



Workshop Evaluation
International Opportunities Workshop

Sponsored by UW Extension, Cooperative Extension and Epsilon Sigma Phi

March 19, 2013

Woodside Ranch Resort

Mauston, WI

Objective

To evaluate the outcomes of the international opportunities workshop for UWEX colleagues. The workshop aimed to increase confidence and interest in working internationally, understanding of how international work can benefit one's work with Wisconsin communities, and to prepare people for getting involved with international work, including self-promotion and cross-cultural skill development.

Evaluation Method

Participants were given the option to fill out a workshop evaluation at the end of the day. The format was a two page questionnaire asking people to list the extent to which they increased knowledge, skill or interest by particular subjects that were covered in the workshop. They also had an opportunity to comment on particular topics. The second page asked participants to list what they liked best, as well as if there was anything they would change about the workshop.

Findings

Nineteen participants filled out the evaluation form. One person did not fill out the form completely, omitting certain questions. For those questions, a denominator of 18 versus 19 was used to calculate the percentage of people who answered specific questions by each level of extent ('not at all', 'somewhat' and 'quite a bit'). **Calculate response rate by dividing 19 by the total number of participants**

Key Outcomes:

Table 1: Number and percentage of participants reporting extent of change by outcome as a result of participating in this workshop

Two what extent did the workshop...	Not at all		Somewhat		Quite a bit	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Increase your interest in working internationally (N=18)	1	6%	4	22%	13	72%
Increase your understanding of various international work opportunities available to UWEX colleagues (N=19)	0	0%	4	21%	15	79%
Provide you with new skills related to international and cross-cultural work (N=18)	0	0%	4	22%	14	78%
Help you prepare for an international experience (N=18)	0	0%	5	28%	13	72%
Increase your understanding about the benefits of international and cross-cultural experiences to your work with Wisconsin communities (N=18)	1	6%	2	11%	15	83%

In each of the outcome areas, the majority of participants (over 70% in all areas) reported that the workshop resulted in “quite a bit” of change in a positive direction.

Increased understanding about the benefits of international and cross-cultural experiences to work with Wisconsin communities

Everyone except one person reported at least somewhat of an increase in understanding of how participating in international work can benefit their work with Wisconsin communities, with the majority (83%) reporting quite a bit of increase in this understanding due to the workshop. The one person who marked ‘not at all’ commented that this was because s/he already had a strong understanding of this before coming into the workshop: *“I’m extremely aware of how useful cross-cultural and international experience benefits my work in Wisconsin”*

Increased understanding of international work opportunities

Nearly eighty percent (15/19) reported that the workshop increased their understanding of international work opportunities. The remaining four reported ‘somewhat’ of an increase in this understanding.

New skills related to international and cross-cultural work

Everyone reported that the workshop provided them with new skills for working internationally and cross-culturally at least to some degree, with the majority (78%) reporting that their skill level increased ‘quite a bit’ in this area.

Prepared people for international experiences

The majority of respondents (72%) reported feeling quite a bit more prepared for international experiences as a result of attending this workshop. The remaining five (28%) reported feeling somewhat more prepared.

Increased interest in working internationally

Seventeen out of 18 people reported that the workshop increased their interest to work internationally at least somewhat, with the majority (72%) reporting quite a bit of increase in interest. Only one person reported no change in interest to work internationally, with a comment: *“I was already there, but if I had not been it would have been”*.

What people liked best

Many people reported that they enjoyed hearing about the **personal stories**, examples of real-life experiences, and tips from facilitators who are experienced in international work. Two people liked the session on cultural understanding and sensitivity the best. One person specified liking the session with Arlen and Trisha. Others mentioned increasing their understanding of international opportunities and the ability to network with others interested in international work.

Suggested areas for improvement:

A number of people asked for more hands-on, experimental training devoted to **Participatory Rural Appraisal**. Other comments included:

- Desire to learn to do **monitoring and evaluation** of international experiences both in the host country and in the volunteer's counties/departments
- More needs to be done on providing concrete examples of benefits back to Wisconsin communities (**bi-directional application of learning**)
- One person expressed an interest to hear more about the **'female' perspective**
- A number of people requested **follow-up or repeat workshops** of this type
- One person mentioned wanting to learn more about work outside of Ag and CONRED (**cross-discipline**)
- A number of people noted that the group composition already had a number of people with international experiences- some suggested this be considered in future workshops to ensure the **learning level** is appropriate to the audience.

In terms of logistics, one person stated that the early morning sessions ran long without a break and another said there was not enough water available.

Limitations

The evaluation did not measure existing knowledge or interest in the particular areas *before* the workshop. Therefore, it is possible that those who reported a smaller extent of change in attitudes or skills did so because they already had a strong grounding of the subject prior to the workshop. This was backed in some cases by the comments section, where people noted their interest in international work was already high coming into the workshop.

Conclusion

Overall, the participants perceived the workshop as positive and resulting in an increased awareness about the benefits of international and cross-cultural work, as well as availability of international opportunities that may be suitable for UWEX colleagues. The workshop seemed to do a good job at generating and reaffirming interest in international work. All participants who filled out the evaluation reported at least somewhat of an increased interest in working internationally as well as feeling more prepared to participate in international and cross-cultural work. The workshop was effective at translating the impacts of international work to cross-cultural community programs in the US, although it was suggested that there needs a better system for documenting examples of this. The workshop seemed to have provided everyone with new skills to add to their tool belts. It is recommended that similar workshops be offered to reach a wider audience of UWEX staff, as well as additional workshops that focuses specifically on PRA/PLA methods and monitoring and evaluation tools for international and cross-cultural work. Assessing participant background and expectations can help group the audience and design the workshops according to level of experience. It is also important to seek out as many diverse perspectives as possible, to demonstrate how 'identity' affects the way we work and relate to others overseas and at home.

Overall comments:

"I have always been interested in international work but without this training I don't know if I would feel confident enough to put my application or resume forward"

"Excellent job by the team. Thanks so much for this fantastic day!"

"Good balance-I would have gone to all the break-out sessions if I could"

"Excellent workshop, thank you for pulling us together"