

Applying CYFERNet Resources to Evaluate Community Outcomes

Using Timelines in Program and Evaluation Planning

Case Example: A Program Seeking to Increase Teen Involvement in Social Action in the Community

Jones County is an agriculturally based community that has suffered economically with the farm crisis in North Carolina. Seeking to provide opportunities for engagement and positive youth development in Jones County, Cooperative Extension has begun a program to increase youth engagement and opportunities for community involvement for the youth. The program leaders first decided to rally community support by holding a Town Meeting on youth engagement in the community. To determine the kinds of issues in which teens were interested or involved, a county-wide teen survey was conducted. Program leaders used the results of the surveys to kickoff the program in a Town Meeting. In addition, the program recruited adolescents to form a teen club to address issues of leadership, civic responsibilities, and community service. As part of the teen club, local teens became involved in planning activities to increase their involvement in community activities and they planned annual events that involved their families. In addition, the teens in the club were able to go to retreats with community leaders to learn more about leadership. The major aim of the program was to increase teen involvement in activities that would mobilize the community and encourage citizen participation.

Evaluation Timelines:
This Bulletin will seek to show a case example of a program and evaluation, give an appropriate timeline to get the program off the ground and begin to conduct the evaluation.

Program Plan

Program Goal 1: Rally community support for community development targeting teens and increase decision-makers' willingness to include teens in community decision-making bodies

Program Goal 2: Empower teens so they feel capable of making a difference through leadership development, community involvement skills, and access to community decision-making bodies



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Community Action Plan

Before any work was done in Jones County, community leaders realized they must first gain community input and buy-in. To gain buy-in from parents and school staff, they made plans to contact parents and school personnel to explain their efforts and get permission to survey teens at school. To gain information from the teens, program leaders decided it would be useful to conduct a general survey of all teens in the county and then conduct more in-depth focus groups to flesh out the survey information. The focus groups would help the programmers gain a better understanding of the kinds of things teens would do and would like to do in their spare time, how they are currently involved in the community, what roles they feel they should play, and what they could do to make a difference.

Before making any further plans, the program leaders formed an advisory board with community members to assist them with their activities. The advisory board met bimonthly to offer input to the survey and focus group questions. The advisory board also helped program leaders plan for a proposed Town Meeting and recruit community leaders to attend the Town Meeting.

After the advisory board agreed on appropriate survey and focus group questions, the program leaders administered the Needs Survey to high school students in their regular classrooms. The Needs Survey was used to determine the kinds of issues the local teens felt were important. After the Needs Survey was administered, program leaders conducted two focus groups with small groups of teens to further explore teens' thoughts about community participation.

The Town Meeting took place about a month after the surveys and focus groups. The results from the surveys and focus groups served as a basis for the discussion. To further encourage teens to become involved, the program leaders implemented an essay contest in which high school students could write an essay entitled "What you can do in your community to make a difference." The winners of the contest were given the opportunity to attend a 4-H Congress to learn more about leadership.

After the Town Meeting, the teen club, called the Teen Community Action Club, began to get together to discuss issues of leadership, civic responsibilities, and community activities. At one of their first club meetings, the teens took the Mobilization Survey to measure how active they are in their community. This administration of the survey served as the baseline data for the project. The teen club continued to meet regularly and plan and participate in community activities, such as a newsletter, fundraisers, and a variety of community events. The teen club also designed a questionnaire to administer to high school students to solicit topics of interest for the second annual Town Meeting. Based on these results, the club helped plan the second Town Meeting. Eighteen months after the club had been meeting regularly, program leaders administered the Mobilization Scale again to determine if teen participation in the community had increased.

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Citizen Development Evaluation

Program Goal 1: Rally community support for community development targeting teens and increase decision-maker's willingness to include teens in community decision making bodies

Indicator 1: There will be increased opportunity for teen involvement in the community decision-making bodies

Measure: Pre-post test of involvement opportunities using Needs Survey data combined with informal discussions at Town Meeting around involvement opportunities compared with recording of new teen involvement opportunities throughout program

Indicator 2: Teens in Jones County perceive that community leaders are supportive of their efforts to create positive community change

Measure: Pre-post analysis of Focus Groups

Program Goal 2: Empower teens so they feel capable of making a difference through leadership development, community involvement skills, and access to community decision-making bodies

Indicator 1: Teens will show an increase in knowledge, awareness, and skills to increase teen involvement in Jones County

Measure: Pre-post analysis of Teen Mobilization Scale

Indicator 2: Local teens display empowerment through increased pursuit of leadership roles in community activities

Measure: Analysis of Needs Survey to see how many activities in Jones County are run by teen leaders

Program Goal 3: Increase teen involvement in the community

Indicator: The extent to which teens participate in the community activities in Jones County

Measure: Pre-post test using Mobilization Scale and pre-post Needs Survey tally of participation

Tasks	2/00-- 3/00	4/00-- 5/00	6/00-- 7/00	8/00-- 9/00	10/00-- 11/00	12/00-- 1/01	2/01-- 3/01	4/01-- 5/01
Devise plan	x							
Set up tools	O							
Advisory board meeting	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Administer survey		O						O
Conduct focus groups		O						O
Town hall meeting		x						x
Essay contest		x						
Interview and hire PA			x					
Recruit teens for club			x					
Club newsletter			x		x	x		x
Community Action Club				x	x	x	x	x
Recording of club members community involvement				O	O	O	O	O
Mobilization survey				O				O
Teens plan leadership retreat				x				
Teens begin to attend advisory boards/town meetings				x				
Teens run a BIG SWEEP				x				
Youth leadership retreat					x			
Teen planner fundraiser						x		
Teens begin to prepare 2nd annual town meeting						x		
First year report written								x

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Teen Focus Group Survey

1. What is your favorite thing about your community?
2. What do you do in your spare time when you are not in school?
3. What would you like to do in your spare time when you are not in school?
4. What do you do in your community to make a difference?
5. What role should youth play in your community?
6. If you had the opportunity, what could you do in your community to make a difference?

About the NOWG website and other resources

The Community National Outcome Workgroup seeks to provide resources for evaluating educational efforts that work to strengthen communities. The evaluation literature reviews, indicators, and measures available on the CommNOWG web site assess changes in the ways communities work (Process development); the structural components of the community (Policy development, Resource development, and Citizen development); and in community indicators.

Indicators of these components:

Process Development

- Strategic Planning
- Key Stakeholders
- Community Building
- Link to Research

Resource Development

- Community Asset* Expansion
- Community Asset* Integration

Citizen Development

- Human Capital
- Community Assets*
- Empowerment
- Citizen Participation

Policy Development

- Changes in CYF Policies
- Changes in people

These resources were developed to be used as part of the evaluation techniques outlined in the State Strengthening Evaluation Guide. The indicators presented on this site often rely on non-standardized survey methods of data collection. Information on alternative methods for collecting data can be found at CYFERNet Evaluation/Alternative methods.

*Community Assets are comprised of Social Community Assets, Physical Community Assets, and Economic Community

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