, develop collective understanding of network development, set priorities and associated action plans, and help network members define and commit to clear roles and responsibilities. The rubric, a self-assessment tool, was designed to help KnowHow2GO grantees chart their progress along a continuum of network development, and

provide information for national and grantee-level technical assistance activities.

Rationale for the Network Survey

The network survey was one of several methods used in the process evaluation of the Know-How2GO initiative. Its primary purpose was to provide an overview of network-building efforts among a very diverse group of grantees. The KnowHow2GO evaluation team created the network survey to obtain network members' perceptions about network structure and functioning as well as progress toward accomplishment of outcomes of their collective work. It served a number of purposes:

- Measuring characteristics of the networks as organizations.
- Assessing interim steps in the development of effective, sustainable networks.
- Measuring perceptions of attainment of short-term service provision objectives, providing immediately useful information to individual networks and allowing for comparison (e.g., identifying target populations reached and

college access services provided by member organizations, perceived progress toward common purposes, and satisfaction with network participation and accomplishments).
- Communicating expectations to new network members.
- Providing information for strategic planning.
- Providing KnowHow2GO stakeholders (e.g., national partners, grantees, evaluators, technical assistance providers) a common understanding of the key dimensions of an effective network.

The survey assesses the five dimensions and attributes of effective, high-functioning networks that guided the KnowHow2GO effort. (See Figure

The KnowHow2GO Network Survey measures the organizational structures considered to be essential to support network functioning and members' experiences in working with other stakeholders toward a common purpose.

1.) The survey focuses primarily on a network's structure and functioning and measures members' perceptions of how well the network is accomplishing grant objectives. Because the KnowHow2GO networks were so varied, the network survey needed to be generic enough to be useful for grantees at various stages of network development, appropriate for different types of networks (e.g., regional service networks or statewide associations), and relevant for networks with different capacities and staff resources. Although the network survey was not designed to measure long-term outcomes, the survey does collect information on intermediate measures, for example the extent to which members believe the network is achieving its shared purpose, filling service gaps, improving practice, and building public awareness about college access. The network

survey collects network members' perceptions about network structure and process indicators and, therefore, provides a broader focus than conventional network analysis and interorganizational collaboration surveys. The KnowHow2GO Network Survey measures the organizational structures considered to be essential to support network functioning and members' experiences in working with other stakeholders toward a common purpose.

Network Survey Format

The majority of the questions on the network survey are in fixed-response format, asking respondents to select an option, use a pull-down menu, or provide a rating along four-point scales (either "has not yet happened" to "occurs to a great extent" or "not at all" to "to a large extent"). The survey also includes several open-ended questions concerning the perceived benefit of network membership to a respondent's organization, specific examples of accomplishments, and negative impacts and challenges of membership. In the KnowHow2GO evaluation, each grantee could add a set of questions at the end of the survey pertaining to their specific planning and programming. The network survey includes questions that are relevant for any type of network but also includes questions specific to the Know-How2GO initiative and to the types of activities and outcomes expected of college access service providers. These content-specific questions can be modified for use with networks focused on different content or service areas.

The evaluation team administered the online survey in 2009, 2010, and 2011 as a component of a mixed-method evaluation of the implementation of the national KnowHow2GO initiative. The evaluation team modified the survey slightly in each of the three years to ensure most efficient and reliable data collection. For example, the number of questions was reduced over time, wording of the questions refined, and the branching and online format improved for easier administration. The final version is a single online survey for all respondents with branching for state- or region-specific questions.

The criteria that networks had to meet to participate in the survey were also adapted over the course of the evaluation. For example, in 2009 and 2010 members of newly emerging networks (i.e., those that did not meet regularly, had not yet established a common purpose, and had not agreed upon common activities) were excluded from the survey. The leaders of each network, however, did complete the survey. In 2011, the network survey was opened to all network members.

Survey Administration

To promote interest and engagement in the survey by network members, the evaluators called upon network leaders to administer the survey and encourage their members to respond. The evaluation team supported network leaders' efforts by providing a sample survey introduction and directions that network leaders could disseminate to their members. (See the Appendix.) The evaluation team also provided network leaders with periodic updates about response rates so they could follow up with their members to boost response.

Contribution of the Network Survey to Foundation Effort

The KnowHow2GO Network Survey contributed in a number of valuable ways to the KnowHow2GO effort, with the initial benefit of clearly articulating the key dimensions of KnowHow2GO networks. In the initial stages of KnowHow2GO, the work of developing statewide and regional college access networks was a relatively new endeavor and the Lumina Foundation did not have a framework in place to describe the network-building aspect of the initiative. The graphic in Figure 1 and the ways in which the network survey clarified those dimensions provided foundation representatives, grantees, and other initiative stakeholders a clear understanding of the organizing principles fundamental to the development of the KnowHow2GO networks.

The network survey results provided Lumina and its KnowHow2GO partners, national evaluation team, technical assistance providers, and foundation staff with a way to triangulate other evaluation data (e.g., network leader and staff interviews and program reports). For example, in the first

year of survey administration the results provided a bit of a surprise to the program manager. In particular, the finding that several networks did not meet the criteria for participating was not consistent with the anecdotal evidence that had been collected up to that point. The anecdotal discussions had not provided a sufficiently fine and grounded picture of the status of network development. Also, the survey allowed network members, not just the network leaders or grantee representatives, to provide data. For example, the survey asked network members to assess network leadership, satisfaction with the accomplishments of their network, and that the extent to which network membership was beneficial to their organizations.

The survey results also highlighted areas of strength and need to guide technical assistance and professional development efforts. For example, Figure 2 is an example of the data that the network survey provided regarding the characteristics of the KnowHow2GO networks. These results suggested to technical assistance providers areas in which the networks were having greater success and areas that could be targeted for technical assistance. The same data were available by network and also aggregated for all networks in KnowHow2GO.

At the start of the network-building effort, Lumina knew that the networks were in different stages of development. Several were in the process of formation and several were more mature and already quite well organized. Therefore, although there was an expectation that over time there should be some progress in development, there was also a clear understanding that because of the varied starting levels, there could be no consistent expectation about the stage of development that each network should have at the end of the initiative. The network survey was able to measure networks at different stages of development – not to compare them to one another, but to provide useful information about each that could guide technical assistance and support.

The responses to the network survey helped to guide the content and agenda for the semi-annual learning-community meetings, which were at-

FIGURE 2 Agreement Among Network Members About Network Characteristics
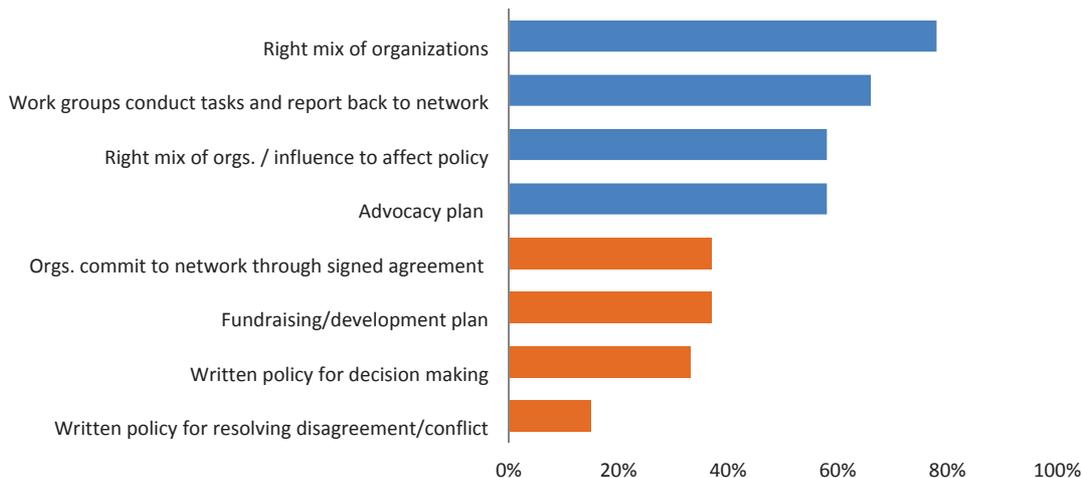
tended by network leaders. The speakers, topics, and facilitated discussions in the meetings were chosen based on network participants' reported needs and anticipated next steps in the network-building process. The technical assistance team also addressed network-building efforts in individual sessions with grantees.

In addition to identifying organizational and network successes, the network survey had an open-ended question about challenges that respondents faced in working collaboratively and general challenges that the network faced. The qualitative data confirmed quantitative responses and offered specific information for network managers. The data also provided helpful information for the foundation and its technical assistance partner to support the work of grantees and enhance the relationships and capacities of the networks.

The network survey provided information about the effects of the network on member organizations, and on the work of college access in each network and across the initiative. The repeated use of the network survey provided stakeholders with an overview of network functioning at three

points in time to begin to see trends and make adjustments in their work as needed. The survey provided Lumina Foundation with a realistic assessment of the status of network development among the grantees. Network survey findings were reported in a variety of ways. The evaluation team incorporated survey results into the annual evaluation reports, created grantee-specific reports that were shared with network coordinators, and provided a standalone network survey report that was shared with all KnowHow2GO participants.

Contribution of the Network Survey to Grantees' Efforts

Grantees' use of the network survey results varied. Several grantees participated in the survey to support the national evaluation, but did not use the results for the evaluation of their own network efforts. Others used the network survey to inform their work and measure progress toward expected outcomes. The survey results were particularly useful to networks lacking internal-evaluation capacity; two grantees in particular used data from several administrations of the network survey to inform planning and engage

network members in discussion. State-level findings and evaluation team presentations at grantee network meetings helped to increase utilization of evaluation findings.

One grantee had the internal evaluation staff and capacity to support widespread use of survey findings. The grantee's internal evaluation team added questions to the network survey about the organization's college access services, capacity-building efforts, and the statewide policy context. The internal evaluation team triangulated survey results with additional data they collected, including focus group information, grantee reports, and scholarship data to confirm and explain survey findings. The grantee planned to administer a version of the network survey in 2013, after the conclusion of Lumina Foundation KnowHow2GO funding, to continue to assess differences, use the data for grant reports and proposals, and provide user-friendly reports to their team and network. The ongoing use of the survey demonstrates that it has been of benefit to this grantee in supporting members' needs and documenting network accomplishments.

Lessons Learned/Practical Suggestions for Using the Network Survey

The network survey, first and foremost, articulated for initiative participants – funders, grantees, technical assistance providers, and evaluators – a common understanding of the dimensions of effective networks. Survey results provided a useful source of information about the creation and growth of 16 very different college access networks. In particular, the survey provided network leadership and member perspectives for the cross-site evaluation and informed network leaders about the status and progress toward network objectives. The tool was used for self-assessment as well as for analysis of overall progress, for decision making, identifying strengths and challenges, and capturing accomplishments.

The network survey was hosted online where it was easily shared and modified, but can also be administered in paper-and-pencil format. The process for online administration is streamlined and all KnowHow2GO grantees were invited to

participate in the 2011 survey administration. A Network Survey Toolkit was developed to provide background about the survey, suggestions for its administration, and other useful information for potential survey users.

Although useful, the network survey had several limitations and offers opportunities for additional research and validation. The survey was created to measure five key dimensions of effective networks and further research could investigate the extent to which networks that are strong in these dimensions have stronger outcomes or greater overall success. The length of the initiative did not provide sufficient time for a full analysis of this question. Also, additional tools for grantees, including data analysis and reporting models and frameworks, could help strengthen evaluation use when evaluation capacity of a particular network is not strong.

The contribution of the network survey and the toolkit to the overall KnowHow2GO evaluation and to the work of specific grantees suggested that this instrument is potentially useful for measuring implementation and accomplishments of other network-building initiatives at local, regional and state levels. The network survey includes questions that measure network attributes and can be adapted for use in other content areas. Questions specific to the KnowHow2GO college access effort can be replaced or modified. The following recommendations are offered to foundations that are considering using the network survey:

- Engage stakeholders in the evaluation process. External evaluators bring experience and knowledge of evaluation methodology to the evaluation process. However, evaluators should actively engage network members and stakeholders in the process to increase evaluation reliability and validity. Widely sharing the information gathered from the network survey and asking for input from members in interpreting the data can help to strengthen participating organizations' understanding of network expectations and benefits. Stakeholder understanding of and engagement in respond-

The results of the network survey can inform technical assistance and professional development and also provide guidance about necessary adjustments or modifications to program implementation. The results can provide useful information about the extent to which network members are aware of the basic characteristics of their networks.

ing to the network survey will increase their understanding of expectations of effective networks and increase the likelihood of accepting and implementing the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

- Provide support for grantees' network survey use and analysis. The evaluation team supported survey administration through a number of strategies. The team explained to network leaders how the survey could benefit their members, drafted a sample memo that network leaders could use to introduce the survey to members, conducted a webinar about survey administration, offered individualized support, engaged network leaders in increasing response rates, and reported state-specific findings back to network leaders. This support increased network buy-in and response rates. Additional resources could be helpful – for example, data-analysis tools or report templates that network leaders could use to communicate results with members.
- Ensure targeted reporting. One of the strategies that the evaluation team used to engage networks to participate in the survey was to help the networks understand findings specific to their own network as well as the overall

findings. In each year of survey administration, each grantee received site-specific results. A separate report of the overall evaluation was prepared for the foundation and made available to grantees, technical assistance staff, and other initiative partners.

- Target technical assistance and professional development. The results of the network survey can inform technical assistance and professional development and also provide guidance about necessary adjustments or modifications to program implementation. The results can provide useful information about the extent to which network members are aware of the basic characteristics of their networks. For example, if a respondent reported that they did not know if the network had a shared purpose when it did have one, networks may need to communicate more broadly the network's purpose to its members.
- Encourage use of the network survey by a variety of network types. Foundations can take advantage of the network survey's usefulness for measuring network functioning among networks that differ in terms of maturity, size, geographic reach, type of lead organization, and organizational structure. Repeated use of the survey can show growth in network development and illustrate differences among networks that can affect outcomes.
- Use the network survey results to show progress toward network strength and outcomes. One of the challenges of working in a network is maintaining interest, focus, and engagement for a sufficient length of time to move from network formation to network outcomes. The network survey promotes grantee and stakeholder reflection on the status of their network and accomplishments in developing their network structure. It also identifies areas that the network can address to improve potential impact. Using the network survey to periodically assess progress can help to show growing relationships and efforts among member organizations and assess movement toward intermediate and longer-term outcomes.

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Appendix A.

Introduction and Directions

What is the purpose of this survey?

This is a survey for networks working to improve college access and success. The survey will help the networks, Lumina Foundation, and KnowHow2Go partners to better understand the different types of networks participating in KnowHow2GO, how they evolve, and how they work to improve college access and success. If your organization completed this survey last year, please do so again. The survey is being conducted at three points in time so we can assess change. The survey contains questions about your organization, its relationship to the network, features of the network, and accomplishments.

Who should complete the survey?

Each organization participating in the network is to complete one survey. Although your organization may participate in more than one network, please complete the survey with only one network in mind.

How do I take the survey?

You can complete the survey online or you can complete a PDF version and return it to Censeo Group by email (email address) or fax (fax number).

The survey will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. You do not have to finish it at one sitting. If you are completing it online, your data will be saved when you click "next" at the bottom of the page and you can return to it if you use the same computer. When you click "done" at the end of the survey, your answers will be forwarded to Censeo Group and you will not be able to make further changes.

Different types of networks, some new and some well established, will take this survey. For this reason, some of the questions may not apply to your network. Please use the "not applicable" or "do not know" response categories when appropriate and answer all questions as candidly as possible.

Will my responses be anonymous?

Yes. We do not ask for your name and only ask for the name of your organization so that you do not receive reminder emails to complete the survey. The name of your organization will not be associated with your responses in any report without your written permission.

How will the data be used?

The Censeo Group evaluation team is conducting this survey under contract to Lumina Foundation and in cooperation with the lead organization for the KH2GO initiative in your state. The survey is part of the evaluation of the national KH2GO initiative, and other KH2GO states with formal networks are participating in the survey. Findings, aggregated by state and/or region, will be reported to Lumina Foundation. Because findings can inform state work, we will report state-specific findings to the lead KH2GO organization or associated public education fund in each state.

Questions?

(Contact information.)
Thank you in advance for providing this important information about college access and success networks.

KnowHow2GO

Introduction

The KnowHow2GO network survey will help us to understand better the process and outcomes of the KnowHow2GO network effort. Even though your network may not have all of the features or characteristics listed in the survey, please do your best to answer the questions. If your organization completed this survey previously, please do so again so that we can assess change in network functions and outcomes over time.

Please complete the survey by (date by which survey to be completed).

The survey should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. You do not need to complete the survey in one sitting. When you click "next" at the bottom of the page, your data will be saved and you can return to the survey as long as you use the same computer that you are using now. When you click "done" at the end of the survey, you will not be able to make further changes.

Your responses will be kept confidential. We ask for the name of your organization or agency so that you do not receive emails to remind you to complete the survey. The name of your organization or agency will not be associated with your responses in any report of our findings without your written permission. You may choose not to complete the survey in whole or in part without penalty.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact (include contact information).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to provide important information about college access and success networks.

Information About Your Organization

1. Which of the following categories best describes your organization or agency?

- ○ College-access organization (e.g., Gear UP)
- ○ Community-based organization (e.g., youth serving, faith based)
- ○ Advocacy organization
- ○ Government (e.g., state, city, or local agency, public library)
- ○ Education – school district or elementary, middle, or high school
- ○ Education – community college
- ○ Education – four-year college or university
- ○ Communications/media
- ○ Private sector (e.g., business, chamber of commerce)
- ○ Grantmaking foundation
- ○ Local education fund

2. Please indicate whether your organization or agency serves each population and how well you meet the needs of each population served.

	Serve this population	How well meet population's needs
Middle school students	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
High school students	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Undergraduate college students	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Adult learners	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Low-income students	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
First-generation college students	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Racial/ethnic minorities	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Parents/guardians	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively
Other (please specify)	O Yes O No	O Not at all O Slightly effectively O Moderately effectively O Very effectively

3. Are there groups in the geographic area served by your network that are underserved when it comes to college access and success services? If so, which groups are these?

Response:

4. What is the name of the college-access network with which you most often or most consistently engage? In some states this may be the statewide or regional network, in others it may be a smaller regional or local network. If the network does not have a formal name, how do members refer to the network?

Response:

Please answer the remaining questions of the survey with regards to the network that you named in question 4.

5. In which geographic region does your network focus its work?

○ Statewide
○ Regionally (multicounty)
○ Locally (county, city, school district[s])

If local or regional, please identify the area served (e.g., cities, counties, school districts, etc.).

Response:

6. Are you a member of the network steering committee or advisory committee, or do you hold a leadership role in the network?

○ Yes
○ No

7. Please estimate how many times you met as a network in 2011, either face to face or through other means (e.g., conference calls, webinars, committee meetings, etc.).

———————————

8. In what month and year did your organization or agency join the network?

———————————

Network features -
Networks differ from each other in terms of their features, and
these features change over time due to internal or external factors.

9. Does your network have the following features?

	Yes	No	Do not know
Agreement that members sign to commit organization to network (e.g., memorandum of understanding, charter, etc.).	○	○	○
Written document describing the process members will use to make decisions.			
Written document describing how disagreement or conflict will be handled.	○	○	○
Subcommittees or work groups that engage in agreed-upon tasks and activities and report back to the full network.	○	○	○
A fundraising/development plan.	○	○	○
An advocacy plan that describes objectives, resources, tools, and tactics.	○	○	○
The right mix of organizations to strengthen or expand college access and success services.	○	○	○
The right mix of organizations and influence to monitor, address, or influence state, regional, or local policy change.	○	○	○

10. To what extent does each of the following statements describe your network?

	Has not yet happened	Occurs to small extent	Occurs to moderate extent	Occurs to great extent	Do not know
Membership					
Members understand the shared purpose that binds organizations in the network.	○	○	○	○	○

	Has not yet happened	Occurs to small extent	Occurs to moderate extent	Occurs to great extent	Do not know
Members agree about the tasks and activities to achieve the shared purpose.	○	○	○	○	○
Members work actively to achieve the mutually understood network purpose.	○	○	○	○	○
Organizations with relevant goals are encouraged to join.	○	○	○	○	○
Network Management, Facilitation, Process, and Structure					
Network leaders, coordinators, and facilitators are effective.	○	○	○	○	○
Members have sense of equal partnership.	○	○	○	○	○
Members have opportunities for regular interaction and discussion.	○	○	○	○	○
Members have positive relationships – mutual respect, trust, understanding.	○	○	○	○	○
Members offer meaningful input about the work of the network.	○	○	○	○	○
Network routinely reviews or reassesses network priorities and progress towards achieving objectives.	○	○	○	○	○
Resources and Sustainability					
Network has adequate financial resources, staff, or volunteers to support operations.	○	○	○	○	○
Members contribute resources to support network tasks and activities.	○	○	○	○	○

| Network effectively finds and taps assets (e.g., funding, relationships, talent). | O | O | O | O | O |

11. Do any of the organizations or agencies in your network exert outsized influence over network priorities, tasks, or activities or distort or create imbalances in members' relationships?

O   Yes
O   No
O   Don't know

Please describe. You do not have to name organizations or agencies, but please give specific examples of how the network was affected.

Response:

Impact of Network on Members

12. During the past 12 months, as a result of participating in the network, my organization/agency…

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Do not know
Communication and Working With Other Organization					
improved communication methods or materials.	O	O	O	O	O
worked with organizations with whom we had rarely or never worked.	O	O	O	O	O
obtained additional funding or funding from new stream.	O	O	O	O	O
Access and Success Services					
learned about the college-access services provided by other organizations.	O	O	O	O	O

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Do not know
offered a broader array of college-access services.	O	O	O	O	O
improved the quality of college-access services.	O	O	O	O	O
strengthened the college-going culture in schools or the community.	O	O	O	O	O
used the KH2GO 4 steps to unify messages around college access and success (i.e., be a pain, push yourself, find the right fit, get your hands on some cash).	O	O	O	O	O
increased the number of low-income students in grades 8-10 who are aware of the 4 steps to college.	O	O	O	O	O
increased the number of caring adults who know how to help students prepare for college.	O	O	O	O	O

13. Overall, how beneficial is it for your organization/agency to be a member of the network?

O Not at all beneficial
O Slightly beneficial
O Moderately beneficial
O Greatly beneficial

Please describe, using specific examples.

Response:

14. Was there any negative impact on your organization/agency from participating in the network? Please explain.

Response:

Network Accomplishments

15. In the following questions, please rate the extent to which your network accomplished the following things during the past 12 months.

During the past 12 months, our network...

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Do not know
General Network Accomplishments					
combined resources to conduct joint events, activities, or programs.	O	O	O	O	O
shared best practices.	O	O	O	O	O
used data to analyze service needs.	O	O	O	O	O
filled gaps or reduced service duplication.	O	O	O	O	O
improved the system of college-access support.	O	O	O	O	O
strengthened the capacity of member organizations (e.g., planning, data use).	O	O	O	O	O
made progress in achieving our shared purpose.	O	O	O	O	O
captured and communicated evidence of the network's progress, challenges, and success.	O	O	O	O	O
was considered by media and leaders as trusted source of college-access information.	O	O	O	O	O
increased public awareness about college access and success issues.	O	O	O	O	O

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Do not know
Accomplishments Related to Policy and Advocacy					
discussed government or institutional policy barriers to college access and success.	O	O	O	O	O
conducted activities to build public will in support of college access and success for low-income students.	O	O	O	O	O
addressed government and institutional barriers to college access and success.	O	O	O	O	O
promoted policy change in financial aid and alignment of K-12 and higher education standards.	O	O	O	O	O
engaged in meetings of advocates, elected officials, and policy groups around college access and success.	O	O	O	O	O

16. How satisfied are you with the accomplishments of your network during the past 12 months?

O Very unsatisfied
O Somewhat unsatisfied
O Somewhat satisfied
O Very satisfied

17. Please describe any challenges related to your organization's work with the network or challenges that the network itself faced.

Response:

18. Please describe specific examples of accomplishments that were achieved through cooperation, coordination, or collaboration that may not have been achieved by member organizations working alone.

Response:

19. What is the name of your organization?

_____

20. In which state is your network located?

○ Connecticut
○ Florida
○ Idaho
○ Illinois
○ Indiana
○ Iowa
○ Louisiana
○ Michigan
○ Montana
○ Nebraska
○ Ohio
○ Southern California
○ Tennessee
○ Washington
○ Wisconsin

21. Do you have additional comments or questions? If you have a question, please include your email address so that we can respond.

Response:

Thank you very much for your help with this survey. We appreciate your time and hope that the information that we share with your state about network functioning, achievements, and suggestions for improvement are beneficial for you and your work.

To obtain a copy of the College Access Network Survey, contact Sara Melnick at the National College Access Network (NCAN), melnicks@collegeaccess.org, (202) 347-4848.