



To Promote Racial Understanding

Coming Together to Promote Racial Understanding: Findings undergird need for race dialogue in Extension.

Poster Objectives:

- Provide an overview of a national initiative aimed at improving race dialogues and relations at institutional and local levels.
- Share initial findings from 28 teams who have participated so far. **Keywords:** diversity, inclusion, race, dialogue.

Why Race Dialogue Matters in Today's Cooperative Extension Service

"We must examine and build the capacity of Extension to respond to the need for racial dialogue to promote understanding and healing."

ABSTRACT

In late 2016, the Extension Committee on Operations and Policy (ECOP) charged a small team of Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and non-Land Grant University professionals (referred to as a Rapid Response Team) to examine the current capacity of CES to respond to the need for dialogue to promote racial understanding and healing, and to provide recommendations to build CES capacity in this area.

This team developed a training process that would prepare groups in participating states to serve as trainers within their own states.

Participants from 20 states attended the first train-the-trainer, five-day intensive workshop in Washington DC, Aug. 27-31, 2018. A second session with 6 states took place from October 7-11, 2019.

The workshop prepared participants to return home and train a larger cadre of CES personnel to lead dialogues on race relations at the local level (currently at over 600 persons trained). The aim was to increase capacity within CES to assist with difficult conversations around race, and to help professionals meet diversity challenges that might arise in their day-to-day duties.

Communities benefit by having a well-trusted entity embedded within their communities to help navigate these challenging waters. Also, each community will follow up the conversations by developing a plan for doable actions that can help improve the racial climate within their respective places.

Curriculum Planning & Eval Team: (2016-2020)

ECOP Program Committee:

Carolyn Williams, ECOP PC chair, Prairie View A&M Univ.

National and Regional Representatives:

- Shatomi Luster-Edward, eXtension
- Brent Elrod, NIFA, Community Development
- Edward Scott, Natl. Urban Extension Leaders
- Doug Swanson, NIFA, 4H
- Kathy Tweeten, ESP
- Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center

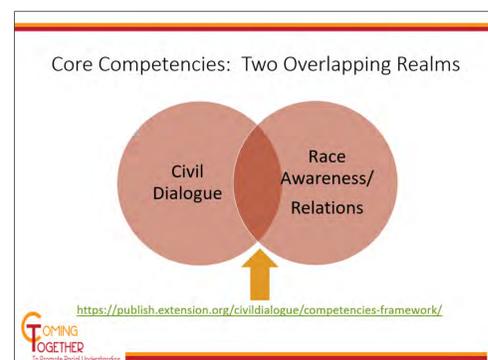
Non-Land-Grant Representation:

- Carolyne Abdullah, Everyday Democracy
- Alice Diebel, Kettering Foundation
- Cheryl Graeve, National Institute for Civil Discourse
- Gwen Whiting, Everyday Democracy

Extension Specialists:

- Michelle Eley, North Carolina A&T Univ.
- Mary Emery, South Dakota State Univ.
- Dan Kahl, Univ. of Kentucky
- David Kay, Cornell University
- Lorie Higgins, Univ. of Idaho
- Nia Imani Fields, Univ. of Maryland
- Paul Lachapelle, Montana State Univ.
- Dave Lassen, Oklahoma State Univ.
- Marcia Ostrom, Washington State Univ.
- Rich Pirog, Michigan State Univ.
- Dionardo Pizaña, Michigan State Univ.
- Brian Raisson, Ohio State Univ.
- Timothy Shaffer, Kansas State Univ.
- Cade Smith, Mississippi State Univ.
- Carolyn Stuart, West Virginia State Univ.
- Mike Stout, Oklahoma State Univ.
- Eric Walcott, Michigan State Univ.
- Terrence Wolfork, Ft. Valley State Univ.

The Spectrum of Civic Engagement

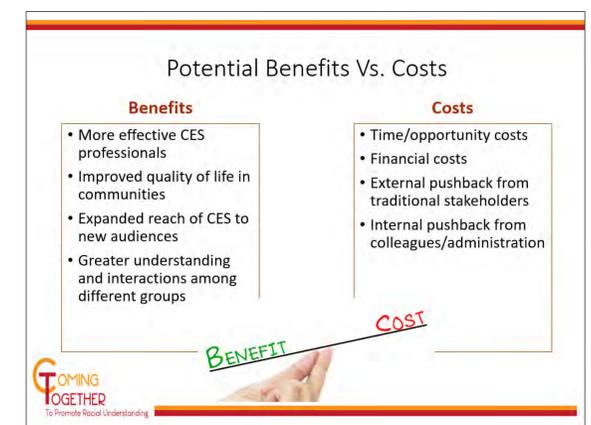
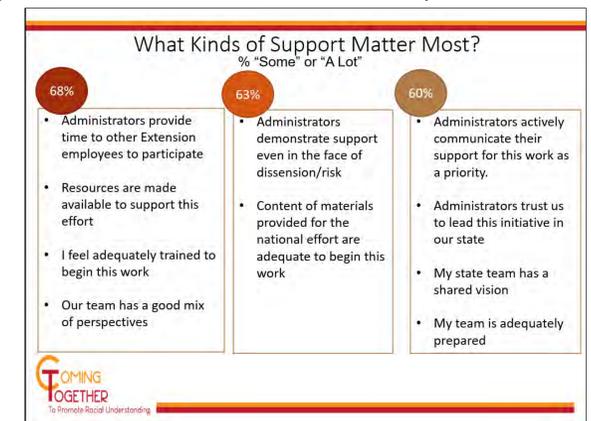
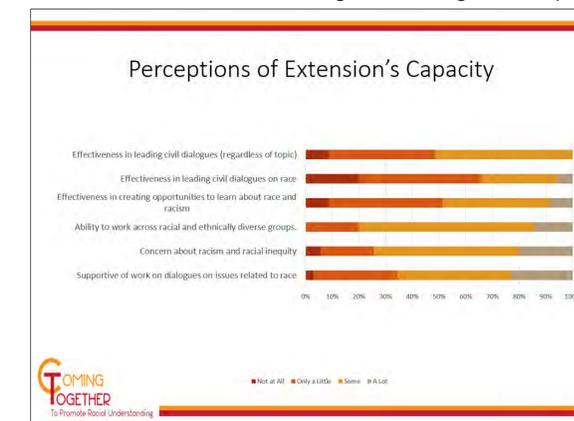


How we got here:
 October 2016 – ECOP formed Rapid Response Team
 April 2017 – Report to ECOP from RRT
 May 2017 – National webinar
 October 2017 – Curriculum Team assembled
 August 2018 – First Cohort
 October 2019 – Second Cohort

Plans for continuation:
 Winter 2019-2020 – Research Team review of evaluations; formative program improvements; writing reports to share findings and promote local dialogues; second round of evaluations (and collecting both quantitative and qualitative from community conversations).

Survey Findings:

After completing the first two trainings, we undertook a survey of participants to better gauge and understand the most important aspects (and potential impacts) of this work. Respondents clearly identified great challenges for both individuals and institutions. They also described how many benefits of this work could have a contraindicating cost. Results also indicated that capacity is limited, and the "kind" of support is important. Bottom line: Our Extension system must demonstrate that entering race dialogues is a priority. Otherwise, we will not have relevant impact in the future.



What If Extension Does Not Pursue this Work?

Declining relevance - We continue to tread water in intolerant communities.

Nothing changes/ Status quo - The systems and inequities remain that have caused so much pain to individuals and communities.

Lost opportunities - We lose an opportunity to build new knowledge and awareness and to inspire actions that can interrupt racist systems within our institution and in our communities.

(Continued) Weakening of relationships in communities - Increased division and misunderstanding among groups within communities and organizations.

