**Needs Assessment Overview**

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***Handout Created August 29, 2018***

***Timeframe.*** May 2016 to December 2016; length due to needing to find people and establish relationships (I was new to the community); and time involved with qualitative analysis.

***Clientele.***Defined through input from County Directors and other long-time 4-H Advisors.

1. 4-H community (CD, 4-H staff, 4-H members and volunteers).
2. Youth not being served in 4-H (focused on Latino youth).
3. Staff in organizations providing youth development and/or STEM education.

***Methods****.* I utilized multiple qualitative methods. Did not go through IRB approval. Methods selected to build on previous work (secondary data), build relationships within the community (interviews), and better understand the state of existing CE/4-H programs (observations).

1. *Secondary data.* Included the US census, school enrollment data (Ed Data), 4-H enrollment, previous county 4-H strategic planning documents, Hispanic Demographic Trends Report 2015; Human Development Reports, Sonoma Community Health Needs Assessment 2016, Napa Self-Assessment 2012-2017, *Putting Youth on the Map (GIS)*.
2. *Semi-structured interviews*. Interview protocol included eight open-ended questions focused on current state, needs, and areas for growth. Interview notes were documented electronically (but interviews were *not* audio-recorded). Interviews were conducted with County Directors, 4-H staff, a handful of long-time 4-H volunteers, and other community key informants, including 3 Supervisors (Marin & Napa) and 27 individuals from 21 organizations (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, Youth Leadership Institute, Libraries, Bay Area Community Resources).
3. *Participant observations* of 4-H meetings and events. Example: Observations and report from five weeks of 4-H summer camp.

***Analysis.***Looked for patterns (themes). Filtered themes through ANR Healthy Families and Communities Strategic Plan and 4-H Mission Mandates. There were community needs identified that were not included in my program, such as alcohol and drug reduction or eighth grade math proficiency, because they are not within identified ANR or 4-H goals). Also filtered through my own expertise; for example, third grade reading proficiency was a community issue but I have little to no expertise in helping to address this need.

***Program Priorities****.* My three program priorities, aligned with clientele groups, were:

1. *4-H community*: Build capacity in the 4-H community to improve youth development outcomes (e.g., improved program quality, building volunteer competencies, use of curricula, finding administrative efficiencies, and supporting formative evaluation).
2. *Youth not being served in 4-H*: Adapt 4-H Clubs to provide opportunities for high quality youth development for Latino youth (see <http://4h.ucanr.edu/Resources/Latino/>).
3. *Staff in organizations providing youth development and/or STEM education*: Bring Cooperative Extension’s expertise to strengthen out-of-school time STEM education with respect to professional development, curricula, and evaluation (see <http://ucanr.edu/sites/YDResources/>).

***Advice and Lessons Learned.***

* Talk with other Advisors in your field who have been around for more than a decade. They have a wealth of experience and can help frame significant issues and point you towards productive objectives.
* If new to the community, treat your needs assessment as both a process to direct your program **and** a method to build relationships with community leaders. Interviews with community members is a fantastic way to meet them and hear about your community’s history, the players, and its needs.
* Pick one of two routes: (a) treat your needs assessment as a research project, go through IRB, undertake rigorous data collection and analysis, and get it published; or (b) use it as a tool to point your program in a productive direction, get the NA done in a timely manner, and then get on with your Advisor program.

**Interview Questions**

1. What are needs of youth in our county? What are people talking about regarding youth? (follow-up, ask about health, education, social and political capital / relationships, community involvement / youth voice, natural environment, built environment.)
2. What services, organizations, and programs are available to youth? (e.g., schools, afterschool, youth organizations)
3. What is your vision for youth in this county?
4. To better support youth in our county, where do you think is the lowest-hanging fruit?
5. Where are the most likely friend and fund (partners and funders) opportunities?
6. Whom else should I talk to?
7. What other questions should I be asking people?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?

**Cold-Call Email**

**Subject:** UC Cooperative Extension & 4-H

Hello,

Great to see an active Boys & Girls Club in Marin County! I am the new 4-H Youth Development Advisor serving Sonoma, Marin, and Napa counties. In this role, I provide leadership, support, and oversight to 4-H clubs, camps, and programs. I also collaborate with other organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate new programs in healthy living; science, engineering, math and technology; environmental stewardship; and civic engagement. I would love to chat with you all and learn more about your youth programs in Marin. Do you have some time in July available?

Thanks,

Steven

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