Organizational Integration: How KIT is Promoting Collaboration and Results Within Organizations

A White Paper by Kara Smith, PhD

ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION:
HOW KIT IS PROMOTING COLLABORATION AND RESULTS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

INTRODUCTION

A historical issue in the literature surrounding organizational behavior has been whether organizations can reconcile their big-picture goals with the unique needs of the individuals that make up the organization. Essentially, an organization seeks to integrate these two, sometimes very dissimilar, objectives. More recently in the literature, this effort has been referred to as a type of organizational integration, which is currently being defined as "the extent to which distinct and interdependent organizational components constitute a unified whole."[i] Organizational integration (OI) reflects how affably unique departments of an organization work together and how tightly coordinated their efforts are to meet unique, yet ultimately common goals. Theories of OI also recognize, however, the distinctiveness of an organization's components. It has been argued that the ultimate in integration is realized when all systems are fused together to the point that they are no longer distinct (Orton and Weick 1990), however in many organizations this is not optimal as the differentiated and complementary skills that come with specialization are necessary. Therefore, when determining how to reach organizational goals while also meeting the unique needs of staff, an organization must carefully develop the appropriate relationship.

As the research on OI has developed and it was determined that not *one type* of OI would be best for all organizations, this broad and diversely understood concept began to expand into various subgroups. Intra-organizational integration, which is understood to be internally operated and internally functioning, has been a common use of the term. However, more commonly now we are seeing inter-organizational integration being cultivated[ii]. Although this type of OI has become increasingly popular, the existing research provides little understanding of the impact of the relationships developed on the clients receiving services and the organizations engaged in those relationships.

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Using data from one non-profit organization's partnership with the United States Military, the author addresses both of these needs through the exploratory evaluation of a unique inter-organizational relationship. Kids Included Together (KIT) is a non-profit organization located in San Diego, CA that specializes in providing best practice training for community-based, out-of-school time organizations committed to including children with and without disabilities into their recreational, child development and youth enrichment programs. KIT established the National Training Center on Inclusion (NTCI) as a state-of-the-art training facility dedicated to creating and disseminating best practice information and tools to all affiliate organizations. Utilizing a blended learning style with interactive eLearning components, KIT and the NTCI's services are provided to its 61 affiliate organizations representing over 299 sites in San Diego County, as well as over 245 United States Military bases throughout the world.

The objective of this white paper is to explain the model linking organizational integration, performance, and implementation efforts. The rest of this paper is organized in four sections. The first explains KIT's concept of organizational integration, proposes KIT's understood definition, and speaks to how our Facilitator Training workshop meets the objectives outlined in our definition. The second describes the methodology for collecting data used to understand the benefits of OI. Section three presents the results of our data collection and discusses mechanisms for achieving OI. The final section synthesizes KIT's

understanding of organizational integration and how our model fits within the organization theory literature.

KIT'S CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

Two years ago, KIT partnered with the United States Military to provide services focused on promoting inclusive programming throughout their bases, specifically in Child, Youth, and Teen Development Centers. One of the components of the contract included KIT working directly with the base trainers[1]. These efforts are both important and necessary as 86%[2] of trainers surveyed indicated that they have never had training on inclusion. One can infer from this statistic that the trainers do not have the inclusion expertise to deliver staff development on promoting inclusive programming without the partnership with KIT.

> The Facilitator Training workshop speaks to organizational integration by being responsive on multiple levels — the organizational level, the management level, the trainer level and the staff level.

KIT provides a broad array of services to the Military to meet this need, ranging from online webinars to site visits, face-to-face trainings, and child specific consultations. In an effort to develop organizational integration and promote sustainability and capacity-building efforts on national and international bases, KIT provides a Facilitator Training workshop. The National Training Center on Inclusion hosted its first Facilitator Training workshop for the Navy on October 15, 2010 and October 16, 2010. A representative from each region was selected by the Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) to attend the training workshop at the NTCI in San Diego, CA. At this two-day workshop, representatives were provided training on delivering specific inclusion modules to staff at their region. While this training is only one aspect of KIT's involvement with the Navy, it allows for one on-base "inclusion specialist" in each region of the Navy.

Each selected regional specialist was trained on KIT's four basic modules: *Introduction to Inclusion*, *Respectful Accommodations*, *Supporting Positive Behavior* and, *Partnering with Families*. They were also trained on how to deliver the modules to their staff and provided with the take-home resources necessary for bringing four successful training modules to their regions.

KIT's concept of how the close partnership with the trainers would establish organizational integration was based on five notions: (1) that KIT would work closely with the trainers to teach them how to integrate KIT's professional development into their base (2) that the needs of trainers would be met because they would gain training on inclusion and on training skills (3) that the needs of the staff would be met because they would learn how to more meaningfully accommodate children (4) that the needs of management would be met because research shows that staff who receive specific and ongoing professional development are less likely to leave their position (5) that the overall goals of the organization would be met because the program would be fully inclusive of all children with and without disabilities and could therefore meaningfully serve all children.

The Facilitator Training workshop speaks to organizational integration by being responsive on multiple levels — the organizational level, the management level, the trainer level and the staff level. It is our hypothesis that this relationship will strengthen the goals of the organization as a whole and meet the unique needs of the staff. It will help the organization meet their goal of providing inclusive out-of-school time care for children with and without disabilities, it will help combat the issue of staff turnover, and it will help staff to enjoy their jobs more by experiencing calmer, more pleasant work environments. Further, it supports KIT's goals by promoting their

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[1]Trainers are assigned to a specific base to work directly with caregivers. They provide them with professional development training, in-class assistance, and specialized child consultation care.

[2]As determined by a questionnaire distributed to Military caregivers and filtered by those indicating that their primary role is a trainer.

mission of making quality out-of-school time care equally accessible to children with and without disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

Overall, 19 individuals participated in the Facilitator Training workshop. All trainers were employed with the Navy in child care and they all identified as female. Each region of the Navy was represented at the training. Facilitators were emailed two weeks after the training course and asked to complete an online questionnaire measuring: overall course quality, trainee perceptions of specific aspects of the workshop, quality of KIT trainers, and expectations for implementation. Six months after the post-questionnaire was collected, a follow-up survey was emailed to the original 19 participants. All participants (100%) completed the follow-up survey. Data from the follow-up survey were used to ascertain participants' views regarding the practicality of the workshop, perceptions of training effectiveness, perceptions of how courses could be improved, additional support to improve implementation, peer-to-peer dissemination, implementation of course material to their staff, and participants' perceptions of staff's most improved areas of inclusion.

Data was then collected from direct caregivers so that we could merge these data with the data from the trainers and determine relationships between the two datasets. The information extracted from these data is helpful in gauging participant perceptions of training quality as well as provider and child benefits. This research was designed to provide information including, but not limited to: actual implementation statistics of both the number of trainings delivered at respective regions as well as number of children impacted, actual gain statistics, and whether trainers' perception of inclusion and the use of inclusion in the classroom has statistically significantly changed over the course of six months.

The forthcoming results speak to organizational integration in that they illustrate how the relationship strengthened the goals of the organization as a whole and met the unique needs of the staff.

RESULTS

Initial Training Analysis

Survey results indicate that, overall, the Facilitator Training was met with great success. Participant ratings of overall course quality are important findings because literature on training reports that one of the most significant indicators of participant engagement and future implementation is buy-in. Research has shown that if a participant is highly satisfied with the training course, he or she will: engage in the training, bring the material back to his or her professional life, and implement the learned material in his or her work.

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To measure participant satisfaction of KIT's Facilitator Training workshop, a scale consisting of five items was developed based on previous research of high quality training indicators. The five items included in the scale asked participants to select the level to which they agreed that they: Are ready to deliver a KIT module; Have a clear understanding of [their] responsibilities as a trainer, Are familiar with the basic techniques for delivering a KIT module; Have learned new inclusion strategies; Have learned new skills for teaching inclusion to [their] staff; Response options included; "Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Somewhat Agree = 3, Somewhat Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1".

Scale statistics were run on the scale and it was determined that the scale had strong psychometric properties. The primary factor accounted for the

majority of the variance (56.5%), indicating that the scale measures what it is intended to measure (Overall Course Quality). The reliability analysis found a high Cronbach's alpha (a = .793). This indicates that ,if repeated, the results of the analysis would be the same.

The Overall Quality rating scores ranged from 5 to 25, and the mean overall quality rating of this training course was 22 (μ=22, SD=2.26). This indicates that the majority of respondents selected either Agree or Strongly Agree that there was a high level of course quality. This conveys to the reader that individuals left the training feeling that they had been engaged and grasped new content and skills, and that they felt prepared with resources and techniques in hand to deliver this training. These indicators build a strong case for expected implementation and positive effects in all regions of the Navy.

Facilitator Training Six Month out Follow-up Survey

Six months following successful Facilitator Training completion, participants were asked to complete a follow up survey. All 19 participants (100%) completed the follow up survey and results were overwhelmingly positive and confirmed that the Navy was experiencing organizational integration.

The Implementation of Facilitator Training Workshop Material

On the follow-up survey, participants were asked to indicate the implementation of course material with their staff, and 89% (17) of them indicated that they had already trained their staff on the inclusion modules in the past six months. The remaining 11% indicated that they expect to implement the training with their staff in the next six months. Table 1 indicates these results.

Participants in the Facilitator Training provided information in the follow-up survey regarding the one area of their training instruction they believed improved

Table 1. Implementation

PARTICIPANTS' INTENTIONS TO UTILIZE COURSE MATERIAL WITH THEIR STUDENTS		
	n	%
I've already used this material with my staff	17	89
I plan on using this material with my staff this year	2	11
I will probably use the material next year	0	0
No I definitely will not use this material	0	0

the most as a result of participating in the workshop. These results are provided from those participants who *had already* implemented course material. Many of KIT's hypothesized findings were confirmed through the six-month out follow-up survey data. More than half of the respondents strongly agreed that the course content: would be easy to transfer to their training (63%), was supported by their program (58%), and addressed the needs of their staff (63%). An overwhelming 84% of respondents indicated that the training enabled them to improve their classroom instruction. Table 2 shows participants' perceptions of the most improved area of their training if they had implemented the material within six months of the training.

Table 2. Most Improved Area of Training

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MOST IMPROVED AREA OF TRAINING (IMPLEMENTERS ONLY)		
	n	%
Explaining what inclusion is	17	89
Providing strategies for respectful accommodations	2	11
Providing strategies for supporting positive behavior	0	0
Providing strategies for communicating with parents	0	0

Table 3 displays participants' perceptions of the practicality of the Facilitator Training workshop. Trainers

reported on how well the Facilitator Training workshop helped them to meet the needs of their staff and to improve their instructional practices. More than half of the respondents (58%) indicated that the training helped with implementing new methods of training. Additionally, a majority of the respondents indicated that, six months after the training, they were very well prepared to: help staff address needs of children with disabilities (95%), implement lessons focused on including children with and without disabilities (79%), integrate accommodation strategies into staff training (53%), and address the needs of staff with diverse learning needs (68%). Additionally, just under half of the trainers (47%) reported that they felt very well prepared to integrate new activities into their training, and address the needs of staff with diverse backgrounds (32%).

Table 3. Participants' Perceptions of the Practicality of the Facilitator Training

(85%) indicated that they had not received training on inclusion, while 23 (14%) reported that they had. These groups were split and compared.

Variables examined included: environment perception, level of comfort providing accommodations, level of knowledge of strategies, whether the individual understands providing accommodations as one of his or her roles as a professional, and how often the staff member modifies program activities to accommodate children. All T-Tests were found to be statistically significant at the .01 level. On all predictors, individuals indicating that they had received training on inclusion were statistically significantly more likely to rate the variable higher. These findings are important because they speak to the significance of inclusion training. Results can be seen in Table 4.

Caregivers were also asked to indicate how they

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRACTICALITY OF FACILITATOR TRAINING WORKSHOP								
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The workshop content is easy to transfer to their staff training	12	63	5	26	3	11	0	0
Program supports use of workshop content in my training	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The training addressed areas of need in my staff	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
The workshop enabled me to improve my training	9	47	7	37	2	10	1	5

These findings are extremely important, given results from a caregiver survey. In total, 163 caregivers in Child Development Centers were surveyed. In this survey, caregivers were asked to indicate whether they had received training on inclusion at their base. Results were analyzed and T-Tests were conducted comparing caregivers who had indicated that they had received inclusion training in the past and those responding that they have not received inclusion training. Of all of the respondents, 140

would describe their environment. They were asked to choose one description from: "Pleasant", "Calm", "Organized", "Stressful", "Chaotic", "Out of Control". Responses were collapsed into two dummy variables. These variables were "Good" including "Pleasant", "Calm" and "Organized", and "Bad" including "Out of Control", "Chaotic", "Stressful". A T-Test was run between the two groups. Respondents who had been provided inclusion training were statistically significantly more likely to be in the "Good"

Table 4. Staff Perceptions: Comparing Individuals who Have had Inclusion Training with Those who Have Not had Inclusion Training

commodations in their classroom and perceive their classroom as "good" after they have received training on inclusion. Ultimately, therefore the overall goals of the center are met because it is promoting the full

STAFF PERCEPTIONS BY TRAINING EXPERIENCE (T TEST)							
	Without Training		With Training				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	Sig
Environment Protection*	1.29	0.455	1.77	0.429	29	4.86	0.000
Level of Comfort Providing Accommodations*	3.32	0.833	5	0	135	9.622	0.000
Level of Knowledge of Inclusion Strategies*	2.85	0.833	3.64	0.953	159	3.638	0.000
Level of Knowledge of Behavior Support Techniques *	2.69	0.797	3.57	0.59	37	6.23	0.000
Level of Knowledge of Supporting Children on the Autism Spectrum*	2.16	0.879	3.32	0.995	26	5.16	0.000
Level of Knowledge of Supporting Children with ADD/ ADHD*	2.22	1.01	3.22	1.11	27	3.98	0.000
Is facilitating inclusion you responsibility as a professional?*	3.02	1.12	4.14	1.13	31	4.192	0.000

Note: n = 159
Note: * is statistically significant at the .01 level

category than were respondents who had never received training. To that end, it is appropriate to say that caregivers who have been provided inclusion training perceive their classroom more positively than caregivers who have not (t=4.86, sig.<.001).

These results speak to meeting needs at all levels. KIT has met our goal of spreading inclusion throughout the world by training a set of trainers. Trainers' needs were met because they were provided what they thought was a highly effective training and expanded their knowledge of both inclusion and training. The trainers then brought the training back to their base and were likely to implement the trainings. Caregivers' needs would be met because previous research indicated that caregivers who receive training on inclusion are more likely to provide ac-

and meaningful inclusion of all children.

While meeting the needs of staff at all levels of command is vital to reach effective organizational integration, linear integration is similarly necessary. The capacity to train every trainer in the Navy is not available. Therefore, KIT has to work to put structures in place for trainers to share the information with other trainers at their site. All trainers can then pass the suggestions and recommendations on to the direct caregivers that they supervise. KIT promotes linear integration in a number of systematic ways, for example, sending written recommendation responses to caregivers and trainers following all Support Center calls. KIT staff also asks the participants at the Facilitator Training to disseminate resources and recommendations provided to their colleagues.

The extent of linear integration is measured on the six month out follow-up survey.

Peer Sharing of Facilitator Training Workshop Material

In an effort to determine the extent to which Facilitator Training course material has been disseminated beyond the course participants, individuals who completed the follow-up survey were asked whether they had shared the course content with their peers. More than half of the respondents (89%) indicated that they had shared Facilitator Training course content with other trainers on their base. Moreover, 11% of the respondents indicated that they had shared the course material with trainers in their building.

Table 5. Dissemination and Organizational Integration

PEER-TO-PEER DISSEMINATION OF COURSE MATERIAL		
	n	*%*
Trainers on my base	17	89
Trainers in my building	2	11
Trainers in my region	0	0
Administrators on my base	0	0
Administrators in my building	0	0
No trainers or administrators	0	0

Note. $N = 19$

Participants who indicated that they had shared Facilitator Training materials and information with colleagues within six months of completing the workshop content were asked to identify each of the methods that they used to disseminate the information. Of respondents who had disseminated information, 19 reported that they had engaged in informal discussions with their colleagues. This same frequency of response was seen for materials prepared and shared. Formal presentations were conducted by 14 respondents. Discussions at planning

meetings were had by two Facilitator Training completers and five presentations were given at management meetings.

The most notable finding here is that none of the trainers had indicated that they had not shared the information with anyone. Therefore, all trainers, in some capacity, promoted linear integration.

Table 6. Dissemination and Organizational Integration

METHODS OF DISSEMINATION	
	n
Informal discussions with colleagues	19
Discussion at a planning meeting	2
Presentation at a management meeting	5
Meeting with a regional director	0
Materials I prepared and shared	19
A formal presentation I delivered to other trainers	14
I did not share this information with anyone	0

Note. $N = 19$ (respondents selected more than one response)

DISCUSSIONS OF KIT'S UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

The mission of Kids Included Together is to provide learning opportunities that support recreation, child development and youth enrichment programs to include children with and without disabilities. As an external technical support and training organization, however, the mission cannot be realized without the support of all management and frontline caregivers. In an effort to fulfill the mission of KIT, integration of the organizational mission is a primary goal. One of the ways that KIT works toward organizational integration is through the Facilitator Training workshop.

Organizational Integration essentially represents a structural and relational characteristic between organizations. As such, it can extend from suppliers to

contractors, clients and customers (Dean and Snell 1991). In this case, organizational integration is represented by a mission-based organization incorporating its goals into a larger sphere by meeting the needs of all stakeholders involved. Organizational behavior researchers Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) defined integration as "… the process of achieving unity of effort among the various subsystems in the accomplishment of the organization's tasks …" (p. 34).

The findings from the Facilitator Training analysis speak to this definition of organizational integration by being responsive on multiple levels of staff need – the organizational level, the management level, the trainer level and the staff level. It is the hypothesis of KIT that this relationship will strengthen the goals of the organization as a whole and meet the unique needs of the staff. It will help the organization meet their goal of providing inclusive out-of-school time care for children with and without disabilities, it will combat the issue of staff turnover, and it will help staff to enjoy their jobs more by experiencing calmer, more pleasant work environments. Finally, it supports KIT's overall mission by helping to make quality out-of-school time care equally accessible to children with and without disabilities. The relationship between our definition of organizational integration and the findings from our analysis are presented in the graphic below.

By meeting the needs of all key stakeholders, KIT has been able to develop a plan for working toward the overall goals of their organization. By training facilitators to bring KIT trainings back to their respective regions, KIT introduces their mission and goals into the Navy's training plans. The data analysis from the Facilitator Training questionnaires indicated that the training was met with great success. This meets the needs of the facilitators in that it provides them additional skills as well as additional training modules and resources to implement in their organization. Previous research has shown that if a training is perceived to be of high quality, it is more likely that the learned material will be implemented. It can be inferred, then, that KIT's training modules will be delivered to the staff members within the trainers respective organizations.

Research at KIT has shown that staff members who have had training on inclusion are statistically significantly more likely to experience a calm, pleasant environment and fewer behavioral challenges. The needs of the trainers and caregivers are further met by providing them with an outside resource for assistance with providing accommodations in the classroom[3]. As research has shown that caregivers with an outside resource for assistance providing accommodations are more likely to change activities or the environment to meet the needs of children in the classroom, the needs of the caregiver are therefore

THE FULL AND MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES
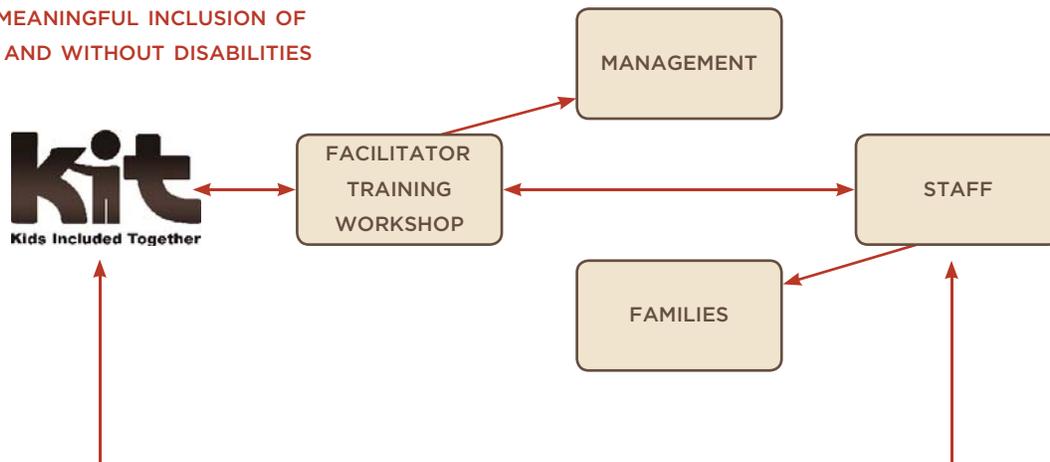
3 At the KIT Facilitator Training, facilitators are provided information on accessing the KIT Support Center. For information on the KIT Support Center please refer to the KIT White Paper *The Need for Skilled Inclusion in Out-of-School Time Programs: Kids Included Together Responds*

met by increasing job satisfaction, which then speaks to the management's goals of decreasing staff turnover.

Integration of KIT's mission is extended even further when staff and caregivers are provided training on KIT's core module *Partnering with Families*. This module gives caregivers practical strategies for communicating with families to support a child in the class, both in the program and at home. Consistency for a child will assist with full and meaningful inclusion in out-of-school time organizations.

What is interesting and important to note with this type of organizational integration is that the United States Military is much greater than one organization; the Military is even greater than one branch. While OI between organizations can be challenging on a one-to-one basis, there are even more difficulties when the organization is as large and complex as the United States Military. The below graphic depicts the scope of KIT's integration in one branch of the Military.

The below graphic demonstrates that the integration

of KIT's training is extending beyond one organization, but is rather being integrated into 83 discrete bases that house anywhere from 1-7 child and youth development centers. While the scope of the impact of this type of OI is vast, it also lends itself to engaging a number of important stakeholders.

A common theme throughout OI research is the important and necessary component of engaging all stakeholders. KIT has observed the challenge of engaging all stakeholders and has put systems in place to ensure that all stakeholders throughout the United States Military are engaged in both integration and our research and evaluation efforts.

Upon contract inception, KIT was able to gather all perspectives and meet each stakeholder's needs in a number of ways. The first is by identifying stakeholders at all levels, which included, but was not limited to, a full review of branch chain of command, full review of all organization policies and procedures, and interviews with points of contact at the headquarter level who could provide his or her subordinate, working down a chain of command. Next, by managing challenges faced when soliciting opinions
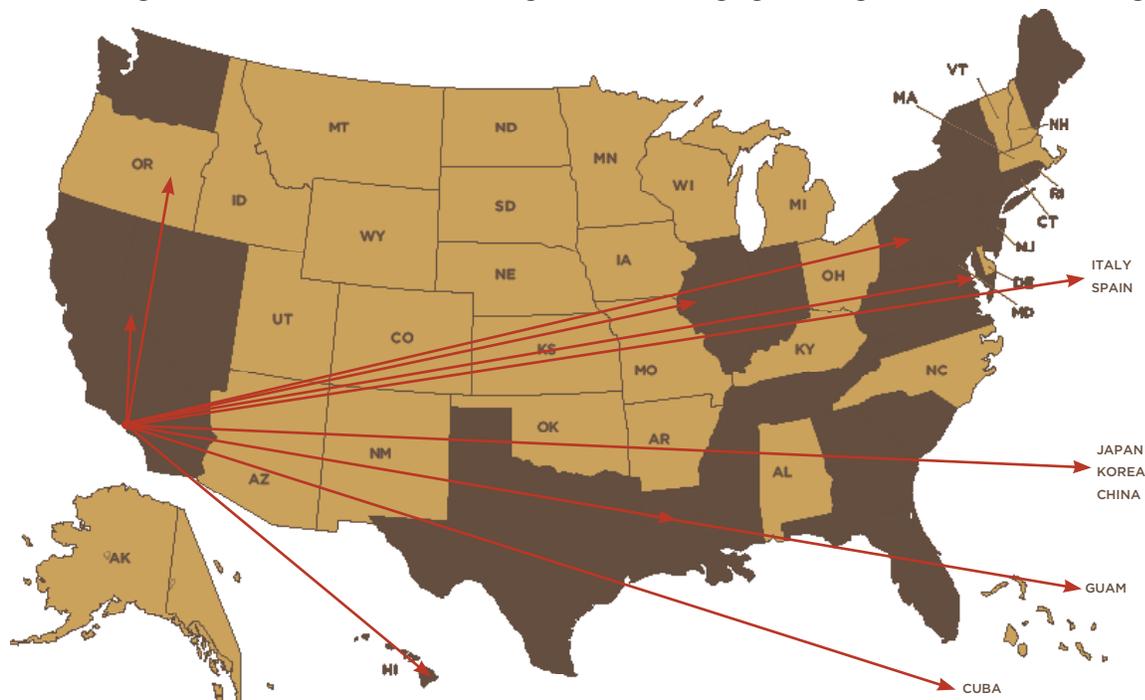
including, but not limited to, social desirability, fear of chain of command and fear of penalty. Finally, by understanding successes and challenges faced when including and illustrating valuing all perspectives, including: reconciling the varying opinions between management and frontline staff, presenting the observed breakdown in communication between administration, management and frontline staff, presenting needs observed during field research that were inaccurately described during interviews as a result of fear of penalty.

To learn more about KIT's model for identifying and valuing stakeholders, please review KIT's White Paper, *Tried and True Strategies for Identifying and Valuing all Stakeholder Perspectives in a Large-Scale, Multi-level Evaluation*.

Kids Included Together is an organization that provides training and resources for meaningfully including children with and without disabilities into community based out-of-school time programs. KIT's blended learning style allows for differentiated instruction so our skills and best practices can most effectively be transferred to a wide audience. By utilizing KIT's training and resources, management and staff at numerous out-of-school time programs are promoting the full and meaningful inclusion of children with and without disabilities.

Selected Sources

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