FINAL REPORT

Assessing the Impact of Training on Professional Practice:

An Evaluation of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (2003-2010)
A Message from the Director

This report presents final results for the Evaluation Project of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), including data collected from July 1st, 2011 to November 30th, 2011.

The National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) was established in 2003 based on the proposition that bad leadership is a public health risk, a risk as real as any disease. If the response to a natural or manmade disaster is not led well, people perish. The response to Hurricane Katrina is perhaps the most dramatic example of this.

This mission of the NPLI was, and is, to improve leadership capacity and capability across the national emergency preparedness enterprise including federal, state, and local agencies as well as the private and non-profit sectors. Our original funder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, insisted that the NPLI be a program that drew upon the strengths of both the Harvard School of Public Health and Kennedy School of Government. We have also drawn upon faculty from Harvard Business School as we have honed our curriculum through the years.

Most important, we have integrated academic research with field experience. Whenever possible, faculty visit major incidents, often at the invitation of an NPLI alumnus. We have been “on the ground” after Katrina, during the H1N1 pandemic, in the early days of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and other events. There we observed first hand what was working and what is not. We regularly ask our alumni two questions: What did we teach you that has proven useful? What could we have taught you that would have improved performance? The answers to those questions has informed the ongoing evolution of what we teach subsequent cohorts of NPLI participants. We view this not as training but as continuous quality improvement for the nation’s crisis leaders.

Researching and teaching leadership, however, presents an interesting paradox: leadership, particularly crisis leadership, cannot be easily observed in controlled experiments or by using other traditional research techniques. Yet the framework of any leadership curriculum must be conceptually valid if it is to be consistently taught. We have endeavored with the Meta-Leadership framework and practice method to close that gap. We have labored to create a model that is intellectually rigorous and profoundly practical.

This evaluation report is an attempt to measure our success. We have many anecdotes from our alumni who have progressed in their careers and met major challenges. Here a broader view has been taken by an independent research team looking across all of our cohorts of participants. Just as with the insights we glean from the field, we will apply this information to build on what has worked, refine what can be improved, and continue to work to educate leaders who can make ours a safer and more resilient nation.

Sincerely,

Leonard J. Marcus, Ph.D

Founding Director
Acknowledgements

Marcia Testa, Ph.D., M.P.H., is the Senior Evaluator of the NPLI Evaluation Project. She provided oversight and input for all aspects of the design, conduct and analysis. Dr. Testa is currently Principal Investigator of the Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (PERLC); and concurrently the Education Director for the Harvard Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center (PERCC).

Linda Marc, Sc.D., M.P.H., is the Project Manager of the NPLI Evaluation Project. She was responsible for day-to-day operational activities and the supervision of the evaluation team. Dr. Marc had significant input on all aspects of the evaluation, including designing and revising the survey instruments, managing and supervising the analysis of data, and the generation of reports. Dr. Marc is currently a Co-Investigator of the Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (PERLC), and serves as the Education and Curriculum Development Director.

Elena Savoia, M.D., M.P.H., is the Evaluation Analyst, and she provided input on the design of survey instruments and the analysis of data. She has extensive experience in the assessment of public health systems’ emergency preparedness capabilities. Dr. Savoia is currently the Deputy Director of the Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (PERLC), and she was formerly the Principal Investigator of the Harvard School of Public Health Center for Public Health Preparedness.

Sarah M. Short, M.P.H., is a telephone interviewer and qualitative data analyst. She assisted in designing interview scripts, conducted telephone interviews, was responsible for the coding of qualitative data, and had significant input in the generation of reports. Ms. Short serves as a Program Manager for the Harvard School of Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (PERLC).

Leesa Lin, M.S. P.H., is a telephone interviewer and quantitative data analyst. She assisted in managing the databases for the online surveys and was responsible for the quantitative analysis. She participated in the design of interview scripts, conducted telephone interviews, and the development of final reports. Ms. Lin serves as the Program Coordinator of the Harvard School of Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center (PERRC).

Whitney Henderson, M.S.W., is a telephone interviewer and qualitative data analyst. She led the design of all interview scripts for the online and qualitative surveys, led the code-mapping for the qualitative data analysis, conducted telephone interviews, and had significant input in the generation of reports. Ms. Henderson is an independent consultant, and concurrently a Research Assistant at Tufts University.

We thank the NPLI graduates who participated in the online surveys, telephone-based interviews and web-cast focus groups. Without their insights, observations and example, this evaluation would not have been possible.
Table of Contents

A Message from the Director ........................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... iii

I. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 2

II. NPLI Goal and Logic Model .................................................................................................... 2

   Current program model ............................................................................................................. 2

   Program Phases .......................................................................................................................... 4
      Pre-program activities ............................................................................................................. 4
      Phase 1 .................................................................................................................................... 4
      Phase 2 .................................................................................................................................... 4
      Phase 3 .................................................................................................................................... 4

   Specific Aspects of the Curriculum and Learning Activities .................................................. 5
      Meta-Leadership Project ......................................................................................................... 5
      Project Teams .......................................................................................................................... 5
      Faculty and Staff ..................................................................................................................... 5
      Frontline Experts Speaking in the Program ............................................................................ 5

III. Evaluation Project ................................................................................................................... 6

   Target Alumni ........................................................................................................................... 6
   Evaluation Project Activities ...................................................................................................... 6
   Structured Survey Content ....................................................................................................... 7
   Telephone Interview Script Content ........................................................................................ 8
   NPLI Focus Group Script ......................................................................................................... 8

   Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................ 8

IV. Results ..................................................................................................................................... 9

   Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents .............................................................. 9
   Domain I: Overall Program Experience .................................................................................. 11
   Domain II: Meta-Leadership Curriculum ................................................................................. 13
   Domain III: Leadership Mastery ............................................................................................. 15
   Domain IV: Crisis Leadership .................................................................................................. 16
      Knowledge of Crisis Leadership ............................................................................................ 16
      Improvement of Crisis Leadership Abilities ........................................................................ 17
      Leadership Style ..................................................................................................................... 18
      Leadership Skills for Disaster and Emergency Response .................................................... 19
   Domain V: Application of Knowledge .................................................................................... 20
   Domain VI: Real Life Response ............................................................................................... 22
      Influence .................................................................................................................................. 22
      Advice on Leadership Situations and Enrollment in NPLI ....................................................... 24
   Domain VI: Overall Influence .................................................................................................. 25
   Domain VII: Student Experience ............................................................................................. 26
      Learning Modalities ................................................................................................................ 26
      Meta-Leadership Projects ...................................................................................................... 27
      Suggestions for the Meta-Leadership Project ..................................................................... 28
   Domain VII: Other Leadership Programs ................................................................................. 29

V. Discussion ................................................................................................................................. 30

   Recommendations .................................................................................................................... 30
      Suggested Focus of the NPLI Program .................................................................................. 30
      Suggestions for the Student Experience ................................................................................ 31
I. Introduction

Since the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, our local, state and federal leaders have been forced to add terror attacks to the emergency and disaster events they address in the United States. One question that arose from these events is how people in these leadership roles prepared for, responded and implemented their responses to disasters.

In 2003, the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) was created as a joint program of the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (HKS) to educate senior-level leaders on meta-leadership skills necessary for high-stress, high-stakes environments. Sponsored by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), past participants have come from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Coast Guard, and state and local government agencies. There have been foreign preparedness leaders, such as those from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), participating in the program as well.

The program’s mission is to equip our nation's leaders with the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to effectively lead during crisis in the 21st century. With its Meta-Leadership framework, NPLI’s goals of preparing, teaching and engaging leaders to collaborate across geographic borders and agencies are successfully shown in the program’s results.

This report presents findings for the Evaluation Project of the NPLI, including data collected from July 1st, 2011 to November 30th, 2011. This evaluation assesses the influence of NPLI on its alumni as well as the subsequent action and policy changes in the preparedness and response by interviewing participants from the program's past seven cohorts since its inception, 2003-2010.

The analyses was conducted by an independent evaluation team at HSPH at the request of the leaders of the NPLI program, and uses a retrospective cohort design and summative evaluation method, which is employed to assess the program’s overall effectiveness. The final report includes alumni’s suggestions to the program for future improvement and expansion of NPLI.

II. NPLI Goal and Logic Model

The principal goal of the NPLI is to improve the leadership capacity and capability of senior government executives with responsibility for emergency preparedness and response. The secondary goal is to create a network of meta-leaders across government and extending into the private and non-profit sectors who can work cooperatively and collaboratively across organizational boundaries. Together, achieving these goals will improve agency effectiveness and the nation’s overall preparedness and resilience in the face of large-scale threats. Figure 1 represents the logic model for the program.

Current program model

The current NPLI model incorporates two on-campus experiences that bracket team learning activities centered on a tangible multi-agency challenge. Figure 2 illustrates the process and it is described in greater detail in the sections that follow.
Figure II-1: Logic Model for the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative

Figure II-2: NPLI Curriculum and Learning Process
Program Phases

Pre-program activities

As part of the application process, participants submit brief essays detailing their current responsibilities, future aspirations, and specific challenges they face and would like to address through the NPLI program. The class is chosen to ensure a diversity of agencies, relative equity of level of responsibility, and relevance of challenges and aspirations both to the overall program goals and to those of the other participants.

Selected participants are required to complete an assignment prior to the initial residential session. The assignment is to detail a current problem, policy, or issue linked to terrorism preparedness and emergency response that could benefit from improved connectivity. This exercise was added after cohort five in order to assist the process of developing a solid Meta-Leadership project and team during the initial residential session.

Phase 1

The initial residential component of the program is held on the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It includes formal classroom presentations and discussions as well as personal reflection, project conception, and team formation. The presentations explore the five dimensions of meta-leadership (see Figure 3), the role of leadership in incident command, negotiating skills for leaders, the challenges of navigating the professional-political interface, understanding the behavior of the media and the general public in crisis situations, and other topics relevant to leading in high stakes, high pressure situations. Case-based discussions on recent events are used to ground the academic material in practice. Wherever possible, these discussions are led by frontline experts who participated in that event.

Time is reserved throughout the week for project team meetings. Participants engage in a “meta-leadership project marketplace” and self-select for the team that best meets their interests and the need of their organization. Each project must involve at least three agencies, seek to make significant impact on a tangible problem, and have a defined outcome. Teams have a minimum of three and a maximum of ten members. Each team presents a brief overview of its proposed project at the end of the session. Networking is facilitated through breaks and meal functions throughout the week.

Phase 2

This phase is spent completing the approved meta-leadership project. Each project team is assigned a faculty mentor as a resource during the independent work undertaken upon departure from campus. It is as important that the participants learn to collaborate across organizational boundaries as to achieve the objective of their specific process. The process is designed to enable them to better understand the perspectives of different organizations, the complexities of jurisdictional limitations, and the need to leverage influence as much or more than authority in attempting system-scale change. They are required during this interim period to present their project to their supervisor and colleagues in their home agency for feedback.

Phase 3

The second residential component of the program is held in June of the following year. Its principal focus is on team presentations of their projects, a completion of program requirement. Projects are critiqued by faculty and the full cohort of participants.

The session also includes presentations and case-based discussions that complement the opening residential session. For example, two then-current students were involved in leading the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. In the concluding session that year, they led an extensive discussion based on their experiences. Faculty who had observed leaders during that event also contributed.
Participants also submit an individual personal report of their learning in the program (added as of Cohort VII). These reports are confidential and are not distributed beyond the faculty at any time.

**Specific Aspects of the Curriculum and Learning Activities**

**Meta-Leadership Project**

The meta-leadership project is designed to teach collaborative, connected leadership that is able to transcend organizational boundaries. If the nation is to be resilient in the aftermath of a significant man made or natural disaster, government agencies will have to work together and be able to work well with the private and non-profit sectors. The project process allows participants to address specific issues while building broad skills for exercising effective leadership that achieves unity of effort.

Some meta-leadership projects have become long-term initiatives with significant impact. Examples include the Tale of Our Cities project that taps international experts in response to terrorism to inform U.S.-based officials and the Meta-Leadership Summits for Preparedness comprising 36 city-level summits across the United States.

**Project Teams**

The project teams are required to include participants from at least three agencies. The teams typically include three-to-eight members. The project teams are responsible for organizing their meetings, assigning tasks, and establishing protocols and project deliverables. They are responsible for engaging with their faculty mentor at least once per month, generally via telephone, during this phase though the faculty are available to meet as needed. Each team develops project plan that may include research, interviews, and other activities necessary to complete their deliverable. These activities often involve work with NPLI alumni who either provide direct feedback and guidance or referrals and introductions to other relevant individuals who may prove valuable to the team.

**Faculty and Staff**

Dr. Leonard Marcus, Harvard School of Public Health, and David Gergen, Kennedy School of Government, are the founding co-directors of the NPLI and serve as faculty. Additional faculty include:

- Isaac Ashkenazi, Harvard School of Public Health
- Max Bazerman, Harvard Business School
- Robert Blendon, Harvard School of Public Health and Kennedy School of Government
- Hannah Riley Bowles, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- Barry Dorn, Harvard School of Public Health
- Ronald Heifetz, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- Barbara Kellerman, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- Herman Leonard, Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Business School
- Marc Roberts, Harvard School of Public Health

**Frontline Experts Speaking in the Program**

- Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant, United States Coast Guard
- Richard Besser, Chief Medical Correspondent, ABC News; former acting director, CDC
- Michael Chertoff, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
- Andrew Heyward, former president, CBS News
- Rear Admiral Peter Neffenger, United States Coast Guard
- Richard Serino, Deputy Administrator, FEMA

Staff for the program include Regina Jungbluth, Managing Director, Eric McNulty, Senior Editorial Associate, and Andrew Schwartz, Staff Assistant.
III. Evaluation Project

Program evaluation is an essential part of the evidence-based public health process and can answer several types of questions ranging from i) determining program needs, ii) improving processes of implementation and iii) tracking and assessing outcomes. The NPLI Evaluation Project focuses on tracking and assessing professional performance outcomes and measuring the effectiveness of the NPLI program competencies by assessing the longer-term impact of the educational program on alumni performance in their leadership roles.

Target Alumni

The target alumni population included a total of 296 alumni from cohorts 2003-2010 who were eligible to participate in the summative evaluation. In addition, 52 students currently enrolled in the 2010-11 cohort were included so that their data could serve as a basis for comparison with regard to changes in student characteristics and class composition over time. However, they were not included as part of the summative evaluation since their participation in the program had not been fully completed at the time of the initial evaluation surveys. Of the 348 alumni referenced above, a total of 265 (76%) participated in one or more components of the Evaluation Project activities.

Table III-1: NPLI Respondents, By Cohort Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>265</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Project Activities

The primary activities included three evaluation methods as described below:

1. Two web-based online surveys (“initial invitation survey” and “online structured survey assessment”), with the goal of achieving a 75% response rate amongst eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) who expressed an interest to participate in the structured survey;

2. Telephone-based interviews, with the goal of completing 25 interviews with eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) who expressed an interest to participate; and

3. Focus group interviews, with the goal of conducting a minimum of 5 web-cast focus group sessions with eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010).
Survey response and participation rates are as follows:

- 56% (N=149/265) of alumni who responded to the initial invitation survey expressed an interest to participate in the second online structured survey assessment;
- 24% (N=63/265) expressed an interest to participate in the telephone-based survey;
- 19% (N=49/265) expressed an interest to participate in focus groups;
- 7.9% (N=21/265) were not interested, or needed more information to participate; and
- 17% (N=46/265) declined to participate in any component of the *Evaluation Project*.

**Table III-2: Survey Response and Participation Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Activity Type</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Interested to Participate (N=265)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents (N=265)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Survey</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>56.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure, need more information</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>328*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some NPLI alumni agreed to participate in more than one activity.

**Structured Survey Content**

The online survey contained questions collecting data and assessing a number of different areas as listed below.

1) **Demographics:** Contact information and current employed
2) **Overall Program Experience:** Assessment of the NPLI curriculum
3) **Meta-Leadership Curriculum:** Evaluation of specific components of meta-leadership
4) **Leadership Mastery:** How NPLI has increased self-regulation, awareness and confidence
5) **Crisis Leadership:** How NPLI has increased your skills and abilities during a crisis
6) **Application of Knowledge:** Frequency and use of the specific skills taught in the NPLI
7) **Real-life Response:** Use of on-the-job meta-leadership approaches
8) **Overall Influence:** NPLI’s influence on leadership abilities

The response options included Likert rating scales such as:
- not at all satisfied, slightly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, moderately satisfied, very satisfied
- not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, significantly
Telephone Interview Script Content
The telephone-based interviews contained qualitative open-ended questions assessing a number of different areas as listed below.

1) **Demographics**: Contact information and current organization type
2) **Overall Program Experience**: How NPLI has expanded leadership knowledge
3) **Meta-Leadership Curriculum**: How NPLI curriculum has influenced professional development in the application of the Meta-Leadership concepts
4) **Leadership Mastery**: How NPLI has increased self-regulation, awareness and confidence
5) **Crisis Leadership**: How NPLI has increased your skills and abilities during a crisis
6) **Application of Knowledge**: Frequency and use of the specific skills taught in the NPLI
7) **Real-life Response**: Use of on-the-job meta-leadership approaches
8) **Overall Influence**: NPLI’s influence on leadership abilities
9) **Student Experience**: Assessment of classroom setting, faculty and group projects
10) **Other Leadership Programs**: Similarities and differences of other leadership programs

NPLI Focus Group Script
The goals of the Focus Group were to:

1) Obtain feedback on alumni’s **satisfaction with the NPLI program**, and their perception of the mastery of the material.
2) Obtain feedback on alumni’s **experience applying the knowledge** from the program to practice.
3) Obtain feedback on alumni’s **self-reported performance** in real-life ‘preparedness’ and ‘emergency response’ experiences.

Data Analysis
Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using Excel (Microsoft) and Stata version 12 (Stata Corporation, Texas, 2011). Qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions were analyzed using content analysis methods (Patton, 2002) and with the assistance of the qualitative analysis software package NVivo version 9.0 (QSR International, Pty, Ltd, Australia, 2011). Each qualitative interview and focus group was transcribed by a professional transcription company. After having read through the qualitative responses initially, two evaluators working on this study developed codebooks (or lists of descriptive labels) with which to code (or descriptively label) each response to every open-ended question using NVivo. The first dozen responses to each question were coded independently between the two evaluators, then in a joint effort they reviewed the coding to develop consensus on the codebook and to how to code each response. Thereafter, each evaluator independently coded the remaining qualitative interviews and focus groups. Then files were merged. When there was a disagreement the evaluators discussed the matter and reached consensus.
IV. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Of the 348 alumni referenced above, a total of 265 (76%) participated in one or more components of the Evaluation Project activities. Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=265) are reflected below. During the study period information gathered shows that more than 70% of the respondents were over the age of 45, and the vast majority (over 90%) were affiliated with a government agency.

Table IV-1: NPLI Respondents, By Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV-2: NPLI Respondents, By Organization Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Type</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government-Local</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government-State</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government-Federal</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital/Health System</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit or Community-Based</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Business or Consultant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other affiliation includes, but not limited to: US Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, US Navy, National Guard, and Air Force.

**Some NPLI alumni may have listed more than one affiliation.
At the time of NPLI enrollment, approximately 31% of respondents lived in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, which comprise the D.C. Metro area. An additional 20.4% of respondents lived in Georgia.

Table IV-3: NPLI Respondents, By States Lived while in the Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States Represented</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia (DC)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Domain I: Overall Program Experience

In this section we report on NPLI alumni participant satisfaction. We integrate quantitative and qualitative study results. Amongst 265 alumni who responded to the initial online invitation survey, 56% (N=149/265) expressed an interest to participate in the second online structured survey assessment. In addition, the target goal of conducting 25 telephone-based interviews, and conducting five (5) focus groups was achieved with eligible alumni (Cohorts 2003-2010).

Findings of the quantitative assessment indicated a response rate of 73% (N=109/149) amongst eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) who agreed to participate in this component, which suggests that the evaluation team came very close to achieving their desired target goal of 75% using the online web-based assessment tools.

When alumni were asked to rate their overall impression of the NPLI Program, final results show that 87% of the respondents (N=95/109) reported they were “very” or “moderately” satisfied, compared to 5% of the respondents (N=5/109) who were “somewhat” or “slightly” satisfied.

Figure IV-1: Overall Impression of NPLI

Please rate your overall impression of the NPLI Program (N=109)

- Very satisfied: 68%
- Moderately satisfied: 19%
- Somewhat satisfied: 4%
- Slightly satisfied: 1%
- No Response: 8%
When alumni were asked to rate whether the **NPLI Program met their expectations**, interim results show that 84% of the respondents (N=92/109) reported they were “very” or “moderately” satisfied, compared to 7% of the respondents (N=8/109) who were “somewhat” or “slightly” satisfied.

**Figure IV-2: NPLI Meeting Expectations**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of alumni satisfaction with the NPLI program.](chart)

When alumni were asked to describe how participation in the NPLI program has expanded their knowledge, more than 60% reported that NPLI has significantly expanded their knowledge in meta-leadership. Similarly, 40% report that leadership in high threat environments has been significantly expanded by the NPLI training.

**Figure IV-3: NPLI Expanding Knowledge**

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who reported significant expansion of knowledge in various areas.](chart)
Results from 3 qualitative telephone-based interviews are consistent with the quantitative findings in the following areas:

**Alumni 1: Expanded Knowledge of Meta-Leadership Construct**

“Well, I think one of the main experiences for anybody coming out of the NPLI program is the exposure to the theoretical construct of the meta leader. They have encapsulated that concept quite handily at NPLI. And it really is an eye opener. What I found interesting after the NPLI experience is I walked away thinking almost organically I knew all of this stuff, but they package it in a way that has kind of a profound impact on you. And I think a lot of people had the same experience. You sit there, and when it’s all put together, it’s truly an aha moment. And you say to yourself, “I just didn’t see it that way before this.”

**Alumni 2: Expanded Knowledge of the Five-Dimensions of Meta-Leadership**

“…the exposure I had to the five dimensions of meta-leadership was fairly transformative. It really provided me a new way of thinking about leadership, and breaking down leadership into core components. I hadn’t done that before. I had taken a lot of leadership courses, but I found this model to be particularly illuminating and easily applicable to the work that I did.”

**Alumni 3: Expanded Knowledge about Leadership in High-threat Environments**

“Yes…. there was a richness in the interaction process itself with the other professionals, and it actually broadened my horizon on what activities were happening in the field of notification of the public and what you call high threat environment”

**Domain II: Meta-Leadership Curriculum**

Eligible alumni (Cohorts 2003-2010) responded to a set of questions allowing them to rate the impact of a number of leadership performance indicators as shown in the following diagram.
Among the 109 respondents from Cohorts 2003-2010, more than 50% of alumni reported that the NPLI program has significantly influenced them with regard to “The Person of the Meta-Leader”, “Leading Connectivity”, and “Leading Up”.

Figure IV-4: NPLI Influencing Meta-Leadership Indicators

Results from 3 qualitative telephone-based surveys are consistent with the quantitative findings in these respective areas:

Alumni 1: The Person of the Meta-Leader

“I think the person, the meta leader, I think it did help me realize how much just the attitude or the leadership qualities that a leader exhibits in a time of crisis doesn’t necessarily mean emergency response, it could be just a budget crisis or whatever crisis it is, sets the direction of the organization.”

Alumni 2: Leading Up

“But as I said, looking at a situation and leading up was one piece that I also not just changed myself, but something that became a big thing for me, especially with so many leaders changing in the organization above me, it has helped me really to move forward.”

Alumni 3: Leading Cross-System

“It definitely influenced me, without a doubt. Primarily, it helped me go from really just focusing on the situation, which is kind of where I was, and to some extent kind of leading the silo, to really focusing much more on things like leading up and leading cross-system connectivity. I mean, that's where I've been focusing much of my time since the program, in doing those two components.”
**Domain III: Leadership Mastery**

Analysis of the structured assessment shows that when eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) were asked to rate various aspects of personal development, performance and experiences since graduation, results show that 52% expressed that NPLI strengthened their ability to expand their network of Meta-Leaders; 46% reported that the program strengthened their confidence to lead across intra/inter agency systems; and 45% reported that the program strengthened their self-awareness as leaders.

**Figure IV-5: NPLI Influencing Meta-Leadership Indicators**

Excerpts from 2 qualitative telephone-based surveys provide feedback expressing similar strengths gained:

**Alumni 1: Expanding Network of Meta-Leaders**

“I think the biggest, in addition to better understanding dynamics, in addition to better understanding the environment than having just that broader inside, the networking and the connections. You know, we always say in emergency response, when things happen is not when you want to be exchanging cards.”

**Alumni 2: Confidence and Self-awareness**

“I think I paid more attention to the self-awareness part after I went through the training of knowing that when you’re in the basement, I never really paid much attention to that before…. And there are a lot of times where that whole concept of you being in the basement and not being self-aware that you are the one that’s causing the issue, it made me think. So I tried to be a lot more cognizant of that.”
Domain IV: Crisis Leadership

Knowledge of Crisis Leadership

Based on results from the second online quantitative assessment, 79% of alumni reported to have “very high” “high” or “moderate level” knowledge on Crisis Leadership Practice prior to participation in the NPLI. Only 10% had “low” or “very low” knowledge in this field.

Interestingly results also show that 72% of the eligible alumni (N=79/109) who participated in the online survey replied that the program NPLI has “significantly” or “moderately” increased their level of crisis leadership knowledge. This is remarkable in light of the fact that the majority of alumni had relatively high levels of crisis leadership practice experience prior to participation in NPLI.
Improvement of Crisis Leadership Abilities

When alumni were asked whether participation in the NPLI has significantly improved their abilities in response to a crisis situation:

- 39% of the respondents (N=43/109) reported they were “significantly” able to “to connect with the individuals encountered in order to advance the work”; and
- 34% of the respondents (N=37/109) reported they were “significantly” able to “to connect with the information encountered in order to advance the work”;
- 31% of the respondents (N=34/109) reported they were “significantly” able to “to respond to a major crisis”.

Figure IV-8: Improvement in Crisis Leadership Abilities

Correspondingly, verbatim responses from alumni in the qualitative survey show that the alumni are self-aware of their improved abilities.

Connect information to advance work

“And I kind of, I think that was one area where in terms of information, if you look at all kinds of information that you can possibly be exposed to during a crisis, whether it's scientific data, other facts, for example, information from the field that might come in that helps you, intelligence, if you will, to help you make some decisions quickly, I think the public information piece was the biggest thing that I kind of was sensitized to. And the institute spent some time on that piece too.”

Connect to individuals to advance work

“It really helped me connect with people at different levels. So, I think it provided me a little bit more confidence in working not just with my peers, but in working with individuals at higher levels and at lower
levels, I guess, in my organization and in different organizations in building awareness, understanding, and ultimately what I think is sort of jointly seeing a common goal.”

**Respond to a major crisis**

“Yes…the ability to think about what other people have to-- It's the level of consciousness and understanding when you work with another organization or person from another organization what their agenda might be, what their view for the world is, and what their mission set is, and what their limitations might be. You don't always stop to think about that. And if you do understand that, then you become much more successful, you're much more successful in reaching out and establishing relationships.”

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**Leadership Style**

In addition, as part of the quantitative assessment alumni express how knowledge of “crisis leadership” helped in understanding their leadership style:

**Alumni 1:** “Knowledge of crisis leadership, particularly knowing myself, allowed me to identify quickly the contributions I was uniquely qualified to make and focus on those rather than trying to do all necessary jobs at once. The importance of leading up, leading across, and leading my silo were very important during events this Administration has confronted (e.g., H1N1, Haiti, Deepwater Horizon).”

**Alumni 2:** “I had been struggling in my Public Health Preparedness responsibilities to define what was different about crisis leadership, what different approaches were needed and what different skills had to be learned. After NPLI, I had a construct both to understand these differences and to begin to translate them within our agency and between us and our other constituencies in emergency response. Most of the traditional Public Health leadership at the time resisted the need to learn ICS and SEMS and didn't see the need to have a common language with first responders in anticipation of a disaster where Public Health might have to take the lead as the technical experts. With NPLI tools, I was able to link traditional Public Health strengths with the newly recognized exigencies of a bioterrorism event and gain acceptance of the need for intensive training of our staff to be able to function effective with other responders in such an emergency.”

**Alumni 3:** “Understanding and reflecting on the concept of "going to the basement" has been incredibly useful in both peace and wartime leadership situations for me. I use the analogy frequently with my colleagues and staff when we are training and planning for crisis situations. In times of immense pressure, I've actually been able to recognize that I'm "in the basement" and it's changed my course of action. I've also been able to recognize it in others and approach situations with them differently than I would before. Just being able to identify and able what's happening emotionally with people somehow seems to enable me to better respond and interact with people. Rather than just stating, "things are chaotic" or "people are stressed and they are not dealing with the issue well", it helps to think of their emotional state as a geographic location and start looking for a way out!”
Leadership Skills for Disaster and Emergency Response

When alumni were asked whether they used specific skills learned in the NPLI program, 28% to 44% report using ALL the specific skills that NPLI taught for use during disaster and emergency response.

Figure IV-9: Use of Specific Skills in Disaster or Emergency Response

Correspondingly, qualitative responses from alumni in the telephone-based surveys show that alumni are self-aware of their improved abilities.

Alumni 1: Improved self-awareness

“The biggest thing that I got out of it was self-awareness. And when Isaac talks about an emergency occurring and everybody goes to the basement, and they talk about everybody goes to the basement, what defines a meta-leader is how quickly you can recognize you’re there and pull yourself out of it. And it's that understanding of where I’m going to go and where everybody is going to go. It's not to try and fight through it, to prevent yourself from getting there, because you go there, that’s the fight or flight response, we all go there. The question is, and this is what I got out of the program-- One of the most important things for me was I’m going to go there, but I need to recognize it and quickly pull myself out of it in order to be effective. That was the self-awareness component.”
Alumni 2: Crisis leadership

“…. Once again, because it [NPLI] teaches you a different way to think and to look at things. It’s very helpful during a crisis, because sometimes you can see how people react, and understand immediately where they’re coming from, understand why they may be responding in a way that they are, understanding why they think certain things are important. And while you may or not agree, you at least understand their perspective and where they’re coming from, and through that understanding you can work with people and work with organizations to get things done. So, yeah, it’s been extremely helpful.”

Alumni 3: Leading up

“ One of the biggest challenges that I faced in developing the university’s emergency management and crisis response program was how best to engage the executive leadership of the university. By that, I mean from the president on down…. And first gaining their confidence that we have some program, but also helping them understand what their particular roles were in that leadership function was very challenging. And I think the more that I reflected on my participation in the [NPLI] program, the more helpful it was to be able to address that with that group. So that, for me, managing upward was probably the biggest benefit.”

Domain V: Application of Knowledge

Many of the alumni report having been deployed to national and international locations in response to natural disasters. Often the role of deployed alumni is to lead a disaster management team on the ground, or direct an incident command center. Results show that that since graduating from NPLI at least 67% (N=73/109) of alumni in cohorts 2003-2010 have been involved in a disaster or emergency.

Figure IV-10: Involvement in Disaster or Emergency Response

A review of the qualitative dataset show that NPLI alumni have been involved in the following disasters and emergencies:

- Haiti earthquake
- Joplin tornado
- Major snowstorms
- Flight crash in 2008
- Tropical Storm Lee
- Deep Water Horizon
- E.Coli outbreak in Germany
- Cholera outbreak in Haiti
- Japan earthquake/tsunami
- Hurricane Katrina
- Hurricane Irene
- H1N1
- Wildfires in New Mexico
In addition, as part of the quantitative assessment (using a text box), 4 alumni described the skills sets used during disaster and emergency response that were learned in the NPLI program:

**Alumni 1: H1N1 Epidemic**

“As State Health Officer, training was most useful--the field was open to apply what was learned and create across governmental departments. Example that comes to mind is working with education leaders and school superintendents during the early phase of the H1N1 response. As Director of H1N1 Vaccine Program at CDC, the challenges were much greater to practice meta-leadership with private industry to address vaccine supply issues. Working now with tribal organizations, have been felt more successful again because the need is great and resources are limited, although negotiating the world of tribal politics is quite a challenge.”

**Alumni 2: Radiation in Japan**

“The radiation response to the Fukushima event hit the west coast of the US particularly hard. While it wasn't a true radiation emergency, it was certainly a "communication" emergency. Seeing no national leadership on the response in the US, I was able to convene a group from a number of the west coast states and we were able to develop a response strategy and communicate it to our agencies and our public days ahead of any federal action on the issue. It worked extremely well.”

**Alumni 3: Haiti Earthquake**

“Both examples from the DHS response to the Jan 2010 Port-au-Prince earthquake: After representing the agency on the initial department senior leadership call, I immediately prepared communications and drafted an action plan for presentation to our agency leadership. In the initial stages it did not appear that our agency's role would be that great to our internal leadership, but my plan and continued communications we crucial to bringing all of the right "people to the table" internally, and we were able to mount an effective response once a number of immigration related issues (primarily dealing with the humanitarian parole of orphans and those in need of specialized medical care) came to light. Based on my engagement in the senior leadership calls, I facilitated a cross agency working group (Dept of State, Health and Human Services, Dept of Defense, DHS, as well as state/local health officials) to help address follow on medical care and costs for individuals who had been paroled into the country for medical reasons.”

**Alumni 4: Hurricane Katrina**

“Following Hurricane Katrina the Recovery Division of FEMA has experienced sharp criticism and scrutiny on many of its policies and practices. This and other events have led to serious demoralization of employees and great dissatisfaction with work. It has certainly impacted recovery operations since that time and recently major overhauls to the program have been proposed. Using skills identified in NPLI courses and the "in the basement" analogy to discuss with staff where we were in the pressure cooker of public and political fallout, I was able to help redirect burnt out colleagues and employees to move in a positive direction of action to make collaborative changes in the temporary housing program.”
Domain VI: Real Life Response

Influence

As part of the structured assessment, eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) were asked to describe how they influenced the use of leadership approaches that NPLI has contributed to in some way. Responses show that more than half of alumni influenced an *intra-agency connectivity* and/or *inter-agency connectivity* that NPLI training contributed to in some way. About 28% of alumni report having influenced a *policy (law)* change.

Figure IV-11: Influence Leadership Approach

As part of quantitative online assessment, eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) were asked similar questions about leadership approaches, and to provide responses in a text box. Verbatim responses include the following:

Alumni 1: Influencing an Intra-Agency Connectivity

“The skills that I learned in the NPLI program have allowed me to better motivate and mobilize the resources of my agency toward dealing with the crises that have come up. One area in particular was building the relationship between three major units in my organization. Until I was able to really understand their situations and their needs and bring them to a common vision, they had not been functioning together. Since then, these three organizational components have begun interacting and building collective energy for dealing with issues that affect us all.”

Alumni 2: Influencing an Inter-Agency Connectivity

“During the early pandemic planning around the H5N1 virus, I partnered with the state's emergency management director to convene an inter-disciplinary team from multiple state agencies to contribute to a
state level pandemic plan. It was the first time anything like this had been attempted and we were very
successful despite having no direct authority over any of the other agencies.”

Alumni 3: Influencing Policy

“In contributing to the revision of DoD policy and public health emergency management, I insisted the
policy title be exactly that (Public Health Emergency Management) in order to tie medical to the "line"
effort to implement EM as a discipline within both DoD and the Army; within that same DoD policy I wrote
and insisted on inclusion of a policy statement regarding the relationship of military installations with the
Strategic National Stockpile. Prior to that policy statement, there was NO official policy on the interaction
of DoD with the SNS or any implementing guidance for the old inter-agency agreement on resource
sharing.”

In addition, the qualitative assessment also asked about leading with no formal authority. Five
alumni provide the range of responses that clearly defines the construct “no formal authority”.

Alumni 1: When I'm in that situation, it's getting people who don't report to me, but are in the same
organization, to agree on a common agenda.”

Alumni 2: “My experience here is if you're in a position where you're trying to do that, you treat people
respectfully and as peers and hope that they will respect you in the same way.”

Alumni 3: “So, that was critical at the beginning, was communication and keeping upper management,
those people above me, always in the loop, not keeping them at all in the dark. I was totally transparent
about everything we were doing... later on when there were individuals, and that was the problem,
individual personalities that got in, they really didn't have an argument, because they couldn't come back
and say, "Oh, you're just doing this on your own. You didn't let us know. You surprised us with this. What
are you doing? You're stepping outside your authority." They couldn't say that, because it was all
endorsed. So, that's one thing I needed was communicating, was transparency.”

Alumni 4: “You recognize that at a certain point, you recognize everybody’s professionalism and then
you recognize their authority. For this, it was the whole thing is collaboration and making everybody else
feel like they're part of the team, that they will help you accomplish the mission. That they have some
unique things that they bring to help you participate or help you accomplish the mission. Then recognizing
those special abilities when you get an opportunity to.”

Alumni 5: “I was able to do it in a couple of ways. One is ensuring right from the start that clear roles and
responsibilities were established. So, if it was individuals over whom I did not have control of authority,
that was made well aware, and certainly my role and their role was agreed upon from the start. The
second piece was really the way I would approach it is management by objectives, that we are on the
same team. Where we are on an org chart, and how my responsibilities may differ from the other party’s
responsibilities wasn't nearly as important as the both of us or all of us agreeing on the objectives that we
must commonly reach.”
Advice on Leadership Situations and Enrollment in NPLI

Results show that in the past 12 month, 74% of alumni (N=80/109) have “frequently” or “sometimes” asked for or given another colleague some “advice” on how best to proceed in a leadership situation. Only 10 out of 109 alumni (9%) who have “rarely” or “never” engaged in this type of communication in the past year.

Figure IV-12: Advice in Leadership Situations

In the past 12 months, how often have you asked for or given another colleague some "advice" on how best to proceed in a leadership situation? (N=109)

- Frequently (9+ times): 32%
- Sometimes (5-8 times): 42%
- Rarely (1-4 times): 6%
- No Response: 17%
- Never (0): 3%

In addition, alumni were asked whether they would recommend NPLI to other professionals, 79% (N=86/109) of the respondents replied “yes” compared to 4% who replied “no”, in addition to 17% (N=19/109) did not reply at all.

Figure IV-13: Recommending NPLI to Others

Have you recommended NPLI to other professionals? (N=109)

- Yes: 79%
- No: 4%
- No Response: 17%
Domain VI: Overall Influence

As shown in the diagram below, when eligible alumni (Cohorts 203-2010) were asked to report on whether participating in NPLI had any influence on changes in the jobs the alumni have taken since graduating, results show that 20% of alumni replied yes, 28% of alumni have stayed in the same position, and 27% of alumni said NPLI did not influence their job change.

Figure IV-14: NPLI's Influence on Professional Trajectory

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question: Did participating in NPLI have any influence on changes in the jobs you have taken since graduating from NPLI?](image)

During the online quantitative assessment, alumni were also asked to comment on NPLI's impact on their ability to perform as a leader. Three alumni provide excellent responses:

**Alumni 1:** “I continue to interact with the program whenever I can. I believe the program has empowered me to continue to lead the Washington program to a much better place in the field of public health preparedness. It has also placed me in a national leadership role where my advice is frequently sought.”

**Alumni 2:** “NPLI provided benefits to me personally and professionally, directly and indirectly. The professional benefits included those relating specifically to preparedness, but also I gained a very valuable mentoring capability. In referring people to NPLI I have been able to convey the meaningfulness of the program. I was extremely gratified to justify and obtain support in sending one of my staff to the program, which I know will benefit his career.”

**Alumni 3:** “NPLI had an enormous impact on my work as a leader in Public Health Preparedness. It gave me the construct of Meta-leadership, provided skills and tools to implement connectivity in my County, put me in contact with other extremely capable professionals to whom I could turn for on-going advice and counsel, and very importantly, raised my level of consciousness of the importance of the work we were doing and my job satisfaction in my continued involvement with it.”
As part of the telephone-based interviews similar questions were asked about NPLI’s influence on jobs taken since graduating. Alumni working in different sectors (or assignments) respond as follows:

Alumni 1: Federal

“I think that my time at NPLI really helped me develop further as a leader, and those were the leadership skills that were recognized when I was asked to be the Acting Director of the CDC after President Obama was elected. I took NPLI very soon after I became Director of the Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response at CDC, and so over the next four years there were many situations, many hurricanes, other crisis where I was in a leadership role within CDC and within government. And also, doing a lot of work on preparing for pandemics and for terrorism, I was exposed across government. So, I think that the leadership skills I developed were what were recognized, and why I was asked to be the Head of the agency.”

Alumni 2: State

“Yes, I think it has in terms of my willingness to take on cross-organization, cross-boundary kind of responsibilities, working with and through other organizations. I think I'm much more comfortable and willing to work outside of my agency boundaries.”

Alumni 3: Local

“I think once I participated in the class and given the framework of the class and where the class was located, Harvard University is not a bad gig. So, when leaders within the city saw that, they were very intrigued and interested in the fact that I participated in such a class.”

Domain VII: Student Experience

The quantitative and qualitative methods captured information on the experiences of NPLI alumni in the classroom setting, with faculty and amongst student led groups. Questions were asked of alumni to provide feedback on the learning modalities, meta-leadership projects, and suggestions for improvement.

Phase 1 of the program includes the initial residential component held on the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It includes formal classroom presentations and discussions as well as personal reflection, project conception, and team formation. Phase 2 is spent completing the approved meta-leadership project, and Phase 3 is the second residential component of the program is held in June of the following year. Its principal focus is on team presentations of their projects, a completion of program requirement. Projects are critiqued by faculty and the full cohort of participants.

Learning Modalities

Positive Aspects

- “I was most impressed by the instructors’ full engagement with disasters and the research that accompanied the guidance. I was not expecting so much "real world" knowledge from an academic institution.”
• “I enjoyed the instructors and speakers/topics chosen. Also enjoyed being there for 2 weeklong periods (rather than a couple of days at a time) in order to get to know our fellow NPLI mates and staff members better.”

• “Holding the NPLI program at Harvard is a superb way to take federal bureaucrats out of our traditional box of thinking and interacting. I appreciated the interactive teaching style and the world-class expertise of the teaching professionals.”

**Delivery of Curriculum**

• “The actual NPLI program during the first week could more explicitly connect the academic teaching about the meta-leadership model, with the information being presented by the other Harvard professors and then add some specific individual coaching or discussions with coaches about personal improvement opportunities and translating the educational material into individual development plans.”

• “I think the fundamental approach to teaching meta-leadership developed by the NPLI co-founders is superb; my only suggestion looking forward to the next phase is that the curriculum, while quite good and continuously improving, could be even better. If there is an opportunity for a concerted review of the curriculum, I would suggest involving both NPLI graduates and select academics with no prior involvement in the program.”

**Faculty Diversity**

• “I think that there were too many white males on the faculty many of identical ethnicity -- and I say that as one myself. I think that hearing the message from multiple perspectives would be highly valuable.”

**Meta-Leadership Projects**

**Positive Aspects**

• “I think that the most valuable part was not-- and maybe that was the whole intent, was certainly the actual written document that you produce. But it was just the bonding with the team members that occurred in pulling that together and really learned a lot from each other and really gave you some opportunity for some truly one on one time with each other. I thought it was valuable.”

• “However, I think that the network and the friendships, the professional friendships that you develop from this is very invaluable.”

• “[NPLI] went on for so long, six months, you had to keep going back to the tenets and the principles of meta leadership. And I think that reinforces what we were taught in the classroom. So I think that, for me, made meta leadership stay with me longer and because I had to keep using it the whole time I had my phone conferences with my colleagues.”

**Logistics in planning and discussing the project with the group**

• “And in our case, the project was pretty good, but we could never get the people together, and obviously that's just a problem of reality

• “While we wanted to try to, you know, make sure everybody was on board, every time we had a call, we had people missing. So we just kept trying and kept trying and then just decided we’d go on. But anyway, we lost some valuable time and that.”

• “I mean, I was right next to people that I was trying to work with and we couldn't get things done and the fact that my group mates were either across the country or in military service.”
- **NPLI Evaluation Team** had difficulty in setting up focus groups

  **Issues with NPLI faculty**

  - "If I can just add, one issue that we were really never clear on is what was the best way to sort of loop back with the NPLI faculty. There were times we would have liked to get some input on directions for projects and we were never-- I know there were Wikis and there were different things but between the three of us that kept working on the project, we were just never clear on once the course ended, how do we keep in touch."

  - "I can tell you one thing that was interesting about my experience at NPLI, the one negative I had, which is actually for the one person that I respected the most, was that the person who was supposed to be working with was never available for us. I mean, never. And it’s because he’s travels a lot and so trying to coordinate our team with his schedule. I mean, he tried, but just never worked out. So we actually ended up doing that project really without any supervision at all.”

  **Stress and Frustration**

  - "I really, to be honest with you, I don't know whether the way in which the projects were done made any sense at all.”

  - "I found the meta leadership project painful. I really did, I found it added an amount of stress to my life that I didn’t need at the time.”

  - “And from some of the groups, it was pretty evident that because of the difficulties of getting people together, maybe two or three people were doing the lion’s share of the work.

  **Lack of continuity**

  - “But it occurs to me there’s been a lot of very good projects done over the last-- since this has been going on. But it didn’t seem to me there was any continuity. We did a project and we submitted it and we got it done.”

**Suggestions for the Meta-Leadership Project**

- **Make groups smaller**

  - “Projects, instead of being a magic number around six participants in each group, that the number would drop to, let’s say, three or three to four because trying to get more than that, of course you could have the same problem with three or four.”

- **Develop a clearing-house of issues**

  - “I think it would be a really good kind of a clearing house…it would have been really good to have maybe an NPLI discussion group or coming to consensus on different issues that from a hospital perspective, certainly, we all struggled with during H1N1. It might be really helpful to be able to kind of lean up to NPLI through the faculty if there are issues that are regional in any respect, and reaching out to people outside of the region that might be able to lend strategy, support and whatever.”

- **Do case analysis instead of projects**

  - “I'd rather have gone up another week and done business cases of past disasters and have ourselves try and make decisions as a team than to work on something away from it and try to do a project.”
Continuous follow-up

- “So I think it would have been nice to track if some of the work we had done made any difference or where it strategy and if those things are actually changing or evolving. So it just seems to me that in many cases, a lot of these projects were one-offs and they were done and it would seem to me that continuity would be something that would be interesting to try to build into these projects.”
- “I think we're offered the opportunity to kind of come up with our own ideas in this, and that inherently plays towards whatever our comfort levels are. Maybe if there's a way that they could sort of grab projects from the previous cohort and sort of carry us forward to almost force the students to take on something that maybe they're not comfortable with might benefit the country and the students a little bit more.”

Domain VII: Other Leadership Programs

Data captured from the second online quantitative assessment shows that many of the NPLI alumni have participated in other leadership programs throughout the country.

- University at Albany SUNY School of Public Health, Northeast Regional Public Health Leadership Institute
- California/Hawaii Public Health Leadership Institute
- University of Denver, Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership
- Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (EPHLI)
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Mid-Atlantic Health Leadership Institute
- University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Public Health & Kenan-Flager Business School, Management Academy for Public Health (MAHP)
- University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health, Maternal and Child Health-Public Health Leadership Institute (MCH-PHLI)
- University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Public Health, Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute
- Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, South Central Public Health Leadership Institute
- University of Washington School of Public Health, Northwest Regional Public Health Leadership Institute
- Center for Homeland Defense and Security at Naval Postgraduate School
- ASTHO New State Health Official Training at Kennedy School, National Public Health Leadership Institute
- U.S. Army Primary Leadership Development Course
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)
- U.S. Army Special Force Qualification Course
- U.S. Army Ranger School
- University of Virginia Darden School Executive Education & Harvard Business School Executive Education
- The Federal Executive Institute
- North Dakota National Guard Leadership Program
- Leadership for Physician Executives-Harvard
- Office of Personnel Management Executive Development Program
- Commander’s Leadership Development course at Ft Benning and Ft Leavenworth
- Post Naval Graduate School Executive Leadership Program
- Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC
V. Discussion

This analysis provides strong evidence that the NPLI program has had a positive long-term impact on leadership performance as reported by the respondents. The structured interview results indicated that the ratings were often at the highest end of the rating scale. Findings from qualitative data also support the findings of the structured assessment, clearly showing the program’s impact on specific areas of professional development, application of knowledge and ability to influence during disaster and emergency response situations.

Recommendations

Suggested Focus of the NPLI Program

The evaluation also provides rich information and recommendation regarding the priority areas for future educational programs. The questions pertaining to identifying what should be the main focus of the NPLI are of particular informative. When eligible alumni (cohorts 2003-2010) were asked to rank topic areas that should be the main focus of the NPLI program, respondents selected the following 3 with the highest importance:

1. Developing the capability of individual leaders
2. Developing a national network of leaders to share knowledge and collaborate on national priorities.
3. Developing solutions for emergency response and preparedness

Figure V-1: Recommended NPLI Focus

What should be the main focus of the NPLI? (N=109)

- To develop capabilities to enhance inter-organizational performance
- To develop capabilities to enhance organizational performance
- To develop solutions for emergency response and preparedness
- To develop capabilities to collaborate with state and federal level governmental agencies
- To develop a national network of leaders who can create policy (law) changes
- To develop a national network of leaders who can share knowledge and collaborate on national priorities
- To develop the capabilities of individual leaders

[Bar chart showing rankings]

Lowest Rank  Highest Rank

Percentage
In contrast, respondents selected the following 2 with the lowest importance:

4. Developing solutions for emergency preparedness and response
5. Developing a national network of leaders who can create policy (law) changes.

Suggestions for the Student Experience

Feedback obtained about the student experience was consistent across the online quantitative assessment, telephone-based interview and focus groups. Positive, satisfactory feedback included recognition of the ‘real world’ knowledge of the instructors about disasters and emergency response; and satisfaction with the development of a meta-leadership network. However, suggestions include:

1. Diversifying the gender and racial profile of the faculty
2. Enhancing the learning experience by developing a model to improve student continuity
3. Enhancing the learning experience by doing case-study analyses instead of meta-leadership projects
4. Enhancing the learning experience of students by reaching out to regions of interest, and/or thought leaders on a specific topic, who can lend strategy and support
5. Develop improved guidelines for project group coordination and interaction
6. Improving students ability to connect with faculty to complete the meta-leadership project
7. Improving professional opportunities for alumni, by translating the materials into individual development plans
8. Involving NPLI graduates and academics to review the curriculum prior to delivery for each upcoming cohort
9. Reducing the size of student groups for the meta-leadership project

In conclusion, we can report that the evaluation has provided a rich quantitative and qualitative evaluation database that yields extremely useful data and information for future educational programs in preparedness and emergency response leadership training.