



ANNIE'S PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Building the Capacity of ANNIES Educators to Help Women Farmers and Ranchers Improve Agricultural Sustainability

2015 Annual Report

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Summary

An Annie's Project National Educator Professional Development Conference was held at Iowa State University in Ames, IA on September 23-24, 2015. There were 57 attendees from 22 states.

The states represented were: AL, AR, CO, FL, GA, IA, IL, LA, MI, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, SC, TX, WI, and WY.

Attending the conference were 39 (68%) people from the NC-SARE states and 18 (32%) from other states.

Looking at the attendance data another way, the majority of attendees, 40 (70%), were extension educators. There were also 4 farmers, 3 USDA personnel, 2 non-profit-organization representatives, and 8 Farm Credit professionals participating in the conference. The project team developed additional sponsors and partners to help make the conference possible, and inclusive of those outside the NC SARE region. Conference sponsors included Farm Credit National Contributions, Ag Star Financial Services, and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Elements of professional development that lead to effective program implementation were incorporated into the conference planning. Training agendas allowed sufficient time for the topics presented, included historical information and values of the programs, demonstrated important aspects of program planning and delivery, allowed for discussion and sharing of best education practices, and offered national networking resources and activities for ongoing support.

The one and one-half day conference included 10 hours of training, plus meals, tours and networking activities. The 2015 conference focused on Annie's Project curricula. Other curricula for farm and ranch women was discussed briefly during training and among educators as they networked. The conference included tours of the Iowa State University Farm House Museum, which was instrumental in early Extension efforts, and the university dairy farm along with the nearby composting facility.

The conference used stories, slide presentations, panel presentations and group discussions. The conference trained participants on the program planning processes of needs assessment, curricula development, program development (including funding and marketing), course implementation (including selection of guest speakers), and evaluation. Information on sustainable agriculture and farm/ranch business and risk management topics were presented. Opportunities were built in for networking among participants.

Objectives/Performance Targets

The main objectives of the professional development conference centered on educator learning and improved practices. We wanted educators to learn: 1) how to apply best educational practices to deliver local courses serving women in ag, 2) motivations and potential impacts for delivering educational programs/courses to women, and 3) new skills and confidence to deliver programs on risk management and emerging issues in agriculture.

We hoped educators would use this knowledge to implement new or enhanced practices to: 1) deliver more business and risk management education programs, 2) involve new partners to strengthen educational programs, 3) create and share teaching materials with other educators, and 4) use program evaluation to inform program planning.

Networking and learning among educators with similar goals was another important objective.

Accomplishments/Milestones

- Conference dates and location determined and announced – February 2015
- Conference planning with Annie’s Project National Leadership Team – agenda completed June 2015
- Professional development training materials prepared including slide sets and conference book/handouts – August 2015
- New marketing materials prepared including Annie’s Project banners and flash drives with customizable marketing templates– September 2015
- Conference – September 2015
- Follow-up survey distributed – November 2015

Impacts and Contributions/Outcomes

The 2015 conference participants completed 25 evaluation surveys. The survey results provide evidence that the Annie’s Project national professional development conference was effective in preparing educators to teach farm/ranch women skills for managing their businesses. In summary, surveys indicated 98% of respondents rated the overall quality of the professional development as above average or average. The professional development program improved confidence, provided resources and helped prepare educators to deliver high-quality programs.

Bringing educators together from across the country for a national educator conference on Annie’s Project and similar courses was an effective strategy for meeting the professional development needs of educators/partners serving the target audience of farm/ranch women. Surveys indicated 100% of the respondents increased their network.

Survey responses also documented skill development, improved teamwork, increased innovation, and adaptation to changing environments as impacts of the professional development. In noting their top three goals for applying what they learned, survey respondents indicated an increased level of confidence in both planning programs and teaching skills. Several respondents indicated goals for statewide coordination and working more with peers.

The professional development conferences helped professionals identify the needs of farm/ranch women audiences they plan to serve, reflect on personal long-term professional development goals to help meet those programming needs, and improve overall career success through networking and exploration of effective program models.

The conference attendees offered the following appreciation and comments:

- “THANK YOU for all your hard work on the conference. It was very good and I enjoyed connecting with people and gleaning information from them.” – Jenny Vanderlin, Wisconsin
- “Thank you for all your efforts in putting together the Annie’s Project training! I found it very beneficial for the work I am doing in Michigan and I look forward to working with Annie’s Project... and engaging newer MSUE educators. – Katelyn Thompson, Michigan
- “Thanks for your efforts to provide an outstanding program... the Annie's Project national team is to be commended for delivering one of the best training programs I have attended in my 30+ years in agricultural/extension education.” - Brent Young, Colorado
- “It was very motivating to learn with others in my position from all over the country. The conference was well planned and executed and I learned several new things I can use here in NJ.” - Jenny Carleo, New Jersey

