



Region 3 Youth Development Institute Training and Technical Assistance Project

Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to:
Youth Development Network
P.O. Box 269003
Sacramento, CA 95826

Submitted by:
LPC Consulting Associates, Inc.
2015 J Street, Suite 205
Sacramento, CA 95811

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Section 1 Background and Introduction

The Youth Development Network, a nonprofit organization based in Sacramento, California, provides the region with training and technical assistance, networking, and policy advocacy centered on the youth development approach. Founded in 2000, YDN began as a result of a need to support youth service providers with training and networking opportunities focused on youth development research and practices. To address this issue, YDN collaborates with individuals, organizations, families, and communities throughout the Sacramento region in order to promote positive development of children and youth. The organization also equips youth service providers with effective tools and best practices in order to develop healthy young people in safe, engaging learning environments. Ultimately, YDN aims to create life-changing experiences for youth to thrive and succeed, and create communities where all youth participate and give back.

In early 2009, the Youth Development Network (YDN) obtained funding from the Sierra Health Foundation, The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, The David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the Yocha De-He Community Fund to implement the Region 3 Youth Development Institute (YDI) Training and Technical Assistance Project. The goals of the Region 3 Project were to:

1. Build capacity of state and federally funded afterschool programs to deliver quality programs using youth development strategies to improve academic and other developmental outcomes.
2. Increase program capacity to administer and use the state program quality assessment tool for continuous improvement.
3. Increase the training/technical support capacity in the region and within afterschool organizations.

YDN proposed to meet these goals by providing coordinated, complementary training and technical assistance (TAT) to state-funded afterschool programs serving youth in Sacramento, Nevada, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties, thereby helping these programs provide quality services to their young clients. The major components of the Region 3 Project consisted of:

- A four-day Youth Development Institute (YDI) Training;
- A four-day Youth Development Manager's Training;
- A four-day YDI Train-the-Trainers; and
- Ongoing YDI coaching and site visits.

Project staff recruited organizations to participate in the Region 3 Project via referrals from Region 3 staff at the Sacramento County Department of Education. Final selections for the project were based on a brief written application, attendance at an orientation session, and an in-person interview. The criteria for participation included: (1) commitment from the organization Director; (2) readiness and capacity of the organization to integrate the work at the program sites and throughout the larger organization; (3) age groups served; (4) geographic area served; and (5) programs that could most benefit from this type of support. Organizations that had state-funded afterschool programs and that served elementary, middle and high school youth were given priority. In total, eight organizations completed the application process and were selected to participate in the project.

At the onset of the grant, the Youth Development Network contracted with LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. to conduct an evaluation of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project. The purpose of the evaluation was to document the implementation of project

activities and participation from Region 3 afterschool programs, as well as measure the outcomes of the Project in terms of knowledge gained by staff and changes in the quality of the Region 3 programs. For a detailed description of the specific evaluation activities undertaken for the project, see Section 2.

This Final Evaluation Report presents the results of the data collected from the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project evaluation. The contents of the report detail each of the Project components, including the YDI Training (Section 3), the Manager's Training (Section 4), the YDI Train-the-Trainers (Section 5) and the Coaching component (Section 6). The report also provides a pre-post comparison of data related to the quality of the afterschool programs before and after engaging in Project activities (Sections 7 and 8) and includes findings from participant interviews (Section 9). Overall, the evaluation results demonstrate that the project activities produced positive outcomes for Region 3 afterschool programs, their staff, and the youth they serve.

Section 2 Evaluation Activities

The evaluation of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project began in early 2009. LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. (LPC) designed an evaluation work plan to align with the scope of services for the Project, considering the multiple funding sources. In collaboration with YDN Staff, LPC also drafted three separate logic models for each of the training components (see Attachment A). These logic models delineated the activities, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes of the project to provide a framework for implementation and evaluation.

To document project outcomes, the evaluation team drafted several data collection instruments. First, the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) Short Form, a one-page paper-based survey including a sample of questions from the complete YPQA, was created to measure changes in the quality of the afterschool programs, as reported by program staff. YDN staff administered the YPQA Short Form survey to participants on the fourth and last day of YDI Training as a baseline measure. Program staff completed the form “retrospectively,” to rate their programs based on the quality of the program before engaging in project activities. In total, 19 individuals representing 14 afterschool programs completed the baseline survey. The second and third administration of the YPQA Short Form occurred in September 2009 and October 2010 via an online survey sent to participants who had attended at least one training. Twenty three program staff representing 11 programs responded to the final post-survey. This data (presented in Section 7) provides a comparison of Region 3 afterschool program quality prior to and after the project activities, documenting change over time. A copy of the YPQA Short Form can be found in Attachment B.

Evaluation staff also drafted a Managers Training Post-Survey to measure the degree to which participants gained knowledge and learned the topics discussed in the training. Survey questions were based on the content of the Managers Training curriculum. LPC administered the survey online via SurveyMonkey.com, sending the survey link to each of the Managers Training participants approximately three weeks after the training concluded. In total, six individuals responded to the survey, the results of which are presented in Section 4.3 of the report.

Additional data collection instruments not developed by LPC included YDN Training Evaluation Forms, as well as the Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSAT). The Training Evaluation Forms were created and used by YDN staff to collect feedback from participants at the end of each day of training. The results of these forms are presented in Sections 3.2, 4.2, and 5.2. YDN staff worked with afterschool programs to administer the QSAT as another measure of changes in program quality over time. At the conclusion of the project, between September 2010 and March 2011, staff administered the QSAT to eight program sites in three districts using a post-test with a retrospective pre-test. QSAT results can be found in Section 8 of this report.

Lastly, in order to collect qualitative feedback about the project, the evaluator conducted telephone interviews with Region 3 afterschool program staff and the lead YDN staff member for the project. In total, 10 afterschool program staff representing four different organizations were interviewed about their experience with the project and changes observed in their programs and among the youth they serve. The interview findings are presented in Section 9 of this report.

Section 3 Youth Development Institute Training

The Youth Development Institute (YDI) Training was the first training administered to afterschool programs via the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project. The YDI took place in February 2009 and consisted of four-days of training for line staff, site managers, and upper management of afterschool programs.

In total, approximately 40 individual staff from eight Region 3 organizations attended the February YDI training. These organizations all operated afterschool programs, serving elementary, middle, and/or high school age youth. At least one staff member from the following eight organizations attended the YDI training:

- City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation;
- RISE, Inc. (Esparto);
- Marysville Joint Unified School District;
- Yuba City Unified School District;
- Galt Joint Union High School District;
- Grass Valley School District;
- San Juan Unified School District; and
- Sacramento City Unified School District.

As self-reported by training participants, various levels of afterschool program staff participated in the YDI, ranging from support staff and aides to supervisors and managers. Participants identified their positions in the afterschool programs as follows:

- Site Coordinator
- Teacher
- Assistant Teacher
- Site Lead
- Site Supervisors/Manager
- Activities/Program Provider
- Mentor/Friend
- REC Aide
- Program Director
- Administrator
- Team Leader
- Support Staff

3.1 YDI Training Description

The purpose of the YDI Training was to help participants achieve a greater understanding of the youth development framework, and provide information for how afterschool programs can align their practices with this framework. The material covered in the YDI helps strengthen the quality of services offered by organizations to support the growth and development of youth. The YDI Training provided to the Region 3 afterschool programs covered the following topics each day:

- Day 1: Explored youth culture, reflected on program work, provided an overview of safety
- Day 2: Overview of relationship building, identified stages and indicators of group development
- Day 3: Discussed youth participation and challenges associated with youth participation, defined community involvement, introduced service learning and the elements of service learning, and identified youth voice and meaningful service
- Day 4: Discussed multiple intelligences, identified resources and tools, covered "teaching through intelligences," reviewed supports and opportunities, and engaged in action planning.

During the YDI Training, participants began to create Action Plans for their programs. In total, the eight organizations drafted 15 Action Plans for their afterschool programs. While some organizations chose to complete one Action Plan to address multiple program sites, others completed a Plan for each of their afterschool sites. These Action Plans served as a guide for staff in implementing the changes they would like to make within their program in regard to: (1) relationship building; (2) safety; (3) community involvement; (4) skill building; and (5) youth participation. For each of the categories, staff documented how they currently address the area, what they want to achieve at their school, the tasks/strategies to accomplish this, the desired effect on young people, persons responsible, and the timeline. The coaching element of the project (described in Section 5 of this report) assisted program staff with implementing and updating their Action Plans.

3.2 YDI Training Participant Evaluation Results

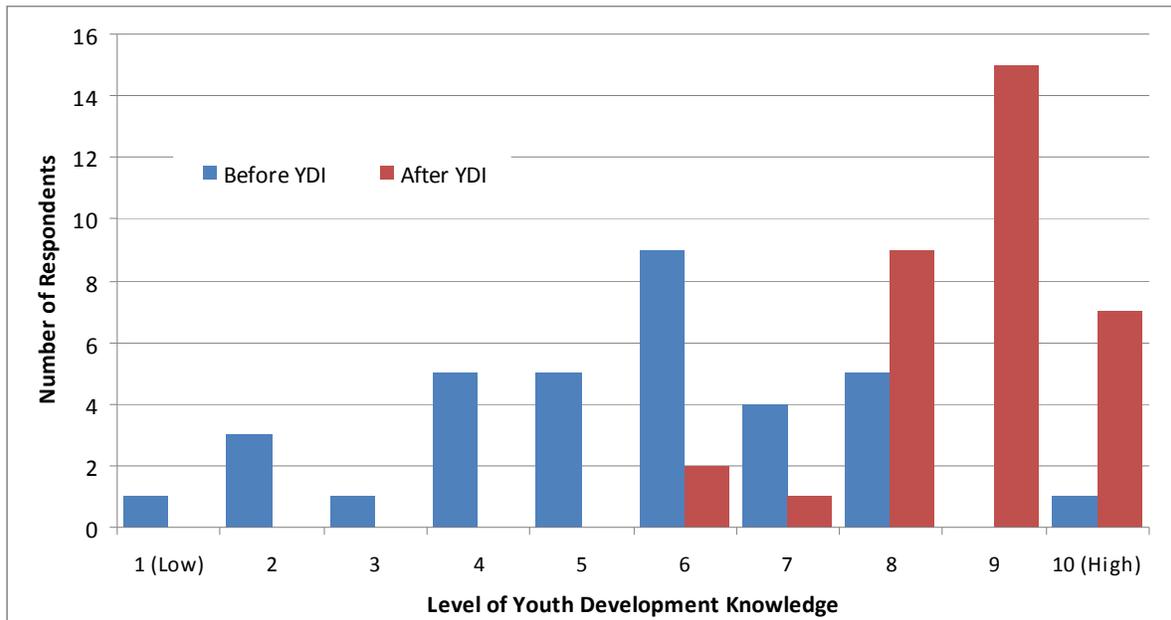
In order to learn how participants felt about the YDI training on an ongoing basis, YDN staff gathered feedback from YDI Training participants using an Evaluation Form at the end of each day of training. The results of this evaluation allowed the trainers to know what was most useful to the participants, as well as what participants would like to change about the training. To rate the overall usefulness of the training each day, participants used a four-point scale: very useful, useful, somewhat useful, and not useful. As displayed in Table 1, results indicate that each day of the YDI training was “very useful” to a vast majority of participants.

Table 1 – Overall Usefulness of YDI Training Days

	% who rated the training as “very useful”
Day 1: Overview of YDN and Safety	96%
Day 2: Relationship Building	92%
Day 3: Youth Participation and Community Involvement	72%
Day 4: Skill Building and Action Planning	76%

To gather feedback from YDI Training participants about the entire four-day training, YDN staff administered an overall Evaluation Form at the end of the last day. In total, 34 individuals completed the overall evaluation. The results of the YDI Training evaluations demonstrate that participants drastically elevated their level of youth development knowledge during the training, as shown in Figure 1. While only 9 percent of respondents rated their level of knowledge as “8” or greater (on a scale from 1 to 10) before the training, 91 percent rated themselves as “8” or greater after the YDI Training, an increase of 82 percentage points.

Figure 1 – Level of Youth Development Knowledge Before and After YDI Training



The overall evaluation results also reveal that YDI participants gained significant knowledge from the material presented in the training. Respondents rated the extent to which their participation in the YDI increased or improved their knowledge or interest in a range of topics. Participants rated themselves on a five-point scale: 1= not much, 3= some, and 5= a lot. Table 2 depicts the percentage of people who responded a “4” or a “5” out of 5 in regards to the extent YDI increased their knowledge on the listed topics.

Table 2 – Participant Increase in Knowledge and Interest of YDI Topics

Rate the extent to which your participation in the YDI Training has...	% Responding 4 or 5 (“a lot”)
Increased your interest in promoting a youth development (YD) approach within your program	100%
Increased your interest in working from a YD framework	97%
Increased your understanding of the elements of the YD framework	97%
Improved how you will work with youth	97%
Provided you with enough knowledge to take this work back to your program	94%
Improved your knowledge of/skills related to building caring relationships between youth and adults	94%
Improved your knowledge of/skills related to youth participation	94%
Increased your knowledge of the skills that youth and adults need to use a YD approach	94%
Increased your knowledge of/skills related to physical and emotional safety	88%
Increased your understanding of key YD terms	85%
Improved your knowledge of/skills related to community involvement	85%
Increased the frequency with which you interact with staff previously less familiar to you	81%
Improved your ability to communicate about your work with others	76%

As shown, between 76 and 100 percent of respondents agreed that the YDI training greatly increased their knowledge about and interest in the topics. Encouragingly 100 percent reported that their participation in the YDI increased their interest in promoting a youth development approach within their program, while almost all (97%) increased their interest in working from a youth development framework and reported that the training improved how they will work with youth (97%).

Overall, 85 percent of those completing a final evaluation form reported that the YDI Training increased their satisfaction with their job or role in their afterschool program. Most reported it increased their satisfaction because they learned things they had not previously known and because they felt “empowered” after the training. One respondent reported being “more well-rounded now,” while others acknowledged they had a “better understanding on how to be effective.” This feedback illustrates the positive impact the YDI Training had on the Region 3 afterschool program staff and the encouragement it offered to them in their respective roles within their programs.

“I feel like I have the tools to now make effective changes.”

“It has given me more confidence and data to support changes I want to make.”

“My role now seems more meaningful!”

Participants also felt the training was useful because it helped them “know what kids need in order to learn” and “it focused on problems that will be fixed to make our program better.” Overall, participants felt the training was “a great tool to move us forward” in program improvement and made them feel that they are able to make “real changes.”

“It’s the best training I’ve ever been to.”

“It made us think of ways to better our program, and to have more involvement from community and parents.”

“Helps us develop a vision for where we want our program to go.”

“Gives me direction.”

“All of the hands-on, energized learning really appealed to me [and] the trainers made it comfortable to speak up.”

“It gives me perspective of where I am and a goal to move to.”

Section 4 Managers Training

The Managers Training was the second training offered to afterschool programs via the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project. Similar to the YDI, the Managers Training consisted of four days of training; however, this training was specifically geared toward middle and upper management staff. Attendees of this training were not required to have participated in the YDI training, as the Managers Training focused on organizational level change and integration of afterschool quality into organizational practices.

In total, 19 individuals from Region 3 attended the Managers Training, representing the following seven organizations:

- City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation;
- Marysville Joint Unified School District;
- Yuba City Unified School District;
- Galt Joint Union High School District;
- Grass Valley School District;
- San Juan Unified School District; and
- Sacramento City Unified School District.

4.1 Managers Training Description

The Managers Training, held in June 2009, showcased the role of management in enhancing supports and opportunities, such as safety, relationship building, and personal development, with organizations. While the training was in concert with the youth development framework, it included additional materials and research from the fields of education, psychology, social work, criminal justice, and management theories. The following list details the topics addressed during each day of the Managers Training:

- Day 1: Provided an overview of leadership styles, identifying core values, and incorporating cultural competency
- Day 2: Addressed emotional and physical safety for adults and key factors to an effective work team
- Day 3: Discussed elements of a highly engaged staff, a manager's role in the external community, and developing staff using their multiple intelligences
- Day 4: Learned the core skills of coaching, the balance between guidance and supervision, and using your own and your staff's strongest talents

During the training, evaluator observation data indicates that participants were fully engaged in the learning process and had numerous opportunities to interact with one another and with the trainers. Participants acknowledged that they enjoyed the networking aspect of the training, as they were able to meet and work with a variety of individuals in the youth services field.

The relaxed training environment created by the facilitators made participants comfortable with moving around the room to engage with each other during ice-breaker and small group activities. For instance, during an exercise called the "World Café," the larger group divided into small groups, which then moved around the room to different stations with different topic questions. Participants reflected on their work experience and discussed key insights to answer the various questions. As groups rotated to the different stations, participants were able to share effective practices with each other in terms of ways to support their staff and incite positive change.

4.2 Managers Training Participant Evaluation Results

In order to gather participant feedback about the Managers Training on an ongoing basis, YDN staff administered an Evaluation Form at the end of each day of training. The results of this evaluation allowed the facilitators to learn what was most useful to the participants, as well as what participants would like to change about the training. To rate the overall usefulness of each training day, participants used a four-point scale: very useful, useful, somewhat useful, and not useful. As Table 3 shows, each day of the Managers Training was “useful” or “very useful” to a vast majority of participants.

Table 3 – Overall Usefulness of Managers Training Days

	% who rated the training as “useful” or “very useful”
Day 1: Core Values & Cultural Competency	92%
Day 2: Staff Agreements & The Three Ps	92%
Day 3: Staff Engagement & Community Involvement	92%
Day 4: Coaching & Nonverbal Communication	95%

According to evaluation results, participants especially appreciated the comfortable atmosphere of the Manager’s Training, and the tools they learned which they plan to utilize in their programs. Specific feedback from participants included:

“I had a great time these four days and have never felt so comfortable sharing my thoughts with complete strangers. I feel I can take back so much to help strengthen me as a leader.”

“I appreciate the time with my team because I really find it useful to hear their perspective on things. My group is very comfortable because this is a very encouraging environment. I love that they are feeling validated and willing to say anything to me.”

“Had a great time and learned so much! I can’t wait to take it home and apply it!”

“I am so impressed with this training and the incredible journey we have been guided through.”

“Best training in a very long time! I found some valuable connections from other districts and I feel like my group has become a team.”

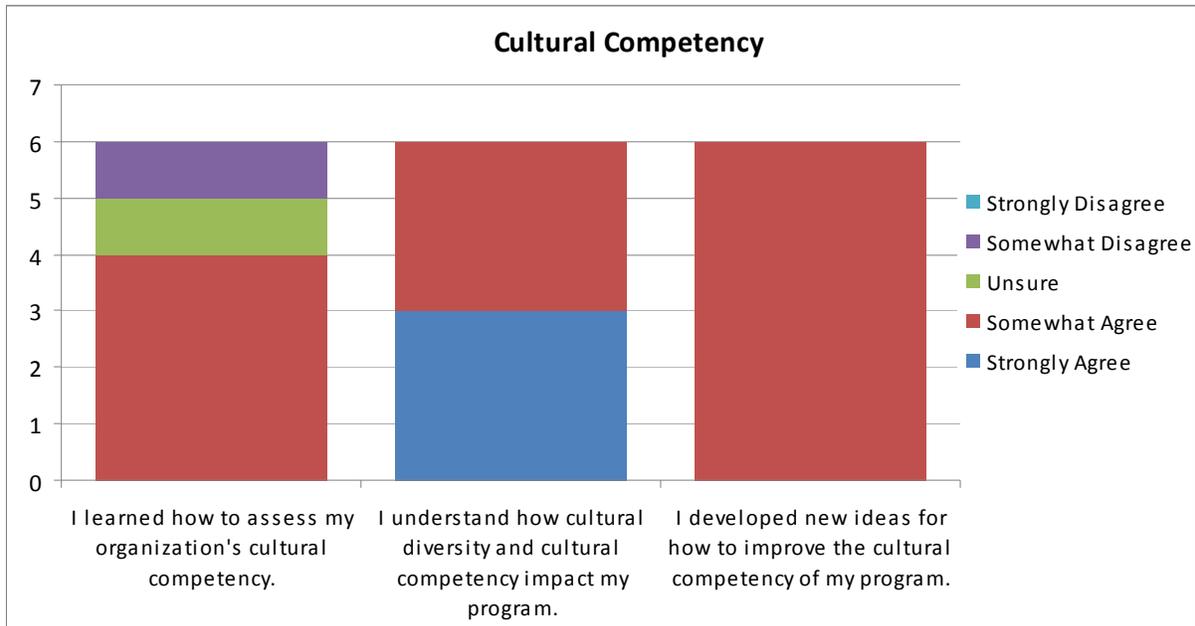
4.3 Managers Training Post-Survey Results

To measure the effectiveness of the Managers Training, participants completed an online post-training survey on the degree to which they learned and understood the topics addressed during the sessions. The evaluator sent the survey to all participants approximately three weeks after the training, and received six responses. Although the number of survey respondents was small, the results can still be considered valuable as an indication of training effectiveness, with the limitation that the sample size does not include the views of all participants who attended the training.

The post-survey content was organized into eight broad categories covered in the Managers Training. These categories included: (1) cultural competency; (2) core values; (3) creating an ideal culture; (4) developing organizational practices; (5) community development; (6) customers; (7) coaching; and (8) general topics. Respondents were asked to select the option that best described their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, unsure, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree). The survey results of each section are presented below.

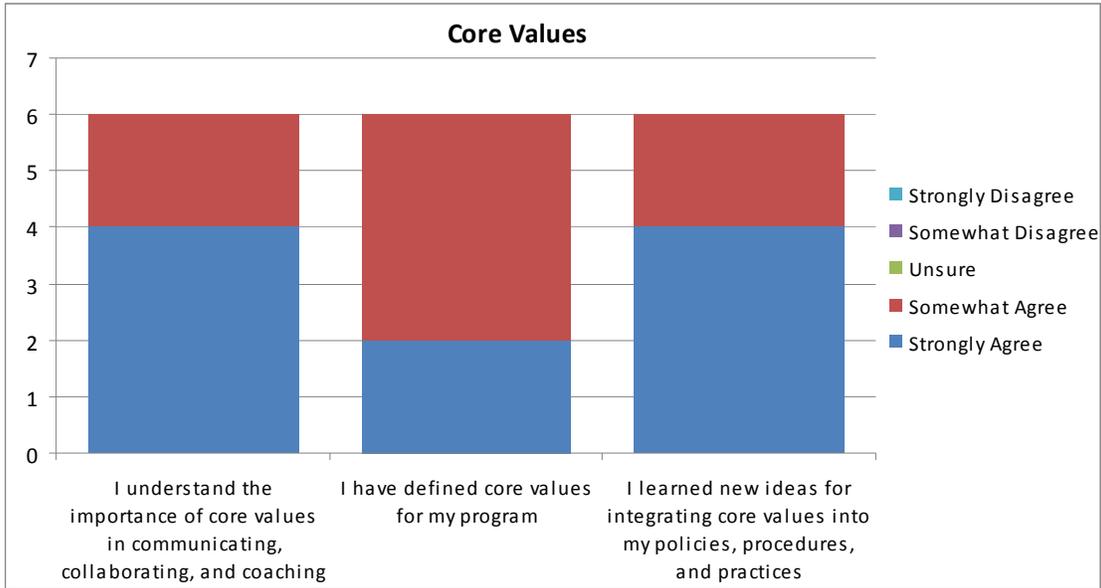
In general, respondents “somewhat agreed” that they learned and understood elements of cultural competency as they pertain to their organization and program. As shown in Figure 2, more people “strongly agreed” that they understand how cultural diversity and cultural competency impact their program, while two people either “somewhat” disagreed or were “unsure” whether or not they learned how to assess their organization’s cultural competency during the Managers Training.

Figure 2 – Cultural Competency



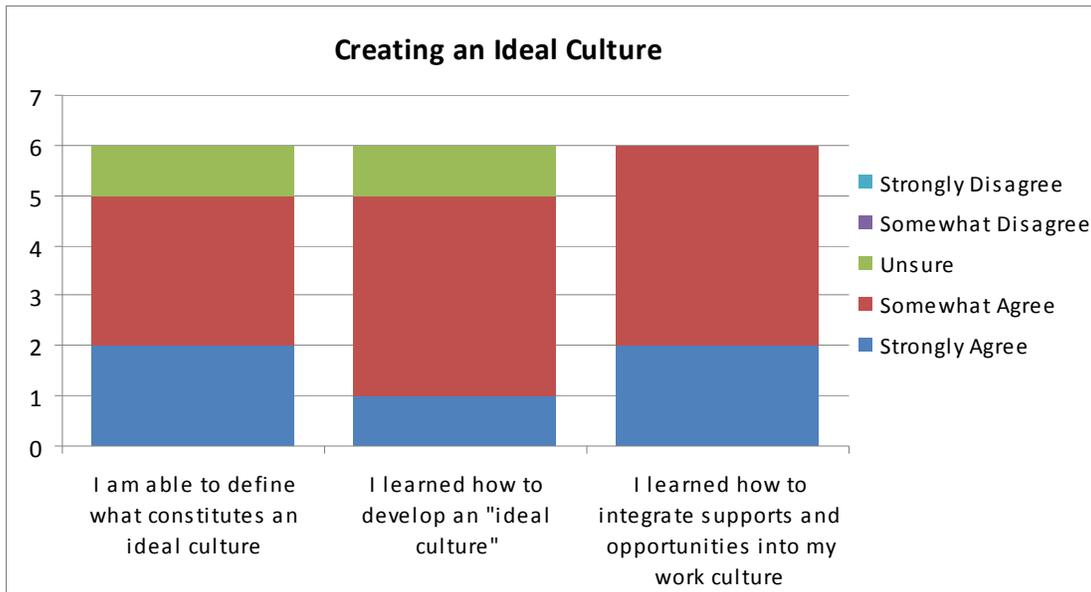
In regard to understanding and learning about program “core values,” all respondents either “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed that after the Managers Training they understood the importance of core values, had defined core values for their program, and learned new ideas for integrating core values into policies, procedures, and practices (see Figure 3). This is encouraging, as core values provide a solid foundation with which to build and develop organizations and afterschool programs.

Figure 3 – Core Values



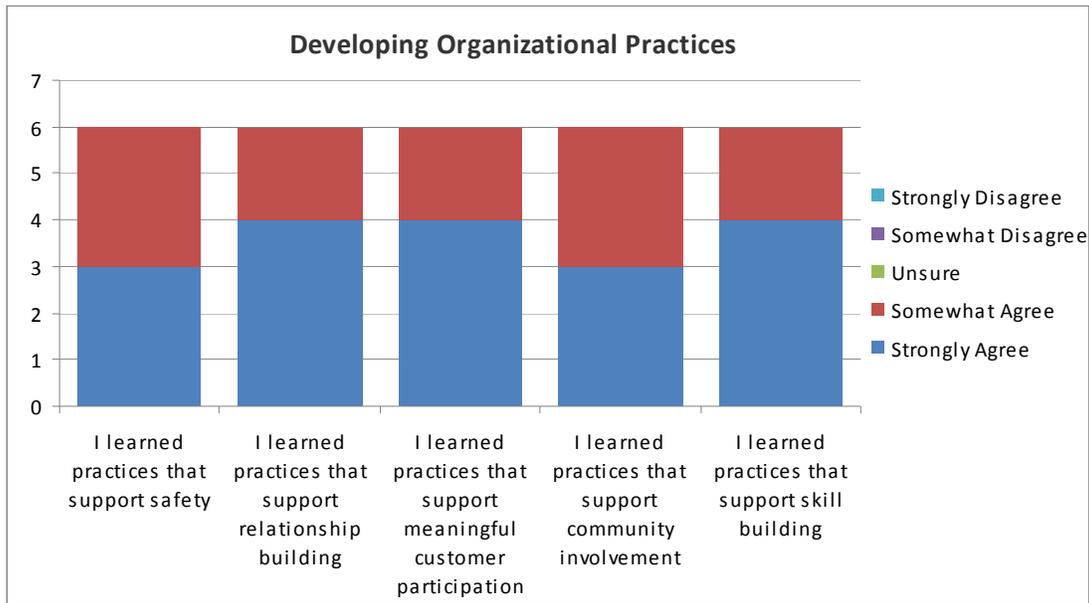
As displayed in Figure 4 below, a majority of respondent “somewhat” agreed that they learned about creating an ideal culture for their program during the Managers Training. For each element of “creating an ideal culture,” some respondents “strongly agreed” that they learned from the Managers Training, while one respondent was “unsure” they were able to define an “ideal culture” and unsure they “learned how to develop an ideal culture.”

Figure 4 – Creating an Ideal Culture



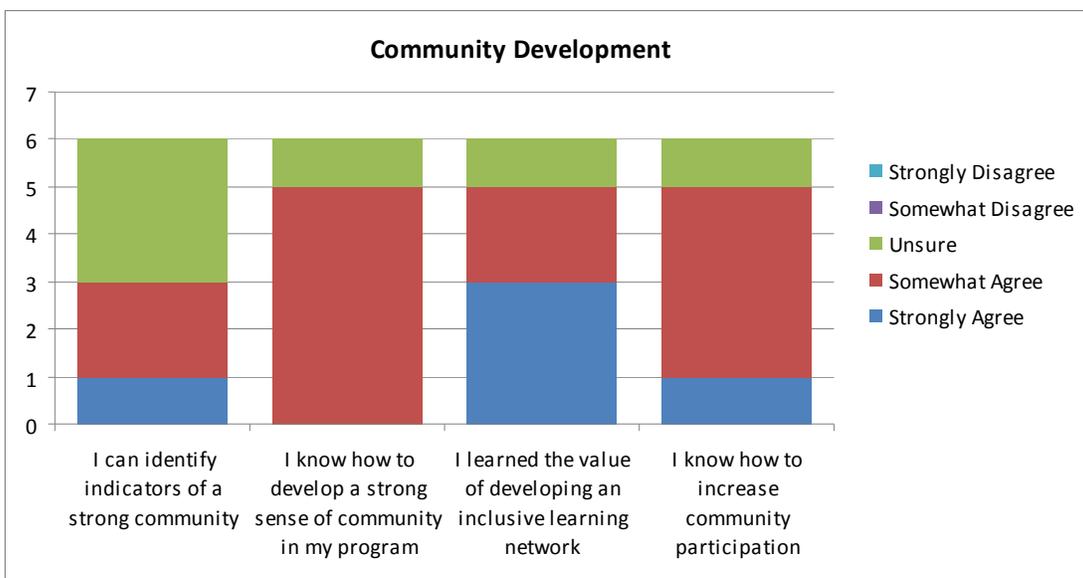
From the survey results, it is apparent that training participants gained significant knowledge about developing organizational practices. Fifty percent or greater “strongly” agreed that they learned various elements of organizational practices from attending the Managers Training, as shown in Figure 5. The remaining respondents “somewhat” agreed to learning about developing organizational practices, while no respondents disagreed or were unsure.

Figure 5 – Developing Organizational Practices



Survey responses varied in regard to gaining knowledge of “community development” during the Managers Training. Figure 6 indicates that while most respondents either “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed that they learned elements of developing a sense of community, an inclusive learning network, and community participation, several respondents also reported they were “unsure” whether or not they learned these things. Most notably, half of the respondents were “unsure” if they could identify indicators of a strong community, yet half also “strongly” agree that they learned the value of developing an inclusive learning network.

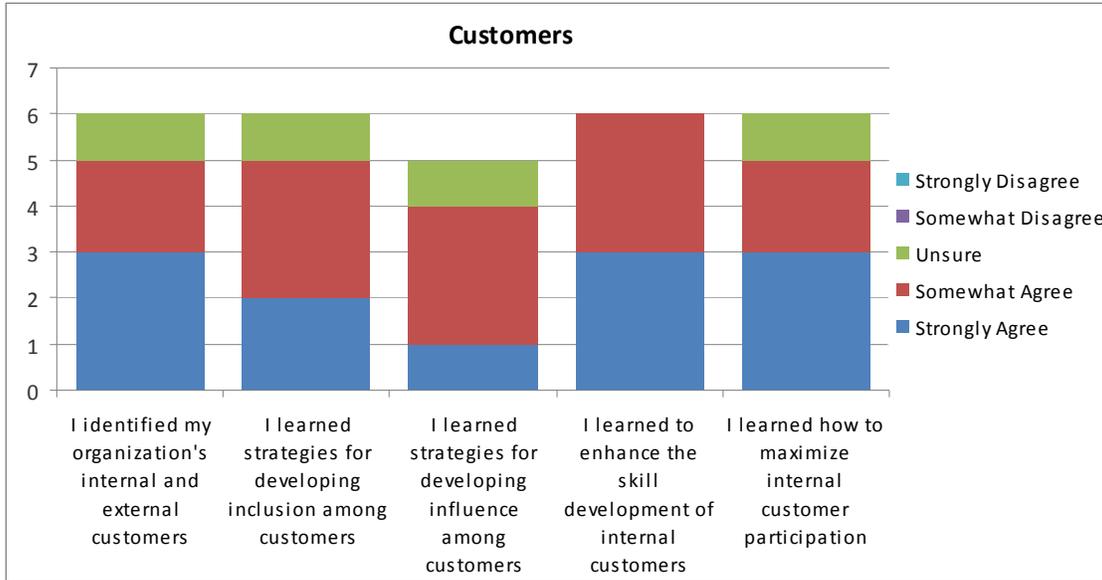
Figure 6 – Community Development



Similar to elements of community development, the survey also showed mixed results in regard to learning about developing strong relations with internal and external customers. Although respondents generally “strongly” and “somewhat” agreed that they learned strategies for

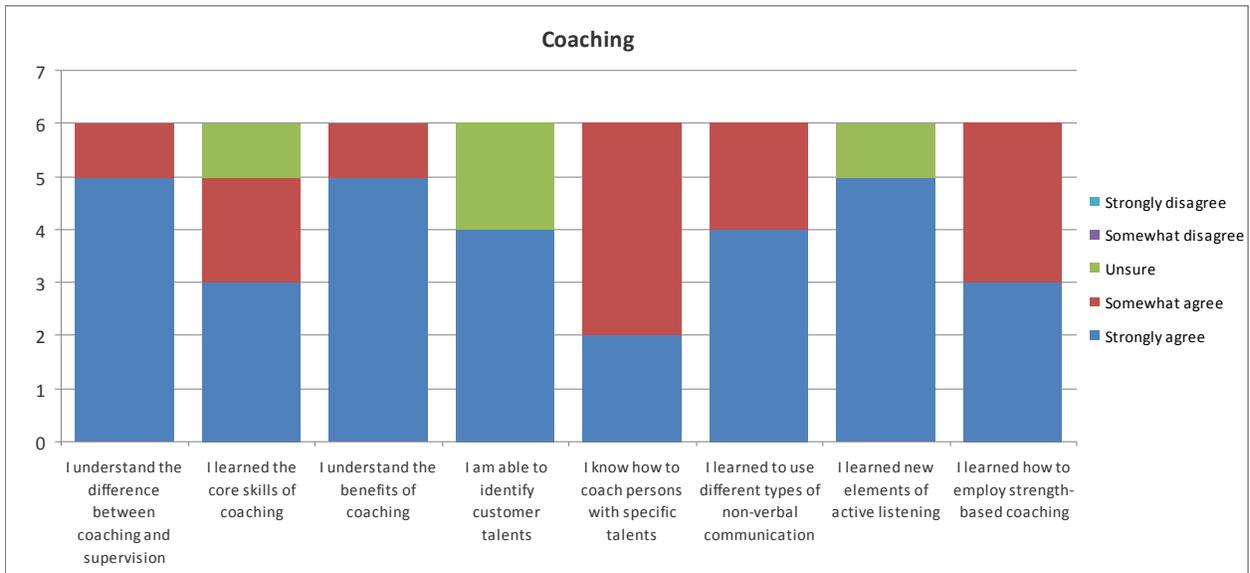
developing, enhancing, and maximizing participation of internal customers, there was one respondent who reported they were “unsure” about four out of the five elements of customer development (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Customer Development



As shown in Figure 8, again most respondents “strongly” and “somewhat” agreed that they learned various elements of effective coaching during the Managers Training. Although several respondents were “unsure” of how to respond on three of the statements, overall it is apparent that participants gained useful knowledge about coaching their staff via this training.

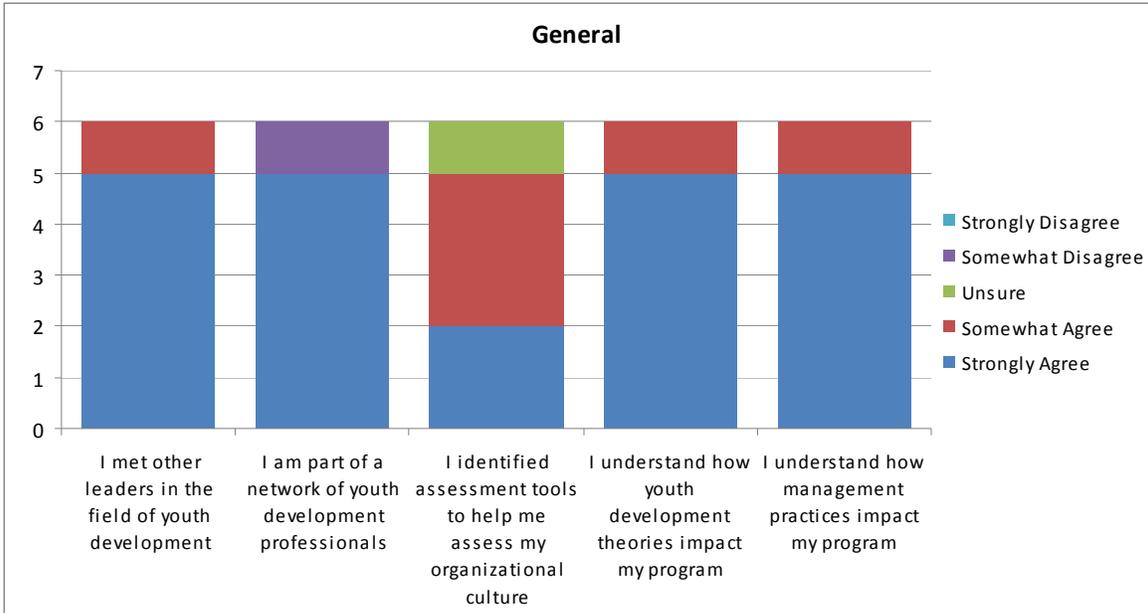
Figure 8 – Coaching



In regards to general topics covered in the Managers Training, almost all survey respondents “strongly” agreed they met other leaders in the youth development field, were part of a network of youth development professionals, and understand how youth development theories and

management practices impact their programs. As seen in Figure 9, participant ratings were more mixed in terms of identifying assessment tools to assess organizational culture.

Figure 9 – General Topics



Overall, the Managers Training Post-Survey results show that training participants generally agreed that they learned a great deal about management issues as they relate to youth and staff development in afterschool programs. It is evident that participants gained the most knowledge in the areas of: core values, developing organizational practices, coaching, and other general topics. Very few (2) survey respondents disagreed with any of the statements in the survey, which indicates that most learned and formed understanding of elements that will help them to effectively manage their afterschool programs.

Section 5 YDI Train-the-Trainer

The Train-the-Trainer event was the final formal training offered by the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project. This training focused on teaching participants how to facilitate their own YDI training and providing ample opportunity to practice facilitation strategies.

A total of 15 afterschool program staff from seven organizations attended this four-day training held during September 2009. The organizations in attendance committed to provide a YDI training to their organizational staff and partners, with the intent of strengthening a large number of afterschool program sites within their organizations and communities. Those organizations interested in enhancing their internal ability to align with the youth development approach included:

- Galt Joint Union High School District;
- Grass Valley School District;
- Marysville Joint Unified School District;
- RISE, Inc. (Esparto);
- Sacramento City Unified School District;
- San Juan Unified School District; and
- Yuba City Unified School District.

5.1 *Train-the-Trainer Description*

The purpose of Train-the-Trainer was to prepare participants to facilitate a YDI training in their own communities. The goal of the first two days of training was to explore and practice the core skills of effective facilitation, while the last two days were spent in formal practice of YDI team facilitation. Train-the-Trainer covered the following topics each day:

- Day 1: Introduced various aspects of facilitation, such as: paraphrasing, open and close ended questions, verbal variations, and techniques for active listening. Participants also learned the power of using positive language.
- Day 2: Received an introduction to the Facilitation Framework and reviewed Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (VAK) facilitation. Participants discussed effective ways to scribe and track on charts. The group also learned helpful modalities for structuring group discussions and techniques for dealing with difficult behaviors.
- Day 3: In smaller groups, teams practiced presenting various elements of the YDI, including: warm up, setting the stage, service learning, multiple intelligences, review of supports and opportunities, and energizers. Participants and YDN staff debriefed each segment and offered feedback to each team.
- Day 4: As a full group, teams presented various elements of the YDI, including: warm up, setting the stage, service learning, multiple intelligences, review of supports and opportunities, and energizers. Participants and YDN staff debriefed each segment and offered feedback to each team.

During the first two days of Train-the-Trainer, participants engaged in several meaningful learning exercises. One activity required utilizing appropriate dynamic facilitator tools to tell a story to a small group. Each participant was able to take turns telling their story, incorporating aspects of quality facilitation, and receiving feedback from their fellow group members. At the conclusion of the activity, the entire group had the opportunity to review, reflect on, and debrief the activity. It was evident that through this experience participants learned more about themselves and about their own personal facilitation style.

On days three and four of Train-the-Trainer, participants practiced delivering elements of the YDI in front of the group. Using a Facilitation Feedback Form, the audience (fellow participants and YDN staff) rated each team on their presentation of the YDI material. Participants used a five-point scale¹ to rate the presenting team on the following nine aspects of facilitation:

- Paraphrasing
- Question Asking
- Voice Variation
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Active Listening
- Positive Language
- Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic Facilitation
- Scribing and Tracking
- Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

Although all evaluations remained confidential, at the conclusion of the training, YDN staff tabulated the findings for each team and emailed the results to the staff for their review. This way, teams were able to use the feedback to further develop and hone their facilitation skills for presenting the YDI to their respective organizations.

Evaluator observation of Train-the-Trainer revealed a safe learning environment for participants. Participants were both complimentary of each other, giving words of encouragement, and effective at offering constructive feedback at appropriate times. YDN staff also provided supportive and valuable comments to help teams prepare themselves for YDI facilitation. YDN staff noted that this Train-the-Trainer event especially benefited from familiarity within the group, as most participants had attended at least one of the previous trainings earlier in the year. This enabled participants to “build a stronger and more comfortable learning community.”

Participants reported that the most valuable aspect of Train-the-Trainers was learning the process and relationship-building of facilitation, not simply the content. As one participant acknowledged, “I have been to several Train-the-Trainers, and this is the only one that addressed *how* to facilitate.”

5.2 Train-the-Trainer Participant Evaluation Results

To learn how participants responded to their experience at Train-the-Trainer, YDN staff gathered feedback from training participants using an Evaluation Form at the end of day one and two of training. The results of this evaluation allowed YDN staff to know what was most useful to the participants, as well as what participants would like to change about the training. To rate the overall usefulness of the training day, participants used a four-point scale: very useful, useful, somewhat useful, and not useful. Table 4 shows that each day of Train-the-Trainer was “useful” or “very useful” to a vast majority of participants. Because the last two days of training focused on practical application of facilitation skills, not on instruction, an Evaluation Form was not administered.

¹ Facilitation Feedback Form rating scale: 1=a lot more practice needed; 2=some more practice needed; 3=good; 4=very good; 5=fantastic; N/A=not applicable.

Table 4 – Overall Usefulness of Train-the-Trainer Days

	% who rated the training as “useful” or “very useful”
Day 1: Facilitation Techniques and Positive Language	97%
Day 2: VAK Facilitation and Scribing	98%
Day 3: YDI Presentation Practice	NA
Day 4: YDI Presentation Practice	NA

To gather feedback on the entire four-day training, YDN staff also administered an overall Evaluation Form at the end of the last day of Train-the-Trainers. In total, eight individuals completed the overall evaluation. Participants were asked to rate their experience on a number of aspects. As shown below, the evaluation results were overwhelmingly positive:

- All of the participants rated the overall experience with the training as either “fabulous” (75%) or “very good” (25%)
- 100% reported the length of the training was “just right”
- 100% of participants reported that the learning community was “very valuable” to them
- 100% of participants felt supported during the training
- 100% of participant reported that the training was “very helpful” in preparing them to be YDI trainers
- 100% would recommend this training to others

Participant feedback illustrates the valuable practice and preparation the YDI Train-the-Trainer provided Region 3 afterschool program staff and the numerous facilitation tools they gained during the training:

“I feel ready to bring YDI concepts and applications to my district and site.”

“This has been the most valuable training I’ve ever attended. I feel like I have so many things that I can bring home and use.”

“I feel like I have so much personal growth when I attend these.”

“I’ve already been able to use the information I’ve learned about facilitation.”

“I feel this is an eye opener to how important youth are and how we can implement this in people who make a difference.”

“[The training was] wonderful, powerful, relevant, and valuable.”

“You will feel renewed in your vision and mission for youth!”

5.3 New Trainer YDI Trainings

In order to broaden the number of program staff and other youth service providers exposed to the content of the YDI training, a component of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project was the delivery of a YDI training by each of the afterschool program teams. This element of the Project was also intended to transfer ownership of the YDI process, so that afterschool programs could own the process and become trainers in their own sphere of influence.

As a result of the training and technical assistance afterschool program staff received through this Project, the newly trained YDI trainers facilitated YDIs for approximately 155 individuals and 36 different programs in their own communities. In total, five organizations delivered the four-day YDI training between January 2010 and January 2011:

- Marysville – January 2010
- Yuba City – April 2010
- Esparto RISE – April 2010
- Galt – August 2010
- Grass Valley – January 2011

According to YDN staff, the new-trainer YDIs were “wildly successful.” Staff noted that the trainings were of high quality and delivered with fidelity to the original YDI curriculum, while incorporating personal aspects unique to the trainers and their environments. As a result of the YDIs, many programs were able to train many or all of their staff and engage community and school partners. In addition, the YDI trainings were met with an enthusiastic response from the communities, as YDN reported receiving a number of requests from these communities for additional information or follow-up.

Challenges

Despite the successes experienced by the new trainer YDIs, YDN staff reported there were also several challenges with the delivery of these trainings, which centered on: scheduling challenges, barriers related to staff responsibilities and lack of time, and reduced coaching.

Scheduling the trainings seemed to be difficult, as many new trainers set dates for their YDIs only to find they had to postpone until they could garner sufficient buy-in from community members or supervisors, or until they could overcome specific scheduling issues. This challenge indicates that new trainers may need more support and training in the areas of marketing, strategic scheduling, and building support for YDIs in their community.

At one afterschool site, the supervisors felt it was unmanageable for staff to host a YDI training while fulfilling their responsibilities as site coordinators. Although the trainers were eager to train, they could not generate the support from their supervisors to justify missing program time. This was particularly disappointing for YDN staff, as they had made a deliberate effort to communicate with the programs early on, describing the necessary commitment during the application process, in conference calls and in the initial interview, as well as in a written letter of agreement signed by each supervisor. While this type of obstacle can be difficult to overcome, YDN staff might attempt additional ways of creating supervisor buy-in, such as providing them with testimonials from other sites that successfully conducted their own YDI training, describing the value it brought to their organization and community.

Lastly, YDN had hoped to provide follow-up coaching after each YDI training delivered by the afterschool programs; however, reduced grant funding resulted in a limited number of hours for

this piece of the project. As permitted, YDN staff provided coaching to those teams who first requested it, and attempted to leverage SCOE afterschool technical assistance staff to include post-YDI coaching as part of their scheduled visits to sites. For future projects, it will be important to establish solid funding for the coaching component, as this was especially valuable to teams.

Section 6 Coaching Component

To provide the Region 3 afterschool programs with individualized training and technical assistance, YDN implemented a one-on-one “coaching” component of the project. Between January and June 2009, a total of four coaches (two YDN staff and two staff from the Sacramento County Office of Education) conducted site visits to each of the afterschool programs to meet with and “coach” program staff.

6.1 Description of Coaching

During the coaching sessions, coaches guided staff in integrating positive program climate, safety, and student engagement practices based on each organization’s individual Action Plan (described in Section 3.1). The site visits to the afterschool programs were a critical component of the Project, as they allowed coaches to witness the program in operation and gain a better sense of the day-to-day activities. With this information coaches were able to engage in more meaningful coaching conversations with staff. They were also able to provide active, hands-on support to teams while they prepared for and administered their own YDI training.

During site visits, all levels of staff were encouraged to participate in the coaching meetings, including upper management. This allowed everyone the chance to be on the “same page” regarding programmatic changes and implementation of the Action Plan. Because the site visits afforded coaches with regular, face-to-face connection time with program staff, the coaching experience impacted the way that YDN was able to relate to the programs and administer quality training and technical assistance.

6.2 Coaching Challenges

Although there were not many challenges associated with coaching the afterschool programs, YDN staff did report that one challenge included maintaining close contact with program staff. In some instances, scheduling meetings was difficult, as meeting times would “fall-through” and require ongoing rescheduling efforts. In addition, reduced grant funding during the second year of implementation caused YDN to be unable to provide as much coaching for new YDI trainers as previously planned. Follow-up coaching was originally scheduled for each afterschool team after delivering their YDI Training. However, this was challenging with the decrease in resources. Although YDN staff provided some coaching with help from SCOE staff, this aspect of the project was not as robust as it could have been.

6.3 Coaching Successes

The coaching element of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project yielded many successes during implementation. Through the technical assistance they received from coaches, each organization made or began to make significant positive changes to their afterschool programs. Examples of specific accomplishments for seven of the organizations, as reported by coaches, are as follows:

- **Organization 1:** Program staff added individual youth to the “hiring board”, which selects Team Leaders for the program. This resulted in youth having more “buy-in” with these staff and “liking them better”. This organization also formed a youth advisory group and implemented more peer-to-peer relationship building during their programs.

- **Organization 2:** To ease the difficulties with combining an elementary and middle school, this site installed an Afterschool Youth Council made up of experienced youth from the elementary school program who were transitioning to middle school. They also implemented grade-level meetings as well as cross-grade meetings and planned to complete a series of activities for the school-day staff as morale-boosters.
- **Organization 3:** After understanding that their program was not completely emotionally safe for youth, staff intentionally created an emotionally safe environment. They also ensured all staff use basic strategies, such as greeting all youth by name when they come to the program.
- **Organization 4:** Staff discussed and reviewed school safety procedures to create a more clear and specific plan in case of emergency. In addition, the program instituted conflict mediation with their youth using the “peace table” concept.
- **Organization 5:** The Site Coordinators and Team Leaders who attended the YDI Training worked together to conduct an in-house youth development training for their program staff to share some of the knowledge and ideas they gained from the YDI.
- **Organization 6:** Staff decided to redesign their program activities as to allow youth to be more empowered, using cross-age peer helpers. Also, to focus on relationship building, staff and students created “get to know me” boards that share about them as individuals and help staff and students find common ground.
- **Organization 7:** This program institutionalized an Advisory Board that provides a youth voice in making program decisions. Staff also continued to add program content as to offer students options while they are in the program.

YDN staff acknowledged that the coaching element was one of the highlights of the Project and was critical to the success of the YDI trainings that afterschool program staff delivered to their communities. For instance, at one site, staff reported that from coaching, “the whole YDI process and subsequent work has really brought together the program staff and they now have institutionalized meeting where they are sharing and planning together.” At another site, staff encountered challenges in working with the school administration to obtain specific resources for their program. Through coaching efforts to hold a joint meeting between administrators and program staff, this organization was able to overcome the communication barriers and the administration granted the program the items they felt were necessary to operate effectively. To add to the coaching element, one coach suggested the possibility of conducting cross-site “ride-alongs” so that each coach has the opportunity to accompany another coach to their site visits with afterschool programs.

Section 7 YPQA Short Form Survey Results

In order to measure the quality of the Region 3 afterschool programs, and effects of the YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project on those programs, evaluation staff created the YPQA Short Form based on questions from the full Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool. This short survey, administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the project, asked program staff to rate their program on a variety of topics related to: safe environment, supportive environment, interaction, and engagement.

During February and March 2009, 19 individuals representing 14 afterschool programs completed the YPQA Short Form Survey to provide a baseline measure of program quality. At baseline, most respondents (53%) were Afterschool Coordinators, followed by Afterschool Instructors (37%), and "other" positions (11%). The intent of this first administration was to establish a baseline measure of program quality before participation in the Region 3 Training and Technical Assistance Project. Therefore, respondents rated their programs "retrospectively" based on program status before the project. For each statement, respondents selected one of three possible responses: "we need this in our program," "we have some, but needs work," or "this is strong in our program."

During October 2010, the YPQA Short Form Survey was administered again as a final "post" survey. In total, 23 individuals representing 11 afterschool programs completed the survey to provide a comparison of program quality over time. At follow-up, most respondents were Afterschool Coordinators (22%) and Team Leads (22%), followed by Afterschool Program Managers (17%), Support Staff (9%), and Afterschool Instructors (4%). Other respondents identified as District Coordinator, Tutor, Youth Leader, Activities Provider and Director of Staff Development. The following tables and analysis provides a comparison of pre- and post-survey responses.

Table 5 displays the percentage of respondents who rated elements of "safe environment" as "strong" in their afterschool program on the pre- and the post-survey. A comparison of pre and post results indicate that there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of respondents that rated their program as "strong" in all areas of safe environment after participating in the Region 3 Project. On the post-survey, a vast majority reported that they were "strong" in providing healthy food and drinks (96%) and the environment being safe and free of health hazards (91%), while a lesser percentage (57%) reported that their program was "strong" in appropriate emergency procedures and supplies.

Table 5 – Safe Environment

	% Responding "Strong in our program"		
	Pre	Post	Change
Physical environment is safe/free of health hazards	58%	91%	+33%
Program space/furniture accommodate activities offered	58%	74%	+16%
Healthy food/drinks are provided	58%	96%	+38%
Psychological/emotional safety is promoted	42%	78%	+36%
Appropriate emergency procedures/supplies are present	32%	57%	+25%
<i>Average</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>+29%</i>

The percentage of respondents who rated their afterschool program as "strong" in the areas of supportive environment ranged more greatly. As shown in Table 6, at the post-test over 90

percent felt that “staff provide a welcoming atmosphere” was strong in their program, while only 41 percent felt their program was strong in using youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict. However, it is encouraging to note that there was an increase in the percentage of programs reporting “strong” across all elements of supportive environment (ranging from an increase of 9 percentage points to 46 percentage points). These results indicate that programs improved in offering youth a supportive environment, yet may still require additional support to incorporate stronger elements of reframing conflict and new skill development among students.

Table 6 – Supportive Environment

	% Responding “Strong in our program”		
	Pre	Post	Change
Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere	63%	91%	+28%
Staff support youth with encouragement	56%	78%	+22%
Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth	53%	78%	+25%
Staff allow youth to learn from/correct mistakes	33%	65%	+32%
Use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict	32%	41%	+9%
Activities support active engagement	28%	74%	+46%
Youth try new skills/attempt higher levels of performance	18%	57%	+39%
<i>Average</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>+29%</i>

Less than half of the survey respondents indicated that elements of interaction were strong in their afterschool programs at baseline, ranging from 47 percent who reported that “youth have opportunities to participate in small groups” to 21 percent who said “youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators or mentors,” as presented in Table 7. However, post-survey results indicate that the afterschool programs greatly improved in this area, with 61 to 83 percent of respondents reporting interaction elements as “strong” in their program. The change in percentage ranged from 29 to 40 percent, with an average increase of 35 percent.

Table 7 – Interaction

	% Responding “Strong in our program”		
	Pre	Post	Change
Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups	47%	83%	+36%
Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging	42%	78%	+36%
Youth have opportunities to partner with adults	32%	61%	+29%
Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators/mentors	21%	61%	+40%
<i>Average</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>+35%</i>

Lastly, while over two-thirds (70%) of respondents rated their program as “strong” regarding opportunities for youth to make choices based on interest, the other elements of youth engagement were not as highly rated by program staff, as shown in Table 8. Although the percentage of respondents who rated elements of engagement as strong in their program increased over time, only 44 percent reported their program was “strong” in providing youth opportunities to set goals and make plans, while just over half (57%) were “strong” in providing youth opportunities to reflect on the post-survey. These results indicate that although the project

positively impacted youth engagement, some afterschool programs may benefit from reinforcement and support on this element.

Table 8 – Engagement

	% Responding “Strong in our program”		
	Pre	Post	Change
Youth have opportunities to make choices based on interests	53%	70%	+17%
Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans	26%	44%	+18%
Youth have opportunities to reflect	21%	57%	+36%
<i>Average</i>	33%	57%	+24%

Comparison results of the pre and post YPQA Short Form survey reveal that the afterschool programs improved in every area that was measured. The increase in percentage of respondents rating elements as “strong in our program” ranged from 9 to 46 percent. On average, at the post test, 79 percent rated their program as “strong” in safe environment, 69 percent in supportive environment, 71 percent in interaction, and 57 percent in engagement. Based on the data, it is evident that the Region 3 Training and Technical Assistance Project had a profound impact on the afterschool programs’ abilities to provide quality services to youth in the realms of safety, support, interaction, and engagement.

Section 8 QSAT Results

The California After-School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSAT) was developed as a way for staff to self-assess their programs and make plans for program improvement. An updated version of the tool was developed during August 2007-September 2009 to reflect extensive input from experts and stakeholders in the afterschool program field. The QSAT provides a comprehensive look at many areas of program quality. It contains 11 sections that identify quality elements of an afterschool program, which are: (1) program design and assessment; (2) program administration and finance; (3) community partnerships and collaborations; (4) alignment and linkages with the school day; (5) program environment and safety; (6) youth development; (7) staff recruitment and professional development; (8) family involvement; (9) nutrition and physical activity; (10) promoting diversity and inclusion; and (11) effectively supporting English learners. Each of these sections has a number of indicators on which afterschool staff rate their program based on a 1 to 4 scale (1=just beginning, 2=done some work; 3=high level of proficiency, 4=exceptionally proficient).

To capture the changes in quality of the afterschool programs engaged in the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project over time, YDN staff administered the QSAT to afterschool program sites at the conclusion of the project. Between September 2010 and March 2011, staff at the eight sites completed a post-QSAT and a retrospective pre-QSAT (rating the program based on where it was before beginning the Region 3 Project). The aggregate results of these programs from Galt Joint Union School District, Yuba City Unified School District, and Grass Valley Unified School District are presented in this section of the report.

A comparison of overall pre- and post-training QSAT results indicates that the afterschool programs improved on every indicator of program quality measured by the tool. As shown in Table 9 below, the pre and post scores for each quality element section increased from 0.43 points (for staff recruitment and professional development) to 0.83 points (for family involvement). The average ratings on the pre-test ranged from 1.66 to 2.85 out of 4, while on the post-test they ranged from 2.46 to 3.33. These increases in self-assessment scores represent a significant and impactful improvement in program quality among the afterschool programs that participated in the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project.

Table 9 – QSAT Results by Section

	Average Pre Rating (1-4)	Average Post Rating (1-4)	Point Change	% Change
Section 1: Program Design & Assessment	2.19	2.88	+0.68	+31%
Section 2: Program Administration & Finance	2.85	3.33	+0.48	+17%
Section 3: Community Partnerships & Collaborations	1.98	2.46	+0.48	+24%
Section 4: Alignment & Linkages with the School Day	2.28	3.01	+0.73	+32%
Section 5: Program Environment & Safety	2.73	3.26	+0.53	+19%
Section 6: Youth Development	2.32	3.06	+0.74	+32%
Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development	2.16	2.59	+0.43	+20%
Section 8: Family Involvement	1.66	2.49	+0.83	+50%
Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity	2.54	3.21	+0.67	+26%
Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity & Inclusion	2.38	3.00	+0.63	+26%
Section 11: Effectively Supporting English Learners	1.81	2.50	+0.69	+38%

Specific indicators of quality that showed the largest increase included “a qualified staff person or consultant conducts regular self-assessments and outcome evaluations using strong research design,” which increased from 1.5 to 2.63 on average (a 75% increase). Also, “we host regular orientations so that parents and caregivers can learn about the program, meet the staff, and learn how afterschool programs can support their children’s social and academic growth” increased from a 0.88 rating pre-training to 2.25 post-training (a 156% increase).

On the post-test, programs were strongest in “activities are attended to capacity” (3.75 average), “staff members address youth by name” (3.88 average), and “no one is turned away from the program because they cannot pay enrollment fees” (3.88 average). Conversely, at the post-test programs rated themselves lowest in “staff participate in school committees” (1.75 average) and “parents and caregivers have the opportunity to play leadership roles in the afterschool program” (1.5 average). This indicates that afterschool programs may require more support and training on these two elements, even though they did improve over the course of the Project.

The QSAT results of afterschool programs are overwhelmingly positive and point to the significant impact of the Region 3 Project implemented by the Youth Development Network. Although, programs were stronger in some areas while needing additional support in other areas, as a whole the programs increased their score on every indicator of program quality measured by the QSAT. The next section of the report presents qualitative data from participants, providing in-depth details about their Region 3 Project experience and the outcomes of the project as they relate to their program, their students, and themselves.

Section 9 Participant Interview Findings

In order to collect qualitative feedback about the project, the evaluator conducted telephone interviews with Region 3 afterschool program staff. In total, 10 afterschool program staff representing four different organizations were interviewed about their experience with the project and changes observed in their programs and among the youth they serve. The interviewees included: four Program Coordinators, three Site Leads, two Regional Directors, and one Program Manager. The findings from these interviews are presented in the sections below.

"I have been really impressed with everything overall: the training sessions, the coaching, and all the support. Everything has exceeded my expectations."

9.1 Project Feedback

During the interview, respondents reported on their experience with each aspect of the program, including the trainings and the coaching, and provided feedback on their favorite aspects of the project as well as any challenges or barriers they encountered along the way.

Feedback on the Trainings

Every interviewee acknowledged that they thoroughly enjoyed the trainings and learned valuable lessons from them, using words like "awesome" and "eye-opening" to describe their experience. One interviewee reported that the Train-the-Trainer showed "how hard the YDI trainers actually work and how much work is put into the training," while another noted that the Managers Training takeaway "was the idea of staff having the same supports and opportunities that they expect to provide young people."

Many interview respondents agreed that YDN's facilitation of the trainings was exemplary. They appreciated that the environment was relaxed, yet there was a lot of energy and a variety of facilitation formats. "We were in large groups, we were on our feet, and in small groups," said one respondent. "It was really interesting to see the different styles of presenting the material," said another participant, "I gained a lot of unique ideas on creative ways to get a point across."

"I am always impressed by the professionalism and the way [YDN facilitators] are able to stay focused on the goal of the project, they are able to break up the training to make it relevant and at the same time give people the chance to get to know one another. It is really well done."

"I remember right off the bat being really impressed with the wealth of information and knowledge; there was more of a learning community atmosphere rather than someone just talking at us."

Many respondents also noted that they especially enjoyed the opportunities "to network and build relationships with people doing this work" during the trainings. Through these relationships, staff reported that "it was like a community that we built," acknowledging that "it is really beneficial to see what is going on in other programs." One interviewee also mentioned that at the last training, Train-the-Trainers, it was "neat to see all the networking and relationships that had developed over this last year."

"When you leave the trainings, it is almost like you are speechless. When you go through something together and you are trying to accomplish something important at the end, something meaningful, you come away with something. That is where the true

teambuilding happens. It is inspirational and it gives you that feeling that we did something together that was significant."

Some program staff felt the trainings were beneficial because they were able to receive "honest feedback" from their colleagues, and the experience "opened up the door" for program issues that may not have been raised otherwise. The forum allowed staff to evaluate their program from a different perspective and a deeper level, by inciting open discussion of issues and topics related to afterschool programs and youth development. "It is that kind of forum where it is open and everyone feels comfortable enough to step back and evaluate from a level that is different from what we normally do."

"We were actually problem solving what was going on in people's programs; that was valuable."

"We both kept saying that they are the best trainings that we have ever been to, and we have been to a lot of different types of trainings. They were different from most trainings because they are so hands-on. We didn't get bored; we were constantly going and learned so much. We learned things that we can actually take back to our programs."

Some staff mentioned that they would like to cover additional topics in the trainings, including 21st Century Skills material, and obstacles to youth development such as gangs and intergenerational poverty. "We know where the vision is and they did a great job setting the vision, but it might be helpful to dig a little deeper," reported one training participant. Other respondents reported that they would have liked to include more people from their sites in the training. "It's different than hearing it secondhand from us; it would be a lot easier to go back and have somebody else there with you who was an ally in this."

Feedback on Coaching

Participant feedback on the coaching component of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project was overwhelmingly positive. Interview respondents agreed that their coach was "really helpful" and "made it much easier to deal with things." As one staff member reported, "The coaching was one of the best parts of the project."

"[Our coach] was good at reminding us of things. Instead of feeling pressure, he kept us on track with what we wanted to do with our program. He made sure we were able to do those things. It was helpful to have him there for support."

"[Our coach] has great ideas and if you have a great idea, he will help you get it done; it's not just fluff. Sometimes in this field people have great ideas but don't know how to get it done; [our coach] knows how to get it done."

Staff from one program especially appreciated their coach's help with completing the Action Plan. Their coach assisted them with translating their ideas in a concrete way. "It is one thing to think about it and another thing to put pen to paper, make someone responsible, and really hammer out the things we want to see and how we are going to achieve them," said a team member.

"All of us get caught up in what we are doing here, and I think it would have gone by the wayside a little bit if [our coach] hadn't come."

Overall, respondents agreed that "there is nothing we would change" about the coaching element of the project. The only recommendation was to increase the frequency of coaching meetings, as they were enormously helpful and a "key for being really successful," said a staff member.

"The way that it was set up, having [our coach] available to us, that's where a lot of the follow through happened. It is really important to have somebody as the go-between, otherwise you hear a lot of great things and you are motivated, but unless everybody at your site has gone, it kind of falls flat. It really comes down to how you are going to bring this back and pass it on to other people. And that is the difference between this and other trainings, that person in between, the coach, the support, is the link."

Favorite Aspects of the Project

Participants' favorite aspects of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project centered on: (1) developing personal relationships; (2) the dynamic of the learning community; and (3) specific training topics and activities.

Interview respondents reported that the project allowed them to develop meaningful relationships with individuals from other programs in similar positions, and also establish stronger relationships with their own team members:

- *"We were able to work in small groups with people from different programs, and we got to share personal stories and got know each other."*
- *"Not only did we develop stronger relationships with our co-workers, but it was great to be able to network and meet other people who are trying to create the same vision in an afterschool program."*
- *"The YDI training was my favorite. That is where our relationships started with the other participants. It really started us off developing our own personal relationships with our co-workers as well."*

Several afterschool program staff mentioned that the learning community fostered by the trainings was their favorite aspect of the project. For most, it was a new and profound experience:

- *"I really felt like we were part of a learning community together. I had never felt that before. These people are very intelligent and have great experiences to share, and this is all going to be part of what I take back with me."*
- *"The positive vibe and positive energy from the facilitators and from the other trainees. It was really empowering to be around a group of people where you feel like these people are in the same boat as me, and we can really make a difference together."*
- *"The exciting part for me is being able to see how much everybody is capable of teaching others. It was amazing to see everybody find their strengths."*
- *"A sense of this learning community and having a shared mission and listening to other people's stories and knowing we really can make a difference. There is a lot to learn from these other people. Sometimes you go to trainings and people tell stories that are not relevant. Here, you can relate it to your mission and how we can go about bettering ourselves and bettering our program. I would say the learning community wasn't like anything I had ever experienced before."*
- *"I felt such a connection with the learning community, and it was really hard to leave once it was over."*

Specific training topics and activities that interviewees most enjoyed during the project included:

- *The ice breakers, the really hands-on stuff where we got in there and took on the roles that the kids in our program take on. We learned cool things that I use now in our program.*

- *One of my favorite things was the StrengthFinder at the Managers Training. It was invaluable.*
- *I remember a storyboard where we had to tell how we got to how we are. I still remember one man's story because it is important to me to see how personal programs make a difference and can come full circle. It was pretty meaningful.*
- *It was really great to hear about core values and learning more about the supports and opportunities and how to integrate that. I was able to expand my personal management role and bring it back to the organization.*
- *The most memorable best part of the training was charades. Fun is important for us to be engaged.*
- *I really enjoyed the facilitation model. One of the best things is that the trainers themselves were modeling everything they are training. No matter what the topic is, it's useful to see the format and the strength based approach.*
- *Ice breakers and getting us to switch our learning style was helpful.*
- *There was a lot of time for reflection and action planning for our program.*

Project Challenges

Afterschool program staff reported two major challenges with participating in the Region 3 Project: time away from their programs and delivering their own YDI Training.

Although they acknowledged the significant benefits of what the project offered, the extra time afterschool staff were required to spend participating in the project was an issue for most. Transportation time, especially for those coming from greater distances, was burdensome, as was being absent from the day to day operations of the afterschool program. "Its hard to be gone for that long," said one respondent, "We had to give up a lot of time."

According to interviewees, many of the organizations did not compensate staff for the overtime they spent participating in the project. "For us, we do have a little bit of a problem coming up with that extra time and support from the district to give our full attention to the project," noted a participant.

"All my other responsibilities didn't stop, even when we have to do our own YDI. Everyone has a lot on their plate. The coverage issue is really hard. I can't let things drop, but I still know how important it is to make time for these things, so just finding time for everything was really hard."

The other main challenge for project participants was delivering their own YDI Training. According to interviewees, this required a significant amount of preparation time and also was stressful for the individuals uncomfortable with public speaking.

"Finding the time in the future to put [the YDI] all together and come up with our own unique ideas is a huge amount of prep work and a big responsibility. We haven't tackled how we are going to fit that into the other responsibilities we have."

Facilitating a YDI Training was especially challenging for the programs who only had two-trainer teams. Although YDN staff and SCOE staff assisted when necessary to make the workload more manageable, it was still a difficult undertaking, according to staff from these programs.

Participants who struggled with public speaking had personal challenges with Train-the-Trainer and YDI facilitation, reporting that these components were “really stressful.” Although this piece of the project was particularly uncomfortable for these individuals, they acknowledged that the challenge turned into a positive experience. “It turned out better than I ever could have imagined,” said one staff member, while another reported that “it helped me to get up in front of people.”

“I was really doubting myself going into it. Being asked to go outside of your comfort zone in front of people you don’t really know, that was the hardest part. But overall it was such a good experience.”

9.2 Project Outcomes

In addition to offering feedback about the Project, interview respondents acknowledged the types of changes they witnessed in their programs and among their students as a result of the training and technical assistance they received through the Region 3 Project. They also discussed how they personally benefitted from participating, and the value they perceive the Project to have in region as a whole.

Program Changes

As a result of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project, participants reported that there were many positive changes made to their afterschool programs. These changes centered on: (1) new and innovative ways of approaching and implementing youth development; (2) stronger relationships between team members; and (3) improved skills among staff in working with youth.

“It has helped us re-center ourselves and focus on what is important and the youth we serve, what the mission is, and to think about the processes as we implement them. Determining what is worthwhile and if it is really helping us to do the work on the ground.”

These new and positive programmatic changes ranged from making the program more youth-driven to developing specific strategies that incorporate all learning styles. The following list presents quotes from participants describing specific ways their afterschool programs have changed because of the Project:

- *The biggest change is seeing youth as an asset. It is youth-focused, youth-driven, we want their input and we want them to plan things. It is a new way of looking at youth development.*
- *Student participant and student voice was something we didn’t think about a lot. We were kind of obsessed with organizing a great program and doing all this planning. I think it’s a piece we kind of forgot, and now everybody is surveying the kids, letting students make more choices.*
- *We are planning our annual staff and board retreat and we are doing core values as an organization for the first time ever.*
- *The youth interaction piece is going to be our focus this year. We are also really working on encouraging the regular day staff at schools to train after school staff in emergency procedures.*
- *I felt better able to come up with homework strategies so that we address all different learning styles.*
- *It has been extremely important in terms of prioritizing the work we do in our organization because you have to take time and it takes a lot of time to do it properly.*

Overall, participants agreed that a major outcome of the project was the development of stronger working and personal relationships among program staff members. Interview respondents reported that their relationships have improved and they are more equipped to overcome challenges when they arise:

- *I work with the coordinators I went with, but we didn't really know each other that well. It really brought us together over the span of the project and helped us to have a stronger bond and network so we support each other. We come to each other immediately when we have any kind of problem even if it's something to celebrate, we email each other or call.*
- *Relationships with staff and my team improved. We do more planning together; they are giving a lot more input. They feel more comfortable sharing what they do or do not want to do.*
- *My team is working better together after having the training. It was about that we are affecting the lives of these kids and we can make changes, and we can go somewhere with this. It made our team a lot stronger and working harder to hit the goal.*
- *Now when I have problems with staff getting along, or little discrepancies in the day, I go back to YDI and we have team meetings where we do a lot of staff agreement.*

Interview respondents also mentioned that the project improved the skills of program staff in working with youth. Some reported that the training gave greater confidence to the individuals, while others said that new ideas brought back from the training were passed along to staff and better equipped them to operate an effective and engaging afterschool program for youth.

"One of our activity providers before this training was getting better being with kids, more sociable, but after the YDI he seemed to really get it. At our summer training, he was leading activities, he was writing things on the board. I really don't think he would have been able to do that if he had not participated in YDI."

"We incorporated more of the youth development language when talking to and working with our staff. That is the language that we wanted our staff to be using directly with the youth."

Another positive outcome for the afterschool programs, according to interviewees, was the introduction of service learning as a youth development strategy. Afterschool staff reported they were excited to use service learning with their youth participants because of its ability to provide hands-on, real-world experience, which reinforces academic skill-building. As a result of the Region 3 Project, more afterschool programs have developed service learning projects, as described below:

- *We found a program involving making blankets for foster care agencies and homeless shelters. With a classroom of 20 kids we made 30 blankets. They had so much fun and they know that they are going to give them to kids who need them. I wouldn't have even had thought of that if I hadn't heard of service learning through YDI.*
- *The kids and staff want to do something to impact the community. We applied for and received a mini-grant to work with the police department and different agencies to come up with a safety plan for the school. We are going to send it to parents and teachers, and hold an assembly. I don't think I would have thought of that if I hadn't been there at the YDI. It has definitely made a big impact on the program.*

Changes in Students

Some of the expected outcomes of the project were for students attending the afterschool programs to attend more regularly, be more engaged in the academic aspect of the programs,

and gain broader skill development via the program offerings. It was also the hope that youth would acquire more leadership experience, more opportunities for community involvement, and closer positive adult and peer relationships. To document student outcomes of the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project, the evaluation sought information from the afterschool staff who work with these youth.

According to the interviewees, an important benefit of the Project was that “it not only helps us, but it helps the students.” Staff learned ideas and activities during the trainings and brought them back to the program to positively impact the youth. Some of the outcomes of the project as they relate to youth are as follows:

- *We have had increased attendance. Within the past school year we are getting more and more kids coming everyday. There is more accountability and buy-in to the program. Kids are getting their friends to come. It has become a cool place to hangout. For the most part it is kids coming because they want to come.*
- *When the kids are here they are more accountable for their actions and behavior. They are holding each other accountable and reminding each other of acceptable behavior, whereas before it was the adults reminding them of those things.*
- *I notice the kids are giving more input now.*
- *Making the action plan and the agreement for each class is really helping the kids take more responsibility for their behavior.*
- *I have seen a change in ownership of the program. Seeing the students make their own agreements and reflect back on that when they do an activity. They are kind of managing themselves and each other more than the adults are managing them, which is really nice to see.*
- *As our staff gets better, it definitely helps the students. We have an in-house enterprise where students run the business, and they talk about core values.*
- *This year was twice the size from last year. We noticed a shift in group management techniques. The youth were energized by the choices and active learning opportunities throughout the summer. We found working with high school assistants and leaders an excellent opportunity for the youth to engage with older staff and experience more autonomy and have a relationship with a mentor type individual.*

Although the youth participants were not direct recipients of the training and technical assistance offered by the Region 3 Project, it is apparent that the effects the Project were also felt at the student level. The interview responses indicated that there were several major outcomes for the afterschool program participants, including: a greater number of youth attending the programs, youth showing more accountability and responsibility for their actions and behaviors, increased youth ownership and input, more self-regulation and management among youth, and increased choices and learning opportunities for youth.

Personal Benefits of the Project

Not only did interview respondents share the outcomes related to their program and the youth they serve, they also reported a number of personal benefits from participating in the Region 3 Project. Several staff mentioned an increased confidence in their role at the afterschool program and in the skills learned through the training. “I feel like I have a toolbox that I can draw from if I need ideas or help,” said one participant.

“It helped me work through that fear of speaking in front of people.”

"[I gained] confidence in what we are doing and we really are making a difference together, confidence in the skills that I have learned and the knowledge that I have in working with youth."

The training also helped participants build stronger relationships in their field and in their personal lives. "I talk to YDN staff more often and other people who were in my learning community, whereas I would not have had that support as much; I feel connected to them." Other participants reported that it has benefited their relationship with the youth they work with.

"This training has helped me relate more not only to the provider, but also with the youth. I have come back from the trainings with new information each time, and I put that to work with the kids. It brings me that much closer with the youth."

Not only did the project benefit participants professionally, they reported that it also benefited them in their personal lives. "It has helped me a lot here at school and additionally I have children of my own and it helped me at home too," said one participant. While another noted that the Project "has impacted my personal life and in everything that I do."

Benefits of Offering the Project to the Region

Lastly, Project participants noted that offering this type of training and technical assistance to the region fills a void and can begin to address the lack of training for afterschool program staff in the community. As one respondent expressed, "we need to provide the tools [program staff] need to have outcomes." According to interviewees, this training provides a common framework and language that can unify programs in providing youth development, and give them a sense of meaning. "It makes everything explicit," said a respondent, so that staff know what the key elements of youth development are, and how to go about making them a reality in their programs.

"There is never much training in afterschool programs, at least not in our district. You just sink or swim. I think having trainings like this unites us in different ways where we can face challenges or celebrate or think of projects we can do as a community. I think it makes us more aware instead of feeling like we are a little island and we just have to survive."

"Before we were involved in [the Region 3 Project], we were out here on our own practicing youth development. You have things in mind, but it means so much more to actually put it down and talk about it with other people. It validates some ideas, and you can connect it to a learning modality or supports and opportunities."

Participants noted that when afterschool organizations have the opportunity to learn tools to help them generate buy-in from all staff levels and foster a positive working environment, not only does it impact the staff, but it also impacts the youth they serve. "Healthy, happy staff create an environment for healthy, happy students," said one respondent. "That is priceless; you can't put a value on that in terms of having a healthy organization."

Overall, respondents acknowledged that the Region 3 Project allowed them to be much more sophisticated as organizations, and use a "long term" approach to youth development as well as to addressing issues like inequality and lack of access to programming. As one participant reported, "I would love to see more of our partners benefit from this."

"For groups that are trying to do the youth engagement part, being able to think about it through [the YDI] framework can be very useful and helpful. It has really helped us."

Section 10 Conclusion

Through the Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project, YDN successfully provided coordinated, complementary training and technical assistance to afterschool programs serving youth in Sacramento, Nevada, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. The Project implemented three major training events and provided individualized coaching to seven core organizations, propelling participants to deliver well-attended YDI trainings to colleagues and partners in their own communities.

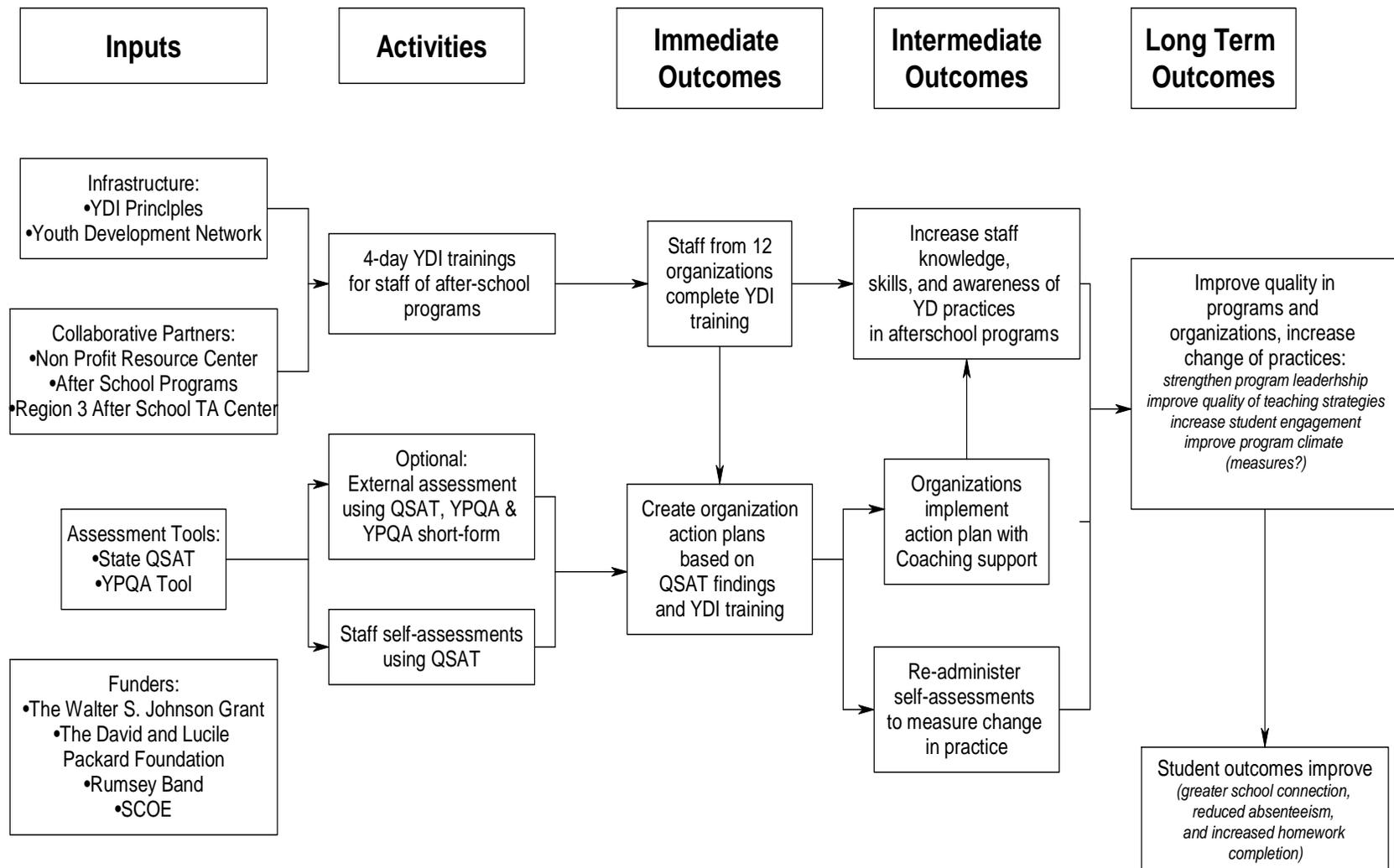
The evaluation of the Region 3 Project indicates that the project achieved positive short-term and intermediate outcomes among the participating afterschool programs and their staff, as well as several promising outcomes among the youth they serve. The results of training evaluations show that staff increased their knowledge and understanding of a variety of youth development principles and concepts, while feedback on coaching indicated that this component of the Project assisted afterschool programs with implementing effective practices and provided valuable guidance to achieve lasting changes.

Results from the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) Short Form Survey and the Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSAT) show significant positive changes in the quality of the programs that participated in the Project over time, and point to the considerable impact of the Region 3 Project. A comparison of pre and post results indicates that, as a whole, programs improved their score on every indicator of program quality measured by these evaluation tools. Based on this data, it is evident that the Project was effective in increasing the afterschool programs' abilities to provide quality services to youth in the realms of safety, support, interaction, and engagement, as well as other areas.

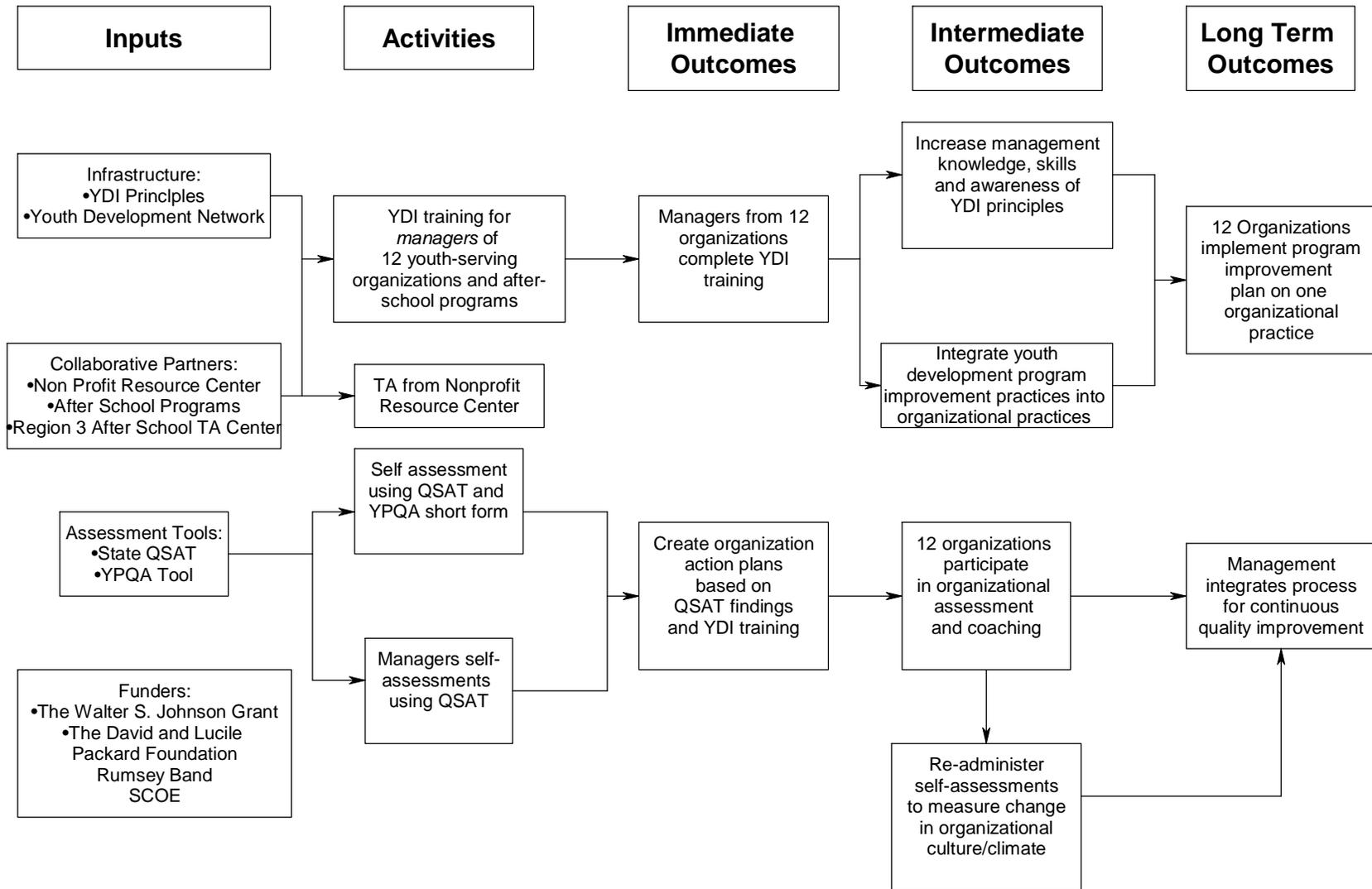
Overall, this Project was a significant step in building region-wide momentum for the promotion of quality practices in afterschool programs for youth. By creating a cohort of trained youth development practitioners within the region, the Project helped spread the implementation of quality services and the greater acceptance of youth development principles. It is the hope that these newly-created strongholds of youth development throughout the region will grow and expand into a sustainable movement in support of positive opportunities and outcomes for our region's young people.

Attachments

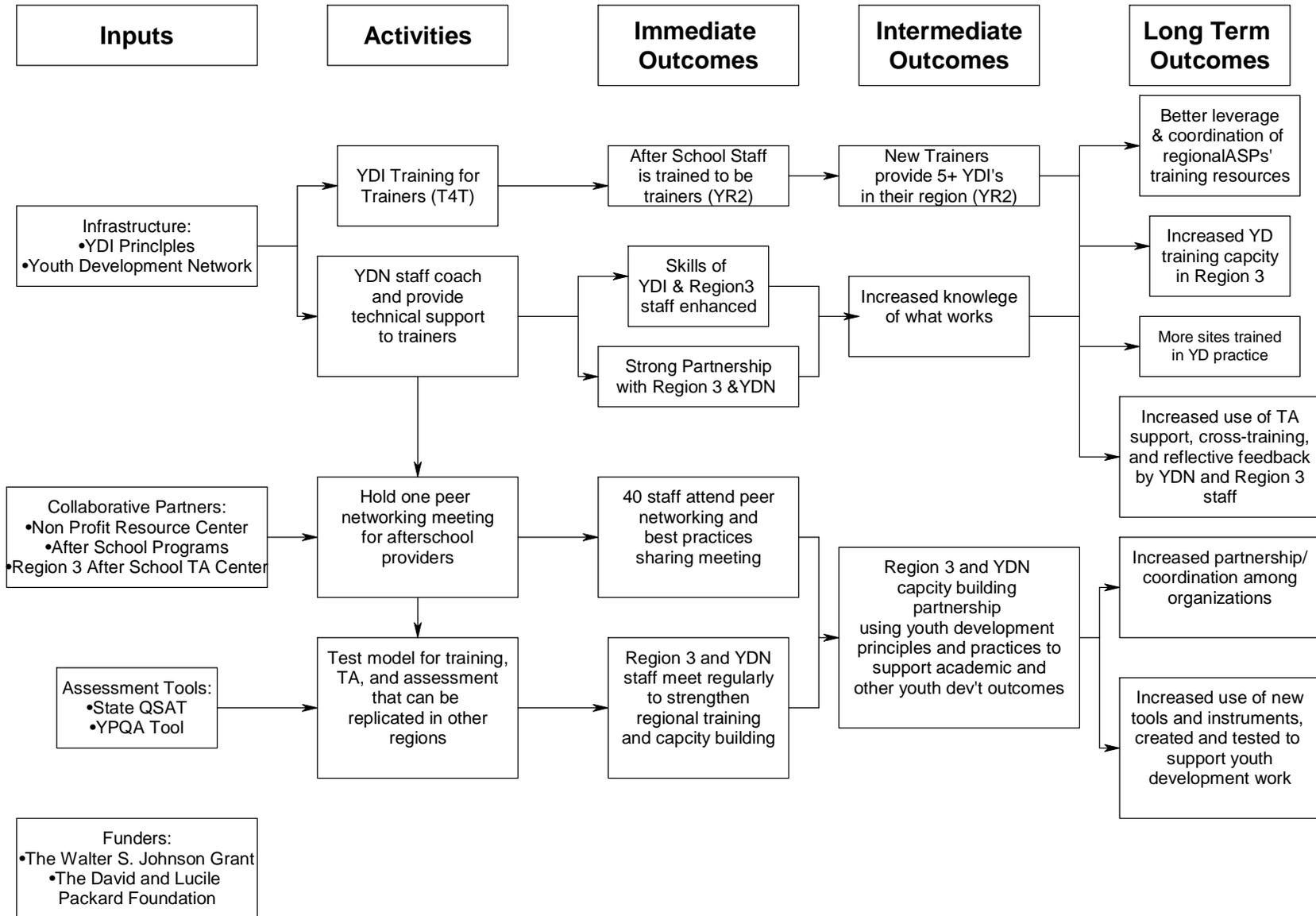
Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project Logic Model for Training and Action Planning Component



Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project Logic Model for Management Training and Program Improvement Component



Region 3 YDI Training and Technical Assistance Project Logic Model for Training-for-Trainers Component



Date: _____

Administration: 1 2 3

REGION 3 AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM Youth Development Network Training Evaluation Form

School Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Position: ₁ Afterschool Coordinator ₃ Afterschool Instructor
₂ Manager of afterschool program ₄ Other: _____

Did you participate in the YDI Training? ₁ No ₂ Yes, when: _____

Please check the box that best fits your program right now.		This is strong in our program	We have some, but needs work	We need this in our program
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	1. Psychological and emotional safety is promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	2. The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	3. Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	4. Program space and furniture accommodate the activities offered.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	5. Healthy food and drinks are provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT	6. Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	7. Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	8. Activities support active engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	9. Staff support youth in building new skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	a. Youth try new skills and/or attempt higher levels of performance.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	b. Staff allow youth to learn from and correct their own mistakes.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	10. Staff support youth with encouragement.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
11. Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	
INTERACTION	12. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	13. Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	14. Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	15. Youth have opportunities to partner with adults.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
ENGAGEMENT	16. Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	17. Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
	18. Youth have opportunities to reflect.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃

Comments: _____