FLORIDA EXTENSION INITIATIVE VII

PREPARING YOUTH TO BE RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS & PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE WORKFORCE

STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN

PRIORITY WORK GROUP 2: ORGANIZATIONAL & VOLUNTEER SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT PYD

SITUATION

Currently only one in four youth are considered on a "trajectory to thrive" (Benson, 2011). Many social factors (dual-earner families, single-parent homes, poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, peer pressure, and media influence) present barriers that adolescents must overcome (ChildStats, 2002). These barriers are "an increasingly complex, technical, and multicultural world; and an extended length of adolescence where pathways to adulthood are less clear and more numerous" (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Families, educators, employers and communities as a whole desire to see young people succeed in life as contributing and productive members of society. Indicators that identify youth as being on a pathway to success include: academically motivated, reduction of risky behaviors, making healthy choices, to have social competence, high personal standards, a connection to others, and contributing to the world around them (Chase, Warren, & Lerner, 2015; Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2015; Arbeit, Baldi, Rubin, Harris, & Lerner, 2015; Hersberg, Johnson, DeSouza, Hunter, & Zaff, 2015 as derived from Arnold & Silliman, 2016). Research has documented a correlation between participation in youth-development organizations and an adolescent's adult education, occupation, and even income. Participation also predicts a decline in engaging in delinquent activities and shows that those adolescents who participate in 4-H have high positive outcomes including: "high academic achievement and low rates of involvement in risky behaviors" (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Furthermore, Pitman, Yohalem, and Ahlstrom (as derived from Forum for Youth Investment, 2001) state that participating in "out-of-school time programs are associated with positive cognitive, physical, social, and civic development." They also state that these types of programs can "prevent or reduce" risky behavior.

In order to maximize Positive Youth Development (PYD) efforts in _____ county it is imperative for 4-H youth development UF/IFAS Extension faculty to provide a quality context (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) in which they provide educational programs that reflect the relevant and diverse interests, or sparks of young people (Benson & Scales, 2011). Alongside these 4-H projects must exist positive developmental relationships through the support of faculty, staff, and trained volunteers (Search Institute, 2014); and opportunities for participation in higher level and cumulative educational activities. An effective 4-H PYD program includes ensuring indicators that promote a high quality learning environment for educational programs, the creation of a volunteer development structure that engages, trains, and manages volunteers, and finally opportunities for multiple degrees of engagement. Combined these elements create the right mix to create and promote the development of productive and contributing members of society (Benson et al., 1999).

{A paragraph should be inserted based on county statistics, needs, demographics, etc. and reflective of specific programs based on above global situation and local advisory committee input.}

SAMPLE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Outcome 1. Volunteer Behavior Adoption of High Quality PYD Best Practices

Sample Objective for adoption of BMP's
Annually _ % of _ # volunteers will demonstrate <u>adopted behaviors</u> in alignment with indicators of a high quality PYD programs as a result of attending volunteer orientations, trainings, and through mentorship by fellow volunteers and Extension Faculty.

Indicators of volunteers adopting* bmp's to create a high quality PYD program are:
- Adherence to and adoption of all youth protection policies – Safety and Belonging (medium-term)
- Creation and Implementation of a risk-management plan – Safety (medium-term)
- Club leaders adopt practices that support mastery of skills and engagement by providing increased educational opportunities beyond the club level (medium-term)
- Volunteers will demonstrate a gain knowledge and skills in best management of positive youth development (short-term)

- Volunteers will adopt and implement strategies and best management practices that promote and foster supportive developmental relationships (medium-term)

Evaluation Methods:
- Observation of club volunteers (use a club quality checklist)
- Self-report of club volunteers (Use the Standards of Excellence club award form, an annual club award application, the club volunteer survey, Essential Elements club surveys)
- Completion of club charter paperwork
- County training evaluation, including knowledge gain and intent to change
- Evidence of % clubs who have created and implemented a risk management plan
- Evidence of % of club leaders who promote educational programs beyond the club

Sample Objective for Equal Opportunity/Diversity
Annually, __% of __# volunteers will adopt at least two new best practices for making their 4-H club more inclusive as a result of attending training in diversity and inclusion.

Indicators of volunteers adopting bmp's in Diversity (this is a sample of the many ways volunteers will demonstrate achievement of this objective):

- Gain knowledge in practices for working with diverse audiences whether they are differences of race, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ, special needs, disabilities, etc. (short-term)
- Volunteers can identify best practices of being more inclusive to all youth and families (short-term)
- Volunteers and community show noted attitude change regarding inclusivity or all youth and families (short-term)
- 4-H club membership is reflective of diversity in the community as compared to census data (medium-term)
- Increased diverse youth and/or volunteers taking on leadership roles (medium-term)
- The social norms of the county 4-H program are more reflective of an inclusive program (medium-term)

Evaluation Methods:

- Post-Reflective Surveys (Youth Perception)
- Volunteer Self-Report Annual Club Survey
- Club Observations
- Enrollment trend data from 4HOnline

Outcome 2. High Quality PYD-Youth Programming – Youth Reaction
(*The attainment of PYD Outcomes correlates to youth being on a thriving trajectory)

Sample Objective for youth perception of a high quality PYD program
Annually, _% of _# youth participating in the _ County 4-H Positive Youth Development program will report positive reactions regarding the presence of a high quality youth program including; independence, safe and inclusive environment, opportunities for engagement, and presence of supportive developmental relationships as a result of participating in various educational programs i.e. clubs, camp, etc.

Indicators of a High Quality PYD program are:
- Adult volunteers provide learning/project experiences that youth report as being projects that are diverse, relevant, and fun (short-term)
- Youth will attain project mastery through educational programs and engagement beyond the club (see impact research for correlation of increased dosage/duration to higher attainment of PYD outcomes) (medium-term)
- Youth report that they experience a positive developmental relationship in the support of their 4-H experience: Express care, Challenge Growth, Provide Support, Share Power, and Expanded possibilities (Search Institute, 2014) (medium-term)
- Youth report that they feel safe and do not have a fear of bullying, judgement, etc. (short-term)

- Youth report that their 4-H Program is a safe and inclusive learning environment (medium-term)

Evaluation Methods:
- Club Outcomes Survey
- Residential Camp Survey (belonging and developmental relationships)
- Essential Elements Checklists (found in curriculum guide)
- Youth Portfolios
- Standards of Excellence Award Applications
- Degree of Participation in educational programs beyond the club
- Youth self-report opportunities to be involved in decision making process
- Project Story Narratives
- Volunteer Outcomes Survey (upon request in Qualtrics)

*Please be aware that use of a high quality and research based PYD framework is of upmost importance. While Essential Elements is considered a research-based framework it does have weaknesses in validity. However, the model is closely aligned with the eight indicators of PYD as put forth and listed above by Eccles & Gootman (2002). The Essential Elements curriculum presents a user-friendly method for training volunteers in the importance of a high-quality learning environment and is easily measurable. As you grow in your profession advancing your theoretical knowledge and incorporating models such as the Community Action Framework for Youth Development, the Developmental Assets model, or the Developmental Systems Theory (5 C's) is suggested.

Outcome 3. Organizational Framework and Capacity

Sample objective for Stakeholder Engagement. (Stakeholders include; Advisory/Association, Expansion and Review Committee, fair/committee/school board, etc. Stakeholder groups can be used to build community capacity and resource development all which builds a system and increased capacity for growth.)

As a result of [partnering, networking, cooperating, collaborating] with _____[insert organization]___ clientele/stakeholder an increase of __% in new partnerships and/or resources will occur resulting in engaged stakeholders building community capacity. (Additional references and examples may be found in CRD resources).

Indicators of success will be:

- Increase in number of new partnerships formed (short-term)
- Increase in number of newly developed resources [money, community capacity, reputation, public awareness, assets] gained (short-term)
- Increased community awareness (short-term)
- Increase in number of newly engaged volunteers (mid-term)
- Increase in number of engaged stakeholders (stakeholders organize and implement resource development strategies, stakeholders provide pro-bono services, etc.) (mid-term)
- Increase in number of stakeholders becoming community advocates (promote good-will, speak out or write in favor of program efforts, solicit new community partners)

Evaluation Methods:

- 4H Online tracking (volunteers)
- Revenue tracking (cost of pro-bono services, revenue secured by volunteers, etc.)
- Personal testimonials of advocacy and education of decision makers

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Florida 4-H PYD programs should utilize the ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971) model to develop a volunteer program that will promote positive developmental relationships (Search Institute, 2014). In addition, 4-H PYD faculty will develop a system for resource development to

support program efforts, will network with other stakeholders, and will ensure equal opportunity programming for all youth. 4-H Youth Development Extension faculty will train volunteers in quality indicators of a PYD program as put forth by the *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* and will include: Physical and Psychological Safety, Appropriate Structure, Supportive Relationships, Opportunities to Belong, Positive Social Norms, Support for Efficacy and Mattering, Opportunities for Skill Building, and Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Additionally, volunteers will be trained in the following skills to best promote PYD: developmental relationships (Search Institute, 2014), how to develop a context for mastery of project work (Essential Elements), Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984), independence through youth and adult partnerships, opportunities for youth voice, and the importance of involving youth in varying and higher degrees of educational opportunities (i.e. county, district, state, regional, and national levels) that promote youth engagement.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

The program aligning with PWG 2 should contain all outcomes that are essential to placing youth on a trajectory to thrive. PWG 1; Youth Development will support project mastery and life skill attainment. This section provides data that supports desired outcomes reflective of a high quality Positive Youth Development program administered through the 4-H organization of the University of Florida IFAS Extension.

IF high quality programs, "then measures as simple as the hours per week that a young person spends participating in the program is related to numerous positive outcomes for youth" (Benson et al., 1999).

"Not just the accumulation, but also the nature of, positive developmental experiences is important" (Scales, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 2011).

"As the degree of 4-H participation increases, 4-H members are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and inclusiveness which is an indicator of a quality youth development experience" (Thomas, Place, Jordan, Israel; 2007).

Successfully engaging and retaining volunteers requires a systematic approach. A systematic approach includes: • Identifying opportunities for volunteer involvement in county 4-H programs. • Recruiting the right volunteer for the right role. • Orienting and training volunteers for success in 4-H. • Supporting volunteers in their respective roles. • Evaluating volunteers and the volunteer program (Boyce, 1971; Bussell & Forbes, 2033; Culp, Deppe, Castillo, & Wells, 1998)

Studies show that providing an appropriate adult role model and providing a safe and secure environment is essential to providing a quality youth development program (Kress, 2005). Having a positive adult role model that youth can interact with and model their behavior over a continuous period of time is very meaningful in the life of a young person (Vygotsky as derived from Berk, 2000). According to the Search Institute the more assets a young person is provided with, such as a positive adult relationship, the less likely youth are to be involved in risky behaviors (1996). With limited faculty and staff, volunteers can assist in reaching more youth through direct mentoring, acting as a club leader, education of youth, and acting as middle managers regarding educational events and activities. Florida 4-H is committed to developing youth and adult volunteers, valuing inclusiveness, and increasing the diversity of program participants. Volunteers who interact with youth on a consistent basis and act as a positive adult role model in their lives over a continuous period of time at which crucial development is occurring can directly influence their lives. As a result of implementing a volunteer development program in _____ county 4-H; the number of volunteers screened and trained has significantly increased and resulted in the ability to slowly transition from a primarily agent delivered program to an agent led and volunteer delivered program.

Nationwide, more than one-third of volunteers that provided service in one year did not donate any time to a charitable cause the following year. In FL that statistic increases to 50%. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, fewer than half of the organizations that rely on volunteers have adopted best practices for volunteer management. This year, ___% of __# volunteers in ___ county were retained as volunteers. (Sample created by B. Terry) (Hager & Brudney, 2005)

A national volunteer study concluded that fewer than half of nonprofits that rely on volunteers have adopted best practices for volunteer management (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Failure to utilize best practices reduces the ability to engage, involve, and retain volunteers that are critical to the success of the 4-H Youth Development program. Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, and Washburn (2009) found that organizations that rely on volunteer to accomplish their mission have invested considerable financial resources to train, lead and support volunteers. Increasing best management practices related to volunteer management in the Florida 4-H Youth

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Development program will increase the number of trained youth and adult volunteers. Increased capacity from volunteers will increase the number of positive youth development experiences for youth. These experiences will result in youth that have the life skills necessary to be successful and contribute positively to their communities.

REFERENCES

For a full listing of references for this Plan of Action, other research in the field of Positive Youth Development, and current tools to support evaluation efforts please visit the Evaluation Resources folder available on the UF One Drive. Log into office.com and navigate to One Drive. 4-H agents will find the file under the "shared" tab. https://uflorida-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/sarahzt_ufl_edu/Eiiq_04yLslElo9fUs5nMMEBW8wn_hzbJ26ktcpt7CJcSQ?e=eTl7Gz

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