

Moving Ahead Together: What Works For Youth... What Works For You?

CSREES/USDA Adolescent Growth & Development Training - Aggregate Report for Trainings

March 1999, January 2000, May 2000 & August 2000

Training Implementation Update Report
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Introduction

In March 1999, and January, May, and August of 2000, CSREES/USDA funded the Adolescent Growth and Development Training (AGDT), "Moving Ahead Together: What Works for Youth, What Works for You?" [AGDT CSREES/USDA training]. Forty-two teams of Cooperative Extension personnel from 37 states and the territory of Guam attended these trainings (see Table 1). [This training was originally developed by the USDA Army School Age & Teen Project (ASA&T)]. Four states (Kansas, Missouri, New York, and Virginia) sent teams to two of the AGDT CSREES/USDA trainings.

Overall, this report represents the survey responses from 41 teams of Cooperative Extension personnel from 36 states and the territory of Guam. These teams were asked to provide information regarding the training that had been provided in their states during the 12-month period following their participation in the AGDT CSREES/USDA training (between March 2000 and August 2001, inclusive). Throughout most of the report data for states that sent teams to more than one

training were combined into one state total. However, with some of the descriptive data, these states may be represented twice (once for each team); these instances will be noted accordingly. A representative from each state team completed a survey for all teams except for Arkansas [therefore, Arkansas is not included in this report].

Participants at AGDT Training

As mentioned above, this report is based on the responses of a representative from 41 teams from 36 states and the territory of Guam. Each team attended one of the four AGDT CSREES/USDA trainings with a total of **199 Cooperative Extension personnel** participating. Teams were comprised of a variety of personnel from Cooperative Extension. County-level 4-H and FCS Educators and 4-H Child, Youth, and Human Development Specialists were most prominent among those in attendance; other participants included university faculty, military staff, program directors and program staff, and other Cooperative Extension personnel.

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Results

Training Action Plan

During the initial AGDT CSREES/USDA training, participants were asked to develop a Training Action Plan for the next 12 months. The teams varied in how closely they were able to implement their Training Action Plans. With each team reporting separately, these plans were considered “fully implemented” by *seven* (17%) teams; “mostly implemented” by *eighteen* (44%) teams; and “partially implemented” by *ten* (24%) teams. *Six* (15%) teams reported that they were “not at all” able to implement their training action plan.

In terms of support provided by 4-H administrators and leaders toward the implementation of the Training Action Plan, a majority (89%, $n=24$) of the teams responding to this question indicated that 4-H leaders were “supportive” of their Training Action Plan. *Three* (11%) respondents indicated that their 4-H leaders were “unsupportive.” Half (50%, $n=19$) of the teams indicated that they needed the support of other administrators to implement their plan; however, most of these individuals (80%, $n=16$) were seen as supportive.

Descriptive Information about the Trainings Conducted by Each State (State Team Trainings)

Between March 2000 and August 2001, Cooperative Extension teams from 35 different states (including Guam) conducted at least one training for an overall total of **82** trainings. Only two states did not conduct any training during the 12-month period that followed the initial AGDT CSREES/USDA training. Additionally, many teams were able to conduct subsequent trainings very quickly, several as early as three months after attending the AGDT CSREES/USDA training. However, the majority of the subsequent training occurred between 6 and 12 months after the initial training session. The number, length, and average length of trainings offered are represented in Table 1. Several teams also reported that additional trainings had been conducted after the initial 12-month period. In addition, several others reported that additional trainings were already planned and scheduled. Thus, the full impact of the AGDT CSREES/USDA training is under-represented in this report.

Participants at State Team Trainings

Responses from teams that conducted subsequent trainings in their states indicated that they were able to reach **2,978** collaborators, volunteers, youth, staff members, university colleagues, and military staff (see Table 2). Fourteen teams (from 11 states and Guam) reported conducting this training with volunteers as well as with paid staff.

Process and Content of State Team Trainings

A summary of training by each session is provided in Table 3, with the number of hours rounded to the nearest half hour. Almost all of the subsequent trainings varied the content and/or order of the trainings that were conducted. This alteration was most often done because of time constraints (82%) and/or matching the training to the needs of the audience (76%). Others (49%) combined elements of this training with elements of other training curricula, combined sessions or days of training (42%), or omitted aspects of the training they received (78%). All of the training curricula were reasonably well represented among these subsequent state trainings, with all but one session (#14: Putting the Pieces Together) being utilized at least 20 times. The greatest amount of time was reportedly spent on sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12. Support materials from the participant handbook were most commonly used for sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 10. It should be noted that several respondents did not provide complete information regarding either the number of hours spent on individual trainings or the use of support materials; thus, the totals in those columns are likely to be underestimates of the true totals.

Training Facilitators

The Cooperative Extension teams endorsed a variety of factors that facilitated the trainings and factors that impeded the trainings that teams subsequently conducted. Facilitators of training are listed in Table 4. **Recognition of the need for youth development training** was identified as the primary factor that facilitated training. **Leadership support, positive working relationships,** and **staff commitment** were also frequently endorsed facilitators.

Training Obstacles

All but five of the teams reported that they had encountered obstacles in providing training, with **time constraints** (69%) being the most commonly identified obstacle (see Table 5). Many ($n=27$, 82%) of the teams

that reported obstacles indicated that existing obstacles would continue to remain problematic. In response to an open-ended question regarding obstacles to training, **financial difficulties** and **time constraints** were identified as primary concerns.

Benefits of Training

All 38 teams that reported that they had conducted training indicated that the training sessions had been beneficial to their state (or territory). In response to an open-ended question regarding the benefits of the AGDT CSREES/USDA training, most comments were focused on one of four themes: 1) **Improved understanding of youth development**; 2) **Improvement of internal training capacities**; 3) **Facilitation of team development**; and 4) **Opportunity for greater and enhanced exposure for Extension Educators**. Examples of reported benefits in each of these categories are listed below. Other benefits mentioned included the **availability of an organized training format with experiential activities**, and the **opportunity to build closer relationships between military and Cooperative Extension**.

Improved understanding of youth development

- “Staff who work at the local level are much more conscious of youth development as a process and the need to keep it at the forefront when planning programs.”
- “[It provided] an important knowledge base to draw upon concerning positive youth development.”
- “We have better prepared staff and educators - a greater understanding of youth and their needs.”
- “This is an excellent training. Unfortunately, I have had to teach it in pieces and not as a whole. My [volunteer] group found it very exciting and motivating. It was new knowledge to many of them.”

Improvement of internal training capacities

- “The curriculum has offered some terrific introduction to youth development training pieces.”
- “We have identified six core elements that all 4-H staff and volunteers need to have to promote positive youth development.”
- “4-H county agents are better prepared to train volunteers.”
- “The [AGDT CSREES/USDA] will continue to be integrated into special projects....and has been piloted through our Continuing Education Program.”

Facilitation of team development

- “We now have a wonderful youth development training team. We can now offer a first class training for youth development staff, without sending staff to mainland training programs.”
- “The state now has a team qualified to train youth development staff: agencies and organizations have more effective youth development staff as a result of their participation in this training.”
- “[CSREES/USDA provided] an opportunity for 4-H agents in the state to bond.”

Opportunity for greater and enhanced exposure of Extension Educators

- “More global appreciation for 4-H youth work.”
- “[There has been] increased awareness of Extension Educators’ roles in youth development at the county level.”
- “For the first time we have a group that sees this kind of training as its role within the organization.”

Future Training Plans

All but two teams that had provided training indicated that they had plans to continue offering training based on the AGDT CSREES/USDA training they had attended. While a wide range of audiences were mentioned as possible recipients of training, most teams indicated that they were planning on using this training with county 4-H staff, volunteers, and State or District level Cooperative Extension staff. In addition, a substantial number of states ($n=12$, 32%) were planning to implement training on an annual basis. Half ($n=19$, 50%) of the states (including Guam) that had conducted trainings reported that the training had become a part of the base 4-H youth development program in their state.

When asked what they needed in order to implement future trainings, teams responded that they needed **more time**, **additional staff**, **leadership support**, and **more resources** to provide the training. Several teams also cited a need to **market the training** and **emphasize the importance of this kind of information to potential audiences**.

Military Partnerships

A little less than half of the teams that provided training indicated they were forming partnerships for youth development with the military. Twelve teams reported that they had formed partnerships with the Army and nine reported that they had formed partnerships with the Air Force.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the AGDT CSREES/USDA training appears to have been an excellent training that meets a need within Cooperative Extension. Importantly, half of the states (including Guam) that had conducted trainings reported that this training had now become a part of the base 4-H youth development program in their state.

Subsequent Trainings:

- All but two of the states and territory that responded to the survey have conducted subsequent training and several planned to provide additional training in the future
- Based on the results of this survey, a total of **2,978** people participated in the 82 trainings conducted by the Cooperative Extension teams.
- The majority of participants at subsequent trainings were county staff, volunteers, and youth.
- Several teams also reported that additional trainings had been conducted after the initial 12-month period and others reported that additional trainings were already planned and scheduled.

Content of Subsequent Trainings:

- The content of subsequent trainings was quite varied, with components 1 (About Youth, About Caring Adults, and About Current Roles), 2 (About You: Colors I.Q.), 4 (Experiential Learning Model), 5 (Characteristics of Youth from 6-8: “Let’s Start Where They Are”), 6 (Essential Elements to Support

Youth and Create Opportunities for Growth), 7 (Understanding and Valuing Diversity), 8 (Communicating One-on-One and in Groups; Communicating to Handle Conflict), 10 (Understanding Risk Behaviors of Young Adolescents), and 12 (Youth and Adults as Full Partners) being the most commonly used.

- Modifications in sequence and content of subsequent trainings were most often due to time constraints and the need to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of specific audiences.

Facilitators of Subsequent Trainings:

- Recognition of the need for quality training on child and youth development, leadership support, staff commitment, and having confidence and positive working relationships within the teams were identified as key facilitators for these training efforts.

Obstacles to Subsequent Trainings:

- Time constraints were identified as the primary obstacle to providing training.

Benefits of Subsequent Trainings:

- A range of benefits were reported including improved understanding of youth development; improvements in internal training; team development; and an increased awareness of what Extension Educators have to offer.

Table 1. Composition of trainings by state

State	Total Number of Trainings	Total Number of Days Trainings Held	Total Number of Hours of Training	Average Number of Hours per Training
AR	No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
AK	2	3.00	10.0	5.0
AL	1	4.00	Not provided	Not provided
AZ	1	1.00	4.0	4.0
CA	3	3.00	14.5	5.0
CT	4	5.00	10.0	2.5
DE	1	5.00	Not provided	Not provided
GA	1	1.00	4.50	4.5
GUAM	2	6.00	23.50	12.0
HI	2	8.00	52.00	26.0
IL	6	7.00	32.50	5.5
IN	1	3.00	16.00	16.0
IA	No trainings	No trainings	No trainings	No trainings
KS	11	15.00	63.00	6.0
KY	1	2.00	8.50	8.5
LA	2	4.00	17.50	9.0
MD	1	5.00	24.00	24.0
MA	1	1.00	Not provided	Not provided
MI	2	3.00	12.00	6.0
MN	2	8.00	16.50	8.0
MO	3	4.00	18.00	6.0
NE	1	4.00	17.00	17.0
NV	4	11.00	80.00	20.0
NH	1	3.00	11.00	11.0
NJ	1	2.00	12.00	12.0
NY	3	10.00	26.00	9.0
ND	4	4.00	16.00	4.0
OH	2	3.00	13.50	7.0
OK	2	2.00	4.00	2.0
PA	No trainings	No trainings	No trainings	No trainings
RI	4	Not provided	10.00	2.5
SD	1	3.00	16.00	16.0
TN	3	3.00	Not provided	Not provided
VT	2	2.00	3.50	2.0
VA	3	4.00	21.00	7.0
WA	2	4.00	18.00	9.0
WV	1	2.00	6.00	6.0
WY	1	1.00	3.00	3.0

The number of hours for "number of hours of training" and "average number of hours per training" was rounded to the nearest half hour increment. "Number of days" totals were rounded to the nearest day. As indicated previously, state level data were combined in states with two participating teams.

Table 2. Total number of people that attended trainings by category

Position	Number
County staff	1333
Volunteers	641
Collaborators	329
Youth	346
University colleagues	244
Military Staff	31
Other (includes State Strengthening and other unspecified State staff)	54
Total number attending trainings	2,978

Table 3. Content of training by sessions across states

	Total number of times sessions trained	Total number of hours spent on topic	Number of times support/ handbook materials used
Session 1: About Youth, About Caring Adults, and About Current Roles	37	36.5	26
Session 2: About You: Colours I.Q.	41	62.5	32
Session 3: Setting Ground Rules-Establishing Norms	31	19.5	16
Session 4: Experiential Learning Model	48	60.5	32
Session 5: Characteristics of Youth from 6-8 "Let's Start Where they Are"	57	80.5	46
Session 6: Essential Elements to Support Youth and Create Opportunities for Growth	38	58.5	27
Session 7: Understanding and Valuing Diversity	31	48.0	16
Session 8: Communicating One-on-One and in Groups; Communicating to Handle Conflict	34	48.0	20
Session 9: Understanding Peer Group Support	24	21.0	15
Session 10: Understanding Risk Behaviors of Young Adolescents	37	30.5	28
Session 11: Providing a Circle of Support for At-Risk Youth	26	20.5	13
Session 12: Youth and Adults as Full Partners	29	41.0	23
Session 13: Characteristics of Programs that Work	21	20.0	14
Session 14: Putting the Pieces Together	17	19.5	7

Table 4. Facilitators of training

Facilitators	Number of Teams	Percentage
Recognition of need for youth development training	25	69%
Leadership support	16	46%
Positive working relationships, confidence, and respect of team	16	46%
Staff commitment	13	37%
Collaboration with outside sources	9	26%
Involvement of parents	2	6%

Table 5. Obstacles to training

Obstacles	Number of Teams	Percentage
Time constraints	24	69%
Staffing problems	5	14%
Problems with materials	5	14%
Lack of leadership support	4	11%