

Assessment of Training Needs and Training Resources

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Instructions for the facilitators:

To conduct a focus group on these issues, convene a group of your key informants and simply talk them through the following introduction and the items on the Focus Group Protocol, recording their responses on the form provided.

This survey is divided into four sequential parts.

- Section I deals with your impressions of the most important **trends** likely to affect adult education in Region IV in the next 5 to 10 years.
- Section II concerns the **resources** that are – or might be – available to meet these training needs.
- Section III is devoted to considering the **obstacles** that might make it difficult to mobilize those resources and bring them to bear on adult educators' training needs.
- Section IV concerns the specific kinds of training that adult educators in the programs with which you are most familiar will need in order to help their students deal with challenges in the 21st Century.
- Section V asks you to draw a few conclusions concerning **priority directions** for the effort that the Regional Professional Development Advisory Council is currently undertaking -- the effort to develop a regionally-driven training system.

Thank you for your help in carrying out this participatory assessment of needs and resources for the continuing professional training of adult educators! Your comments are ALWAYS welcome.

Please note that questions are not always numbered consecutively for data analysis purposes.

SECTION I:

TRENDS IN REGION IV ADULT EDUCATION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

What, in your estimation, are the five trends in the economy and the society of Region IV over the next decade or so that will have the most impact on the adult education needs of its population? Which groups will be most affected by each trend, and how?

Trend	Group(s) affected	How affected
14.	15.	16.
17.	18.	19.
20.	21.	22.
23.	24.	25.
26.	27.	28.

Next, what are the five changes in the form, content or delivery mode of adult education itself that will be most required in order to enable our programs to meet these challenges?

Item nb.	Rank of importance	Nature of change
29.	I	
30.	II	
31.	III	
32.	IV	
33.	V	

SECTION II:

PRESENT AND POTENTIAL RESOURCES FOR MEETING TRAINING NEEDS

What resources can we bring to bear on actually meeting these training needs? Some resources -- like the valuable services of ACE -- already exist. Others still need to be generated or thought up. Please briefly indicate below the most important resources that you think can be found in Region IV or with support organizations to help build a regionally-driven system of training. Four critical kinds of resources are considered: Imagination (effective and innovative models or strategies for training); HUMAN RESOURCES (training skills and experience possessed by different people); FINANCIAL RESOURCES (funding); MATERIAL RESOURCES (equipment and facilities that could be used); and POLITICAL RESOURCES (allies and alliances; policies that could be invoked).

Note in this regard that we very much need to "think outside of the box" -- that is, come up with some innovative new models and approaches to training in order to supplement the good but limited ones already available.

56. IMAGINATION *(example: ideas, models, strategies that work)*

57. HUMAN RESOURCES *(example: skilled, qualified teachers)*

58. FINANCIAL RESOURCES *(example: private grants, endowments)*

59. MATERIAL RESOURCES *(example: training facilities, sharing of resources)*

60. POLITICAL RESOURCES *(example: community leaders, legislators)*

SECTION III:

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME AND POLICIES TO CHANGE

Some obstacles may have to be overcome and some procedures, structures or policies may have to be changed if Region V is to have a good chance of developing its own effective continuing professional training system for adult educators. Examples might be practices with respect to release time, the status or part-time nature of adult education teachers, etc. Please share briefly with us what you think are the most serious obstacles that will need to be overcome and under what conditions this might be accomplished.

<i>Nb.</i>	<i>Obstacle to overcome or policy change required</i>	<i>Conditions for overcoming/changing it</i>
61a.		
61b.		
61c.		

**SECTION IV:
PRIORITY TRAINING NEEDS OF ADULT EDUCATION PERSONNEL**

Based on the information that we have discussed so far, consider what adult education teachers and administrators will need to learn to provide these services most effectively in the decade to come. Think in particular about each type of personnel in the kinds of programs with which you are most familiar. Please indicate the most important training needs under each of the training areas specified in the left-hand column – and then assign a level of priority to each in the adjoining columns. Remember that not everything can be “top priority!” Try to weight training areas according to the relative importance they seem to you to have.

Training Areas	Actual Needs for Teachers	Relative Importance			Actual Needs for Administrators	Relative Importance		
		top	high	med		top	high	med
Use of technology	34.				45.			
Curriculum design	35.				46.			
Teaching students with special needs	36.				47.			
Assume instructional roles (e.g. facilitator)	37.				48.			
Foundations of adult education/ ad. lrng	38.				49.			
Behavior management	39.				50.			
Career/job market awareness	40.				51.			
Student evaluation/ performance assmt	41.				52.			
Distance Learning (DOL)	42.				53.			
Organizational process (e.g. TQM)	43.				54.			
Other (specify)	44.				55.			

SECTION V

CONCLUSIONS: REGIONAL COUNCIL (REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL) OPERATIONS

It is the job of the newly-appointed Regional Professional Development Advisory Council -- in collaboration with its "constituents" in all branches of Region IV adult education -- to try to bring the resources just mentioned and the training needs assessed earlier together in a new regionally-driven system.

How do you think the Regional Professional Development Advisory Council should go about the task? What procedures should it adopt in the following critical areas: equitable representation of Region IV adult education stakeholders? enlistment of necessary technical support for its operations? circulation of information about anticipated initiatives? evaluation of their success and of the effective transfer of training? Please share a few of your thoughts about these matters below.

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