INNOVATION IN URBAN EXTENSION:

A STUDY OF SELECTED EXTENSION PROGRAMS

BY

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Extension agents have long served urban counties and their communities but their role in such settings usually has been more difficult to define than in rural counties. Is it because there are fewer agents per capita? Is it lack of money and other resources? Is it lack of an extensive university research base? Is it because of the special difficulties inherent in urban environments? Experience suggests that these and other reasons have all contributed to the difficulties in transferring the expertise and traditions of agricultural extension to the urban setting.

At the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) have cooperated on the project reported in this paper. The idea has been to talk informally with urban extension agents across the region to learn from them of their successes, failures, and frustrations, and to search for common themes as they all work to serve their communities more effectively. This paper reports on the experiences of urban extension agents as they develop innovative programming and suggests ways in which such ideas might become a more regular part of extension activities in urban communities.

We hope the information and ideas presented here will be helpful to those in other states and we expect our own experiences on this project to lead to other cooperative ventures in the future.

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The Cooperative Extension System has a long and proud tradition of providing educational programs based on the needs of people. Typically, these needs have been identified and met through independent and separate discipline-based programs within the four traditional program areas: agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, and community development.

(Futures Task Force 1987)

This quote from a recent extension publication sums up extension's historic role. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was enacted by Congress to aid in diffusing useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics among the people of the United States. The work of the extension service as defined in the act was to consist of giving youth and adults instruction through practical demonstrations, direct teaching, publications and other methods that were to take place outside the classroom.

Extension's central purpose, diffusing information from land-grant universities to the people, has remained constant. Amendments to the Smith-Lever Act, population shifts, changes in learners' needs, and new technology have produced many changes in the way information is disseminated. The content of the act has given extension a historically rural image even though it has long served urban audiences. Today, many programs demonstrate the relevance of extension's traditional disciplines to urban residents, yet the rural link and rural image remain as legacies, cumbersome as well as full of promise.

As the American population shifts to a primarily urban base, the agencies and institutions that have traditionally served rural audiences are finding the need for change. The 1986 Statement of Direction and Priorities of the University of Minnesota Extension Service provides an insight into the changes taking place in extension across the United States. The plan states that Minnesota will focus its programs and priorities according to the central issues of today and tomorrow affecting the people of Minnesota. Thus, "Our framework for making decisions will be prescribed more by the major concerns of the times than by the occupation or location of clients...." This is not a document aimed only at rural Minnesotans, it is for all Minnesotans.

Part of this paper's background lay in the recognition of a shift in extension's focus. The shift is not a rural-to-urban shift, but a shift to serving the emerging needs of people. Many people within extension have recognized that this will mean paying more attention to the needs of urban populations. This study was begun in the spirit of trying to understand more about the people extension serves and how to serve urban audiences better.

The request for this study on the part of extension personnel indicates extension's willingness to learn and to attempt to serve an audience to which it is not traditionally known.

"Extension is going through a period of transition. The symptoms are organizational soul searching, strategic planning, reorganization, retrenchments and defining new priorities" (Patton 1987, p. 22). This study is one part of that process of transition; it differs from other studies in that it was sponsored and conducted externally.

The study was done in three phases. The first two phases helped the researcher learn about extension and focused the direction of research. This paper begins with a summary of the first two phases, which were reported earlier (Milk 1987). The focus and direction of this study was in part aided by an ad hoc advisory committee (see Appendix A). This committee provided insight into the nature of the urban community and into the work of urban extension, and by their comments assisted in the research planning process.

The goal of this study was to gain insight into the scope and nature of innovation in urban extension programs. Most of this paper focuses on the information gathered in the third phase, in which the innovative nature of urban extension programs was studied through interviews with extension agents.

SUMMARY OF FIRST AND SECOND PHASES OF STUDY

After reviewing extension literature, the first step in the study was to identify key extension staff and faculty members in the nation and ask them to identify the main urban extension issues that need to be addressed. The comments of these eight key extension staff and faculty members were then categorized into the six following question areas:

- How is extension serving urban residents? Should it cater only to low-income people? Should it try to serve the identified needs of clients even though these areas may not be within extension's traditional areas of expertise?

- How well does extension understand the urban scene? Do staff cultivate relationships with other agencies? Do they know the special expertise and services of others and understand their own niche in this network of urban organizations?

- What is the image that most city residents have of extension? It is possible that many residents have no image of it and that those few who do have a rural image. What are urban agents doing to change extension's rural image and to increase their visibility among the myriad urban programs?

- What are the political dimensions of serving urban audiences? What kinds of services are politicians demanding, and what audiences do politicians want served? What does extension do to make politicians aware of how it is serving urban constituencies?

- How does extension evaluate its urban programs? How is accountability determined? Are the formulas, goals, and expectations the same for those who work with urban audiences as for those in rural areas?

- What is the research base of urban programs, in particular those new and innovative urban programs that do not have academic homes in extension? Is extension still serving its mission when it enters program areas that have no extension research base? Should all extension programs be research based, or is it acceptable for some to provide a base for research?

In the second phase of the study the researcher attempted to learn about the nature of urban extension programs from extension supervisors, directors, and coordinators (those in leadership or administrative positions in regional or county extension offices) of major urban areas. The researcher interviewed fourteen people in the major urban areas of the following states: Minnesota, Ohio, Kansas, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. Each person was asked to briefly describe successful, innovative urban extension programs in his or her region or county. These interviews provided insight into the depth and breadth of extension in urban areas and into the meaning of *innovation* in extension.

The people interviewed identified more than forty projects. Traditional programs in home economics, horticulture, and 4-H were mentioned. Nontradi-

tional programs were mentioned in the areas of media, business education, economic development, and housing. A number of programs involving a combination of traditional and nontraditional program areas were also mentioned (see Table 1 for a listing of the programs).

In the first two phases of the study, the researcher had identified issues of concern to urban extension, gathered information on the scope of urban extension programs, and identified innovative urban programs. In the final phase, the researcher focused on innovation in a few urban extension programs. The researcher interviewed fourteen extension agents from eight north-central states in hour-long unstructured telephone interviews. Agents were asked to take their time describing the process of innovation in program development. The interviews covered the source of the idea, how it took shape and developed, what support was received, and what barriers were encountered in the process of program development. Agents were also asked to discuss measures taken to repeat, expand, or diffuse the program after initial success. The remainder of this paper consists primarily of summaries of the interviews after their content was analyzed and the responses were categorized. Where pertinent, information from the first two phases of the study will be included as will comments from relevant reports or articles of Extension faculty. (See Appendix B for details on the programs selected for Phase Three.)

THIRD PHASE: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

DEFINING INNOVATION

In the second phase, the people interviewed were asked for their inter-
pretation of innovative programs. It became clear that *innovative* meant
different things to different people, in part, because they defined it
differently and, in part, because their experiences differed. Some felt that
innovative programs were ones that met newly identified client needs. Some
said that innovative programs used new approaches to tackle issues or
audiences previously addressed. Some felt that innovative programs were
programs that had never been tried before. Some of those interviewed in
Missouri did not consider their programs innovative because they had been
going on for many years. However, some who have not tried them might define
them as innovative; others might call them innovative because these programs
are in areas that fall outside extension's traditional arenas.

Extension agents discussed other aspects of innovation. One stated:
"There is a fine line between what is innovative and crackpot." Being innova-
tive means being different, and some people find that quite threatening. To
some agents being innovative involves redefining traditional programs and
traditional methods in order to suit them to urban audiences and urban
environments.

Innovative programs start at different levels of extension--county,
regional, state, or federal. Each administrative level has its role in
encouraging and supporting innovation.

As Table 1 indicates, innovative extension programs appear to have a
number of common components. Most innovative programs involve cooperation
with community agencies or other areas of extension. Most innovations are
variations or adaptations of existing programs. Adaptations involve seeking
new audiences, trying new approaches, using new material, or refining old
materials for use in a new medium such as videotapes or television programs.
Innovation in urban environments appears to be a way of redefining or re-
shaping traditional approaches or programs to meet the needs and interests of
urban audiences.

Table 1

ANALYSIS OF INNOVATIVE COMPONENTS OF SELECTED URBAN EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
NONTRADITIONAL			
Media (Omaha, Nebr.)	Work with media to market extension	Media contacts	Market extension
Support groups (Omaha, Nebr.)	Senator breakfast	Political ties, funding sources	Innovative marketing of program
Business (Kansas City, Mo.)	Minority business	More than 20 minority associations, black business association	New audience-- destitute inner-city area, agents with nontraditional backgrounds
Business (St. Louis, Mo.)	Family-owned business	Information not obtained	This is not one of the four traditional subject areas of extension
Business (St. Louis, Mo.)	Business education for large business	Business and industry education	New audience, new content area, old skills
Economic development (St. Louis, Mo.)	Community economic development training	Community groups, governmental bodies, agencies	New content area, new leadership, new target audience (old skills of leadership, training)
Economic development (Milwaukee, Wis.)	New model: community economic analysis program--series of three workshops	Neighborhoods, community businesses	Applied community develop. principles to economic develop. issues, work in area extension is not well known for.
Statewide needs assessment (Missouri)	Needs assessment	Community agencies, traditional volunteers	Tried many methods to ascertain needs

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
Public policy (Grand Rapids, Mich.)	Cable television program	Agencies	New audience, new delivery methods, new content
Housing (Grand Rapids, Mich.)	Urban housing rehabilitation (some video programming)	Other agencies	Linked with other agencies, new delivery, new audience, new relationships

COMBINED PROGRAMS

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
Horticulture, housing, interior design (St. Louis, Mo.)	Interdisciplinary urban education on energy conservation for urban fair	Interdisciplinary extension staff	Different audience, new delivery approach, new marketing approach, interdisciplinary
Horticulture (Columbus, Ohio)	Tape program on home horticulture, hotlines on horticulture	Communication media	Combined disciplines, new methods of delivery
Home economics and media (Milwaukee, Wis.)	Family strengths video	Families in community	New approach to delivery, new angle on old problem--family issues
Agricultural economics, home economics, media specialist (Omaha, Nebr.)	Financial forum	Interdisciplinary extension team, bank	New audience, new issue, newly identified need

TRADITIONAL

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
Community development (Benton Harbor, Mich.)	Model of community development	EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program)	Worked with a lot of minorities and citizens groups
Home economics (Kansas City, Mo.)	PLUS (Practical Living Urban Skills)	Network of community people	Focused on program and network development, trained volunteers

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
Home economics (Detroit, Mich.)	Family strengths in black family	Black ministers, bank, community agencies	Took risk, new approach, new funding agency, request for help from outside county, old issue
Home economics (Cleveland, Ohio)	Special grant on health care services	Cleveland Foundation	New information
Home economics (St. Paul, Minn.)	Special grant for nutrition education to food shelf staff	Food shelf agencies	New audience, new relationships, old topics
Home economics (Indianapolis, Ind.)	Mentor Mother	Volunteers, social service agencies	Teen mothers, new target group
Home Economics (St. Paul, Minn.)	Videotape in Hmong on housekeeping in public housing	Public housing, local college, volunteers, cable television network, community agencies	New method of delivery for this audience, involved cooperation among many groups
Horticulture (Milwaukee, Wis.)	Shoots and Roots, urban gardening	Many groups involved	Obtained city block grants and integrated disciplines
Horticulture (Detroit, Mich.)	Food production and environmental quality, maintenance of nonfarm lands owned by city residents	Magazines	New audience, new marketing strategies, old content
Horticulture (Chicago, Ill.)	Master gardening	Volunteers	Use of volunteers, volunteer training, content area
Horticulture (Indianapolis, Ind.)	Urban gardening contest	Housing project	Housing project audience that in past hasn't participated, new audience
Horticulture (Indianapolis, Ind.)	Private enterprise lawn care	Private business	New audiences, serve business

Extension Area	Content Program	Relationships	Innovation Component
4-H (Milwaukee, Wis.)	Nature center and zoo program	County, schools, and other agencies	Special model for getting youth awareness, short-term involvement
4-H (Omaha, Nebr.)	School enrichment program	Schools, health department	New curriculum
4-H (Chicago, Ill.)	K.O.T.O. (Kids On Their Own) latch-key survival skills	Volunteers, community agencies	New target audience, lots of cooperation among agencies
4-H (Kansas City, Mo.)	Sex education program in schools, substance abuse program in schools	Schools, state drug program	New content and issues with youthful audience
4-H (Kansas City, Mo.)	Health careers for inner-city teens	Information not obtained	Expanded audience, new target group--inner-city youth
4-H (Indianapolis, Ind.)	Day camp for youth	Neighborhood parks	Unique local program in kids' neighborhood
4-H (Kansas City, Mo.)	Handicapped horsemanship	Information not obtained	Special interest program
4-H (Indianapolis, Ind.)	Natural science program for school district's camp	Schools	New content, new delivery method
4-H (Chicago, Ill.)	School enrichment, curriculum --wetlands entomology, embryology	Schools	New contacts
4-H (Minneapolis, Minn.)	American Variety Theater Company 4-H	Community agencies serving high-risk youth	Serving hard-to-reach audience, different formula is needed to assess program costs per child

WHY IS THERE INNOVATION IN EXTENSION?

It is not enough to know what people mean by innovation, it is also necessary to know how and why innovation takes place in extension. Part of the study's aim was to discover who wants innovation, who encourages it, whose support is required, what motivates an agent to be innovative, and what circumstances in an extension program encourage it to become innovative.

A list of people whom agents stated have requested innovation in urban extension follows.

- Clients
- Advisory boards
- Extension boards
- Local officials
- Extension county staff
- Local county extension directors
- Regional extension directors
- Extension faculty
- State extension administrators
- Federal extension staff

The following exemplifies the comments made about the demand for creativity or innovation in extension:

From day one since I've been in extension, they've always wanted creativity...That means county, regional, and state, although I'd say county and regional demand it more.

The following comment demonstrates that though demand for innovation is important, political support for it is crucial:

I think it does take decision makers in power who say that they want innovation. New ideas come out of local people, but in a climate that permits, encourages, and supports new efforts.

Innovation does not simply just happen. It requires that those in key positions make conscious decisions to support and encourage it. Agents and directors reported the idea of innovation sometimes began during the hiring process, with some county boards asking prospective agents if they saw themselves as innovative or creative. Others mentioned regional or local directors who had been instrumental in pushing for innovative projects. In Missouri, visionary leadership almost twenty years ago was cited as being responsible for some of today's innovative programs. Others said that special innovative grant funds, available in the past in some states through the state extension director's office or through 4-H foundations, signaled that innovation was encouraged. Others stated that the conscious decision to encourage or support innovation is important and that if it didn't begin with the county director, it would not happen:

The key is your county director, your number-one support person. Your second support is your county executive board--they typically

take leadership from the director. Your third support is from your volunteers. If you can't get their backing for a new program, you may never get it off the ground.

Clearly, the type of board and the relationship the extension staff has to the board varies among the different states and counties, owing to variations in political structure and county size. Still, the point to understand is that key decision makers must clearly state their support and encouragement for innovation if it is to occur.

The motivation for individual agents to be innovative was examined. In most cases it appeared that individuals do not engage in innovative projects because they seek rewards or recognition. One reason for that may be that there appear to be few systemic rewards for innovation. Agents mentioned the need to serve clients and to try to meet their clients' needs as one reason for being innovative. Others mentioned the challenge of trying to reach audiences that were of great concern to them or to the decision makers with whom the agents were directly connected.

Some agents are innovative in the line of duty. Sometimes advisory boards ask for programs or information on certain topics, and agents must find a way to comply. Some agents are innovative because it is personally challenging to them. Innovation on the part of agents does not just happen: it involves a conscious decision on the part of the agent to change traditional approaches, expectations, or beliefs. These decisions are not made in a vacuum, they are part of a long process and are made after listening to the client, assessing the resources, and consulting with decision makers and peers.

Table 2 shows how circumstances or history may affect the development of innovative programs. The work of other extension staff or the agent's own background of involvement in the community may set the stage for an innovative event or program. Innovations build on prior achievements and programs. In most cases prior programs have established the legitimacy and credibility of the agency or the agent. Several of those interviewed were conscious of their roles in new programs in urban areas where extension had previously been unknown. They stated that they knew they were building trust and a reputation that over time would lead people to identify a program that carried the 4-H logo as a quality, trustworthy program. The irony is that extension innovators are faced with building new traditions that can be recognized by today's urban residents.

Table 2

BACKGROUND FOR INNOVATION

Expansion of Past Community Service

Extension personnel had developed contact with local officials, making innovative agreement possible for joint funding of a county and extension project.

Extension agent responded to community request for help, did excellent job. When she wanted to develop a program she returned to group for support, endorsement, and used it in program development.

Extension was asked to develop project because others knew they had expertise in teaching adults and in working with the target audience, and had knowledge of the content area.

Visionary Leadership

An extension board saw that urban needs were different and acted to create a new position.

State leaders believed extension should offer something beyond the traditional agriculture program.

Existing Programs

Client request: kids asked to continue a project that they accidentally discovered.

Staff interest: staff wanted to reach more clients with special needs.

Extension advisory council: council suggested program seek to reach those with special needs.

Innovative ideas come from a variety of sources. Innovations can be spurred from federal, state, or district initiatives or mandates. Most of them, however, occur at the local level. Locally conceived innovations in this study came from five basic sources:

- Extension boards
- Extension clients
- Community groups or agencies
- Advisory councils of specific program areas (4-H and home economics)
- Extension staff

Table 3 explains the context and purpose of the various innovative ideas mentioned by those interviewed. A key to understanding much of the innovation in urban extension is to examine in more detail the purpose behind innovations. The goal statements listed in Table 3 demonstrate that at its most basic level, the incentive for innovation is to serve urban residents. Agents want to reach new clients and new audiences, handle special needs, and solve certain problems.

Table 3

SOURCES OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Person or Source	Context	Purpose or Goal
LOCAL--4-H		
4-H community workers	While staff was involved in program development process they came up with this idea	Idea was to try to reach kids to give them some self-care skills
Board of directors for low-income 4-H programs	Board of directors for low-income 4-H kept hearing of teenage girls dropping out of program when they became pregnant; they took this up as an issue of focus	Focus on teen needs; help teens from being so isolated; help them get back into school
County officials	Zoo needed someone to provide education; extension was in the right position to do this cooperatively	Provide short-term learning for youth; assist them in finding the kind of learning that excites them
County park system, extension staff	The nature center was overflowing; staff couldn't meet the demand, so nature in the parks was started	To serve educational needs of youth in best manner possible and provide short-term learning experience
Extension staff	Growth of nature in the parks program; goal was to have adult volunteers work with children	To have someone in each neighborhood park, studying and working with groups that come to the park
Kids involved in 4-H urban gardening project	Kids were finishing a gardening project and celebrated with dancing and entertainment; they enjoyed the entertainment so much they asked to keep doing it	Kids found a program they enjoyed doing; goal was to reach high-risk urban kids and keep them off the streets
Staff person in agriculture	Staff planned and brainstormed idea	Help kids in urban area understand where foods come from; concentrate on specialty of the state

Person or Source	Context	Purpose or Goal
County staff	State advised county staff federal monies were available for special grant through the Department of Labor; from a community survey we decided on a target audience	To educate teens about job possibilities and give them self-confidence in seeking jobs

LOCAL--Home economics

Extension homemakers council	Planning meeting of extension council	Leadership training in the area of health coverage
University of Nebraska trained fifty people from around the U.S. in this special family strengths program; extension person later sought to provide program in community	Ecumenical Council of Churches developed strong relationship to city bank; together they backed programs for community and asked an extension staff person to conduct other programs for the family	Develop program geared especially for black families in inner-city to strengthen the family
Local public housing agency	Local public agency had difficulty with low-income clients (refugees) and asked extension to help in training clients to handle problems	Develop standards in housekeeping, coordinate volunteer groups and community resources, and develop educational videotape appropriate to clients' culture and standards needed by public housing agency

LOCAL--Inter-
    disciplinary

Staff	Staff discussed the many questions regarding this issue and decided to develop a program; staff person was assigned to develop it	Design a program to meet needs of client groups

LOCAL--Other

Extension board	The board saw that urban areas had different concerns than rural areas and decided to develop a new position	Media in an urban environment are different and must be handled differently from those in rural areas

Person or Source	Context	Purpose or Goal
STATE--(OTHER)		
State level extension	Statewide needs assessment	Reclassify old regional positions to fit new state priorities
Far-thinking people on the campus who believed extension ought to offer something other than traditional agricultural programs	There was a need for extension to provide things relating to urban nature that elected officials wanted; there was also a big gap in urban services; extension met a need no one else was meeting	Hire business and industry staff to provide leadership, educational programs, and staff training where such programs are needed
Funding provided for economic development	State asked extension agent (well known for his expertise with inner-city urban groups) to transfer into the economic development program because community groups knew him and because of his excellent skills in community development	Increase economic development through a new model of neighborhood training
DISTRICT--4-H		
District director	In planning for a new nature center building by county park district, arrangements were made for someone to do the education; extension was invited	Provide educational programs for youth in county park's nature center
FEDERAL--Agriculture		
Federal legislators	Rural legislators made trade-off to assure support for USDA budget	Help low-income urban groups with food production; follow EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) model

THE RATIONALE FOR INNOVATION

One question, relating to extension's overall mission, remains to be answered about the purpose of innovation. Are agents always doomed to start a program, see it get off to a good start, and then see it dropped because extension has not allocated funding for program continuation, but only for program innovation?

Copa and Sandman (1987) discussed the competent practice of successful agents. One point the agents they interviewed mentioned is that agents sometimes get so caught up in innovative activities that they lose sight of the larger picture. In planning and thinking about innovation, agents must consider whether innovative programs are being developed just for the sake of doing them, or to meet temporary client needs, or to reach out, trying to serve any client and any need. Or are innovative programs part of a larger plan and broader picture?

An agent interviewed in this study said, "most of the competition tends to follow along after we do something. We start most of it, then somebody will take up on some of it." Is it the role of extension to introduce the new and hope another community agency or funder will keep it going? Part of extension's mission, as the Smith-Lever Act states, is to disseminate information to the public.

Patton (1987) suggests that interdisciplinary teams must take a holistic systems perspective on important issues of the day in order to understand those issues in a global context. White and Brockett (1987) offer some practical suggestions for using philosophy as a tool for improving the effectiveness of practice within extension. They state that agents must ask themselves why they are planning an activity and what the potential consequences will be before deciding on the content or format of programs. They state that such analysis of the situation will enable agents to make choices with an eye toward the total picture of the institution and society, rather than by relying on tradition.

The agents interviewed were not asked how their innovative project fit into extension's long-term or broader plans. Some agents' comments, however, reflected how their projects might relate to the broader picture. One agent complained that the state had not acquired her program for further distribution because it did not have a priority for her project area at that time. Though she realized that the state had its priorities, she was still disappointed that her program had not been dispersed. Other agents talked about the long-range planning involved in the development of their projects. One agent discussed how, over time, the whole 4-H staff had developed a county-wide model as they sought to understand how their innovations fit into the broader picture of 4-H.

In summary, innovation happens because it is supported by decision makers, because a conscious decision is made to pursue a certain goal, because proper groundwork has been laid in terms of needs and resource assessments, and because someone had an idea about how to pursue the goal. Innovation should occur within a broader plan, although this does not always appear to be the case. Of the fourteen programs studied, the most intriguing ones were

those that the innovators clearly had developed as part of a planning process and those where the innovators had had a clear sense of building something to serve client needs.

MAINTAINING AND DIFFUSING INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The following list describes the fates of the innovative programs of the agents interviewed:

- Program was given once and not repeated
- Program was given once and follow-up was later scheduled
- Program was repeated over the years in essentially the same way or with minor refinements
- Program was expanded to serve more people
- Program was expanded and developed in new directions, with new services, and branched out in many ways
- Initial program was continued, and a different program was begun based on the trust and confidence built in the first program
- Program was discontinued, and another began based on the relationships developed in the first program
- Program was discontinued, and another community group took on the job
- Program was continued and expanded, and others in the community began to conduct similar programs
- Program was expanded to nearby counties
- Program was diffused across the state
- Program spread across the nation
- Program was mandated to spread in state or nation

Once the initial presentation or service provided through the innovative program is completed, a decision must be made to continue or discontinue it. Continuation may involve change, different administration or staff, different clients, and a different focus. The reasons for program continuation are related to the support and encouragement of innovation and to the innovative program's ability to fit into the big picture. Barriers to innovation also exist.

Barriers to Program Development and
Program Continuation or Dispersion

Let us first examine some of the barriers to the development and continuation of innovative programs. Several of those interviewed mentioned major barriers that have to do with attitudes and perceptions, including the following:

- Some agents fear handling machinery, talking to crowds, or appearing foolish when using a new medium such as television or videos. One agent summed this up as a lack of self-confidence:

    Some fear going beyond or doing or saying anything innovative or different--it's a matter of self-confidence and fear of what we don't understand.

● Others see stumbling blocks, and their own perception of things may cause real barriers to getting things done.

> Some agents may see so many difficulties in getting a program started that they give up before they even get started. Foreseeable blocks are things like funding, volunteer help, support from the community or from other agencies or even potential negative response to the program topic. Some staff may believe that clients will not be interested in a topic.

● One person saw the structure of extension as a block to innovation:

> The myth is that extension is not rigid. It is rigid. There is tremendous power and control and push for traditionalisms. There is flexibility in the mission statement, in the philosophy, in the methodology. People need to know how to take advantage of what allows them to do something different.

● Others mentioned that getting things done through the proper channels is slow, so they do things themselves even if it means that fewer resources are available.

Perceptions, attitudes, and the workings of the bureaucracy create barriers. Geography and politics, in the form of county and state boundaries, also present barriers to innovation. Additional sources of barriers are found in the practices of hanging on to old traditions and measuring and evaluating programs on the basis of rural priorities rather than on the realities of urban life.

Support for Program Development

Program support is often related to the same conditions as the barriers. Support may be motivated by politics, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, program priorities, and personalities. A program's level of initiative may determine its support or continuation. For example, federally funded programs such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and Urban Gardening operate under different circumstances than small programs begun by county agents.

From their start, programs initiated locally struggle for funding and must seek cooperation and help from other community agencies just to come into being. These programs tend to get the following support and responses from local and state extension:

● Extension staff make statements such as "this meets with our new priorities and directions, sounds like a good idea," but no funding is forthcoming.
● State specialists or regional directors give staff time to advise and help develop materials or locate resources.
● Extension gives administrative support and helps with printing of materials. When a program is diffused, state offices may send one copy of manuals or printed matter to all counties in the state.

- Grant money may be set aside to fund the costs of low-cost innovative programs.
- On the rare occasions when an innovative program coincides with top state priorities for which money has been budgeted, funds are given to initiate or continue new programs.

In sum, extension is generous with moral support and encouragement, but has few funds for program development. This occasionally appears hypocritical to some agents. Extension apparently encourages innovation and new program development but does not (and cannot) support innovation with funding. It engenders the irony expressed by one of the extension agents interviewed, who stated, "I don't see human development as a priority in extension, perhaps because they can't see the tangible effects like they can in agriculture."

The picture that emerges of extension's support to innovation is one of decision makers asking for innovation and encouraging agents to be innovative and then requiring that agents conduct very low-cost innovative programs or seek funding for innovation from other sources.

The political reality that extension is part of the United States Department of Agriculture comes into play in funding innovative programs. The department sees its mission primarily as providing service to rural areas. As one agent stated, "I think there is some recognition that urban models have to be different...but when it comes to dividing up the budget dollars, it is based on an absolutely rural emphasis."

Table 4 summarizes the barriers and supports for innovative program development and diffusion. The comments in the table are either summaries or direct statements from those interviewed.)

Table 4

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BEING INNOVATIVE

Advantages	Disadvantages
Don't have to meet anyone's expectations.	There are no models to follow.
No one tells you what to do.	There's no one to talk to who understands your situation or problems.
You can develop your own materials.	There are few if any resources.
You get to redefine terms.	Others don't understand your definitions.
You are involved in exciting changes and new programs that many find quite interesting.	You struggle almost daily to justify to yourself and others how this fits into extension's mission.
You are on the cutting edge and are rewriting and changing old models.	You don't fit the mold. You can't use the standard forms for computer printouts.
You are meeting new needs, serving clients that extension has historically not reached well; your community raves about the success of your program.	The accountability formulas for counting clients and figuring client cost ratios don't make sense when applied to your programs. Extension's formulas and traditional ways of measurement keep them from evaluating your program as successful.
Your feel you are demonstrating a successful model for urban extension.	Some say that what you are doing is not the work of extension.
There are always new challenges and problems to solve as you try to fit this program into extension and show how it is relevant.	You wonder yourself if this is really extension's role; you question yourself and must daily struggle to decide what you can and cannot do.
Over a period of time you begin to feel like you have built a good program; it is tremendously well received; there are good evaluations and clients are learning.	Extension hires a new dean or a new director and these new people say, even after your years of success, "Well, that's not really 4-H." (Top extension people in power fail to see this as the work of extension.)
You are all alone.	You are all alone.

INNOVATIONS IN URBAN EXTENSION

Description of Innovative Programs

In choosing the programs to be researched, the decision was made to select programs from several different geographical as well as topical areas. It was decided to have at least one program from each of the eight relatively urban states of the north-central region. It was also decided to research federal, state, and local programs that represented several program areas. All programs were chosen from the list of forty innovative programs cited in Table 1. In some cases, program agents were not available when first called; alternate programs were chosen. The ones chosen may not be the very best in the region and may not be representative of programs in their state or program area. Some of them, however, are distinguished not only in their state, but throughout the nation. The individuals chosen spoke for themselves and were not asked to represent the thinking of their state, county, or program area.

Appendix B provides a comprehensive description of the fourteen programs. This appendix gives the name of the program, the city and state where it was conducted, the program area, goal, target audience, source of support (where pertinent), and a description of the program. When available, other information about diffusion barriers and relationships to others is included. The appendix demonstrates the scope and range of programs related to this study and provides the opportunity for each reader to judge the extent of innovation. It is likely that some readers will find some programs more innovative than others.

Process of Program Development

Networking, cooperating with others, and having a good knowledge of community resources seem to be essential at a number of junctures in the program development process. Copa and Sandman (1987) consider an acute sense of context to be a quality of exemplary extension agents. As the innovative agents discussed the development of their programs, it became clear that knowing the resources of their communities was essential to their program development.

Astroth and Robbins (1986) list six steps for increasing awareness of the function and mission of extension in all communities. The first step, supporting and cooperating with extension coworkers, and the second, cooperating with other agencies were practiced by innovative agents in this study.

An initial process of data gathering, needs assessment, and situation analysis takes place early in the process of program development. Developing consciousness of a problem and searching for solutions may be a process of years. When an idea or solution is found, the search for resources, methods of implementation, or areas of support may also take time. Eventually this long-term work may lead to implementing an idea. Then the following steps occur:

- Deciding to act on a goal
- Discussing ways to put an idea into action (often in conjunction with other staff members or advisory councils)

- Networking with other community agencies
- Seeking help from other community resources (for funding, grants, staff time, cooperative planning, building space, or for other areas of program need)
- Seeking help from a state extension specialist for program and materials development
- Grant writing (done at several stages in the program development process for start-up, program implementation, and program continuation and diffusion)
- Recruiting volunteers
- Training volunteers and other staff or resources
- Networking to spread the word about the program to potential clients
- Evaluating the first phases of the program

This looks like a short list. However, many of the steps are repeated throughout the process. It is worth mentioning again that the most often repeated step is networking, which occurs in many ways and for different reasons; the extension agent without an extensive network system is an agent who cannot properly function on the job.

Measuring the Success of Innovative Urban Programs

The following is a list of some of the measures used by extension agents to evaluate the success of their programs:

- To measure knowledge gained by child participants of innovative programs, questionnaires were mailed to the child participants. Their response rate was high and their scores indicated they had acquired knowledge and also had applied the skills which they had learned.

- Demand for services exceeds facilities or staff. People are willing to be placed on waiting lists for a chance to participate in the program. (This indicates that the program is popular and demonstrates to staff that people perceive the program as useful or important.)

- Grants are continued with little difficulty. (Grant extensions are a signal to some staff that a program is acceptable and successful.)

- Community groups or organizations consistently support or fund the organization's programs, giving the agent their vote of approval. They acknowledge that they know the agent produces programs of quality.

- An agent can determine the success of leader-training programs by having the leaders the agent trained train others. By observing the methods the trainers use and the areas they emphasize, the agent can gauge the success of the training program and the impact it has had on the lives of those first trained.

- The media cover the organization's controversial programs positively.

- People taking a series of workshops attend most of the sessions, demonstrating their interest.

- Agencies and organizations give the agent their vote of confidence by asking him or her to return to provide more programs.

- Others copy or adapt what the agent has done and start their own versions. (This indicates that knowledge is being put to use and that others see it as valuable--or at least profitable.)

- Agents should observe the reactions of children when they participate in the program for the first time. Children will usually convey their level of interest honestly.

- When initial goals are exceeded, an agent can claim success in a program.

- When clients' formal or informal written evaluations state the program met a need, was useful to them, taught them something, or gave them concepts or skills that they have put to good use, it is a measure of program success.

Program agents have used the methods above to formally or informally measure or evaluate their programs. In some cases it is clear that agents made evaluation a formal part of their programs. In others, evaluations were informal, and measures used to evaluate programs were not standardized. The verification of agents' judgments about program success comes from reviews by others, acceptance by clients, endorsement by funders or the news media, and by the diffusion of programs.

It is hard to say if all of the programs researched were really success-ful or innovative. Though some programs may sound fascinating or interesting, an agent has to decide if they would meet the needs of clients in his or her area. The final criterion for judging these programs relates to their impact on the urban environment.

The Nature of Urban Extension Programs

The agents interviewed in this study had been or were currently involved in urban extension programs that their supervisors had defined as innovative. The agents were asked to describe their programs for the purpose of partici-pating in a study that was attempting to understand the nature of urban exten-sion programs. Many offered comments about the work of extension in urban environments. Their comments were categorized into four areas.

1. Many agents felt it was important that people become aware of the nature of the urban environment and of urban residents. They tried to explain how the urban environment differs from rural areas.

   > There are far too many different media outlets and too
   > many different extension agents and other staff members
   > for the kind of relationship [with the media] to exist
   > such as there is in rural areas...

Working with urban kids it has to be intense; the tradi-
tional program doesn't allow intensity. If something is
an alternative to the street, the kids aren't going to
come back if they have to wait a month. There is too much
else out there.

2. As they talked about the realities of the urban life, many stressed
the need for different models in urban areas.

I think there is little recognition that urban models have
to be different.

With so many other people around with talent and expertise
we have to be able to provide both uniqueness and effec-
tive outreach and educational savvy with adult learners.

One of the things that we try to do beyond cooperation
with other extension services, but with other agencies
here, is that we adjust our program because there are a
lot of other agencies. We try not to reinvent the wheel.
We get into something, perhaps as member of an advisory
board, rather than doing certain types of programming.

3. Agents discussed their theories about why their innovative programs
had been successful. Many felt that they had been able to achieve a
rapport with their clients and to demonstrate sincere interest in
urban clients and the urban environment. In the interview these
agents reflected an air of confidence and assurance about working in
the urban environment. They are the veterans; they have experience
and expertise; and they want to share their perceptions with exten-
sion. Many fervently believe in their work and in the need to change
and adapt extension models to the urban environment. Some of their
comments on what has worked for them follow:

What we tried to do in the last eleven years was to take
existing 4-H materials and adapt them to an urban area.

We tried to put together short-term learning experiences
that they like, where they are getting quality, and so
that they can start to identify us and relate us to a good
experience.

What's neat about our program, is that in most cases ex-
tension is the only institution providing these kinds of
services.

We said, 'we gotta meet these people where they are at,
give them what they are looking for and show them that it
is high quality'.

We can reach more people with the use of paraprofessionals
in the urban neighborhoods.

4. Because they understood the nature of this study, many offered unsolicited recommendations for extension programs in urban areas.

> We have a lot of competition for people's time; we have to offer them something of special interest and make it so high quality that they want more.

> Gradually as we expose people and show that we are innovative in new areas, they will be able to perceive us as being able to provide in that area...then we must make key political people aware of what we are doing and show that we are a viable agency.

> It's important that we change to try to meet the needs of city people. We have expertise in other areas besides agriculture. I don't think extension is perceived as highly knowledgeable in the financial management area although we do have the expertise.

> We must respond to the perceived needs of elected officials and get their support.

CONCLUSIONS

In part, the extension agents' comments about the nature of the urban environment and the types of urban extension programs that work echo the concerns voiced by national leaders in the first part of the study. These innovative agents have gone one step beyond, however: they have not only identified issues of concern, they have demonstrated methods of dealing with those issues.

If visibility is a problem, then urban agents must network, get connected, join advisory groups, and become known in the community. If image is a problem, then it's necessary for an agent to build a solid program and work to become known as someone who provides quality and trustworthy programs. It is imperative that urban agents recognize that this takes time and is slow and to have a well-conceived long-term plan and model for program development and visibility. When getting program participation is difficult, agents may find it useful to redefine the aims of the traditional programs. For example, an agent working with kids in 4-H might try to meet the kids' needs by focusing on building learning experiences for them, rather than on building up the club. It's necessary that agents learn about the community, adapt to changes in the environment, work cooperatively with others, build visibility in an area of expertise, and make politicians aware of how their constituents are being served. When agents' credibility in the community is an issue, or when agents are working with different cultural or ethnic groups, they should seek help. Consultants from the ethnic or cultural groups can teach agents about the population being served, provide training in developing or modifying programs to fit the population, and provide extension with increased credibility and sensitivity to the needs of new audiences.

The urban extension agent must have many skills. He or she must understand the nature of urban environments and must have a strong working aware-

ness of the resources of their own communities. In addition to possessing community and networking skills, they must know how to relate to people, to develop sound programs, and to engage in long-term planning and must have a recognized area of expertise. To be successful they must be innovative and creative, know how to write grants, and thrive on their own successes. They must be adaptable and life-long learners, always striving to learn new things about their environment or their field of expertise. They must genuinely care about people and the needs of urban residents and must want to bring new ideas and new information to the people they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In a study such as this it is easy to see the exciting and challenging nature of extension--and harder to see where the problems lie. The fourteen innovative agents shared their triumphs and concerns. The directors showed great enthusiasm for the innovation going on in their areas. The national leaders spoke about issues that extension must address. This study's recommendations are a composite of the thoughts of these agents, directors, and extension leaders.

1. Extension at national, state, and local levels must make clear commitments to urban extension. If extension is to serve urban audiences, the need for urban models must be accepted and recognized. New formulas for budgeting dollars, new ways of allocating resources, and new ways of measuring program success must take into account the needs of the urban population and must not be based on old rural models.

2. Extension's relationship with land-grant universities must be re-structured to reflect a new commitment to urban populations. New ties must be forged with other departments in the university, and old ties, where relevant, should be strengthened and reinforced.

3. When a strong research base for the programs being provided is lacking, extension must make some decisions about its mission. Is extension only to provide programs and information from a research base, or are innovative community programs a potential base for research? Extension must either define the limits of innovation or be willing to support innovative programs that challenge the research base and that are in themselves new areas for research.

4. New programs cannot be developed from a single discipline. The needs and concerns of urban residents are too complex for a one-dimensional approach. New programs must be interdisciplinary in nature and focus. They should not be problem centered but people centered: they must focus on people and the complex environment in which they live and work.

5. Obviously, if programs are interdisciplinary they are also inter-connected. Support, resources, and direction will come from many agencies working together toward common goals. A systems approach is endorsed by many as a way of seeking solutions to the complex prob-

lems of urban residents. The key factor is *cooperation* between agencies, the university, different levels of extension, different disciplines, and the news media. There must also be a willingness on the part of people representing these organizations to work together for a common goal.

6. The recommendations are interrelated, and networking is an element key to all of them. In fact, they cannot be realized without it. It bears repeating that networking is an essential skill of the urban extension agent.

7. For innovation to occur there must be support and encouragement for it. The decision makers, policy makers, and budget allocators must demonstrate in their actions and plans that innovation is a top priority.

8. Finally, in terms of innovation, extension leaders must be clearer about the purpose and mission behind innovation itself. Is the purpose of innovation the perpetuation of any new program? Or is the purpose to provide people with a new vision, new opportunities, new information, and new ways of doing things?

Innovation challenges the existing structures. It challenges old models, existing knowledge, reknowned experts, and time-honored traditions. Because it challenges that which exists, it is not always easily accepted. Extension may need to consider issuing new guidelines for the acceptance of innovative programs so that they will have a chance to come into being in a system that, to many, seems entrenched in tradition.

Extension must decide the purpose of its innovative programs. However, the community, policy makers, politicians, and the clients themselves will be the ultimate judges, deciding whether a particular innovation is the appropriate way for extension to serve the urban community.

Perhaps extension should consider ways that it can listen to urban residents and politicians to find out about the kinds of innovations they expect and want. Extension may need to stop doing so much internal soul searching and start asking outsiders who have no background in or connections with it to examine the services of urban extension programs. If extension seriously desires to be perceived as an innovator, it must really demonstrate its willingness to hear how others view its programs and must listen to how it stands out against the backdrop of the urban environment.

To exist and continue in the urban environment, extension must become part of it. This means establishing a real presence in the urban community and being there to hear the concerns, share the visions, and provide new opportunities for living together.

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APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The format for these interviews consisted of asking respondents one major question: Discuss at length the process of program development from idea to implementation. The format was non-directive; beyond the initial question there were only a few standard probes. In analysis of data, certain information was standard, but it was not obtained from all of those interviewed. Technological problems with the telephone taping of the interviews also led to the loss of some data. Hence, where the phrase "information not obtained" appears, it is due to the nature of the interviews themselves or to the possible loss of information owing to technological problems.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Business Education

CITY, STATE: St. Louis, Missouri

PROGRAM AREA: Business and Industry

GOAL: Provide business education to families and small businesses.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Small business

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: From state and campus extension faculty.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Information not obtained.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Sponsor workshops on how to start your own business. Offer one-on-one counseling for starting a business or on dealing with problems. Do follow-up or special workshops when needed. Have a workshop on operating a business from your home.

NUMBERS SERVED: Fifty to seventy-five people attend monthly meetings on starting a business. (Numbers for other programs not available)

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Business education has existed in Missouri for years, but it is a nontraditional program in many other states.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Information not available.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: We are the innovators. We do something, later community college or adult education programs offer the same things. Most of our competition follows along after we do something.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: In many ways, sometimes diffusion is not through extension.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Information not obtained.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not obtained.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Information not obtained.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not obtained.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Regional Economic Development Specialist

CITY, STATE: St. Louis, Missouri

PROGRAM AREA: Economic Development and Continuing Education

GOAL: To teach neighborhoods or communities how to operate an organization; how to evaluate their area and see what can thrive there.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Ninety municipalities and neighborhoods of the county.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Information not obtained.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: State-funded position.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Network with people and community organizations. Do a newsletter about economic concerns. Try to build up a network of people who know about extension and who will seek it out for services in the area of economic development.

NUMBERS SERVED: Mail 700 monthly newsletters. (Other figures not available due to newness of program.)

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Regional position, no academic home. Has a home county, but based on campus. New position.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Program is too new.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Information not applicable at present.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Information not applicable at present.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Visibility in the metropolitan area, where there is so much else happening.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not applicable at present.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Agent involved in constant networking in community.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Agent must work with several levels of extension.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Media Specialist

CITY, STATE: Omaha, Nebraska

PROGRAM AREA: Interdisciplinary

GOAL: To reach urban audiences.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Media outlets in an urban area.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: County extension board

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Information not obtained.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: A position was developed for a media specialist. The job was to contact media outlets, combine all newsletters into one, and send a monthly newssheet to community organizations as a news service. Also, to try to get on local talk shows and coordinate cooperative ventures with local organizations.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: There are few positions for media specialists in the country.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Information not obtained.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Other media specialists have been hired around the country.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Information not applicable.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Physical--county lines. Individual perceptions--fear of machines, fear of being on television, and fear of being different or innovative.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not applicable.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Maintain constant contact with media.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Maintain good contact with extension staff of adjacent counties.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Black Family Strengths

CITY, STATE: Detroit, Michigan

PROGRAM AREA: Home Economics

GOAL: To adapt the family strengths program model for use with black families in the inner city.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Urban black families

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Ecumenical Council of Churches of Greater Metropolitan Area of Detroit

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: National Bank of Detroit

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: The model is a re-teaching model. Train facilitators (in the first group trained these were ministers and lay leaders). Facilitators work individually with families using workbooks provided.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: A new model for working with families, non-traditional agencies coooperating in project.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Observe how facilitators from the first training group help in training subsequent groups. Can observe areas where they have learned or picked up new skills.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: There have been requests to train others in the state. A general training session was held for others.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Extension home economists are scheduled to receive training during their next state staff meeting.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: This is not a traditional extension program. This program had many geographic boundaries and different goals of the different groups involved.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Must work to keep people informed at different levels of bureaucracy in all groups involved.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Strong relationships in community are essential. Must have back-up plans and potential funders to assure program delivery.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Must maintain contact with other administrative levels in a cross-county project, and keep people informed.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Financial Forum

CITY, STATE: Omaha, Nebraska

PROGRAM AREA: Home Economics and Agricultural Economics

GOAL: To reach a new audience on matters of financial concern.

TARGET AUDIENCE: People with financial concerns.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Information not obtained.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Local bank

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Sponsor a three-part workshop on financial matters.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Topic was relatively non-traditional; help from bank also a non-traditional ally.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: People return to program, good turnout each time.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Information not obtained.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Discussed it in state association meeting.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: There are so many routine things to do that it is difficult to find time to develop innovative programs.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Funding for programs.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: We contacted many other agencies to tell them about the forum.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not obtained.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Health Choices

CITY, STATE: Cleveland, Ohio

PROGRAM AREA: Home Economics

GOAL: To develop leader training for homemakers groups in the area of health choices related to health insurance.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Homemaker groups leaders

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Information not obtained.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Grant from Cleveland Foundation

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: First year of grant to do research and to develop materials for a pilot test on fifty people. Grant was extended for nine months to refine materials, develop other materials, and conduct leadership training.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Met a stated need of extension clientele. Dealt with a subject area new to extension. Hired special staff to develop the program.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Information not obtained.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: A state specialist was assigned to critique materials. The state mailed out copies of the manuals to each county. Several state agencies used portions of the manual.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Interagency cooperation diffused materials, but the program itself was discontinued after groups had been trained.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Information not obtained.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: No funding available for program continuation.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Lots of cooperation with other agencies. State agencies helped in getting people to meetings.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: People in home extension offices were helpful.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Hmong Housekeeping Videotape

CITY, STATE: St. Paul, Minnesota

PROGRAM AREA: Home Economics

GOAL: Teach Hmong public housing residents basic housekeeping skills to avoid eviction and eviction costs.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Hmong families in public housing.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Cable public access television, interns from local college, volunteers from other community agencies, staff from public housing, and extension staff.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: In-kind contributions from cooperating agencies and volunteers.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Develop standards, coordinate resources, agency staff and volunteers, work on accurate script and culturally accepted expressions. Supervise videotape so that Hmong families can care for their homes in public housing.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: New media for this audience, first known educational Hmong video in Minnesota.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Extension was asked to help the public housing agency with a second video. Economic factors and number of Hmong evictions can be reviewed.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: The housing agency will repeat this type of program for other cultural audiences now that extension has provided the model.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Integrated into ongoing homemaking classes in housing projects.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Work through relationships with many volunteers. Coordinating cooperation among many volunteers and community agencies. Producing project in a language known to none of the project team. Relying on Hmong participants for accuracy.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Staff time, enough VCR equipment to show at other cities.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Help from many other agencies was necessary since there was no funding.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: State extension and department staff were helpful with reference publications and support and encouragement for the project.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Shoots and Roots

CITY, STATE: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PROGRAM AREA: Agriculture

GOAL: To teach people to grow and preserve food and improve their diets. People will benefit from money saved by growing plenty of food.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Low income urban community

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: City block grants; seeds and compost from local compost manufacturer.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Federal funding for the Twenty-One Cities Project.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: To promote and develop community gardens. To develop a youth program for summer gardening; train self-sufficient garden leaders; do one-on-one and light educational programs; and do demonstration plots. Work with other program areas to serve community.

NUMBERS SERVED: Since 1978 expanded garden sites from 3 to 50. The number of plots rose from 50 to 2,000.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: This taps into a clientele base in which extension is typically rather weak. There is a blend of program areas relatively unique to extension. (Good interdisciplinary relationships and efforts.)

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Over $1 million in food produced last year.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Program has continued for several years with innovations every year despite staff reductions.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Not applicable.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Political.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not applicable.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Network with many community agencies. Does a lot of community organizing.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Good interdisciplinary interaction.

NAME OF PROGRAM: American Variety Theater Company 4-H

CITY, STATE: Minneapolis, Minnesota

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: Youth development

TARGET AUDIENCE: High-risk urban youth

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Grants from many agencies, many community volunteers.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Several grants from community, foundations, and other sources.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Theatrical activities with youth. After youth acquire acceptance and confidence, then they get involved in 4-H stuff. The latest grant required youth to run the theater as a business. They have their own job descriptions. Older youth have paid jobs, newer ones take classes.

NUMBERS SERVED: Three hundred youth enrolled in 4-H theater plus many more contacts in schools and in special programs and community festivals.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: High risk audience unusual for extension to serve, unique program approach.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Waiting list of children to get into the program. Positive and supportive reviews from local newspapers. Referrals from school counselors and court system and other agencies. Evaluations and data gathered for grants. Standard measurement tools used in pre- and post-testing show improved self-esteem in youth. There are also many older youth joining the program.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Program has expanded and diversified.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Community support, networking with youth service agencies.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Prove that the people ratio is cost efficient. We spend more dollars per child than any 4-H Club, but we also spend many hours with them. A different measurement formula is needed. Trail blazing new needs as an innovative program means that the resources, answers, and physical needs have to be identified.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Fundraising, high turnover of staff in project.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: We network with many other community agencies who work with high-risk children.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: State extension provides concept support and encouragement for program. State extension staff endorse program and advocate it as a model for this target audience.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Career Education

CITY, STATE: Kansas City, Kansas

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: For children to learn about how to get jobs.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Low income children

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Information not obtained.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Department of Labor grant

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: To teach children about the process of getting a job. Run them through practice interviews and practice filling out applications. Give them self-confidence. Computer program available to help them see career interests. Field trips to a major local industry to see the range of jobs needed to keep a place going.

NUMBERS SERVED: Information not obtained.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Served audience not often reached by traditional 4-H programs.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Information not obtained.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Funding ended.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Information not applicable.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Could not get access to information needed to determine which children were eligible for the program.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Grant ran out. No funds available to continue programs in this area of the city.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Need support from county board, from director of extension, from volunteers.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not applicable.

NAME OF PROGRAM: KOTO (Kids On Their Own)

CITY, STATE: Chicago, Illinois

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: For children to gain knowledge and self-care skills that can be used in the absence of supervised care.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Volunteer instructors; 8 to 10 year olds.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: 4-H advisory council, 4-H youth advisor, 4-H community worker, horticulture and home economics advisors, and volunteers.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: One township in the area gave a matchable grant.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Recruit and train certified KOTO instructors. Give six to seven hours training in one day in six different subject areas. Instructors work with their own agencies to recruit and train children.

NUMBERS SERVED: Fifty-nine certified KOTO instructors, 919 children in fifteen months.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Goal is not to be a 4-H club, but to serve the needs of children in the manner of a special interest activity.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Children were surveyed twice by mail. Once to see how they had applied new knowledge, once to test the extent of knowledge gained. Seventy-eight percent answered questions correctly.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: There are people on a waiting list to be trained in future training sessions.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Other counties have sent agents to be trained. Two years after this program came out, a state specialist dispersed a similar program.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Money (for materials), staff time and availability.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not obtained.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: A lot of networking with other agencies happened; people from the same community also networked during training.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Interdisciplinary support in development of program materials.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Mentor Mother

CITY, STATE: Indianapolis, Indiana

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: To focus on the needs of the teenage mother. Acknowledge that as a new mom she has special needs, but still focus on her needs as a teenager.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Teenage mothers

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Child Development and Family Studies Department of the University; advisory board

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Child abuse prevention grant

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Match twenty teenage mothers with twenty mentor mothers (women over 20 years old who are mothers). Interview teenage mothers and mentors and match a teenage mom with a mentor. Give four hours of training to mentors. They see their teen mom three times a month. The whole group meets monthly at an agency of potential interest to the teen. Teams plan programs around the interests of teen mothers.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Serves a clientele not often served by extension or others. Uses extension model of using volunteers to deal with a major social problem.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Requests from around the nation for materials and training.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Program has been repeated across the nation. There has been leader training in other states and in other counties.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Agent has been on HOUR Magazine (television show with host Gary Collins), spoken at national 4-H donors conference, national 4-H meetings, and American Home Economics Association. Articles about the program have been published in extension magazines and in a publication of the National Junior League.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: There weren't a lot of developed materials. There were few resource people to turn to for help.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not available.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Other agencies joined advisory council, helped in many ways.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not obtained.

NAME OF PROGRAM: Nature Center Education; Nature Education in the Parks; Education in the Zoo; Backyard Activities; 4-H Goes to School

CITY, STATE: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: To find the kind of learning that really excites children.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Children

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: Volunteers, county extension, and joint funding with other county programs.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Information not provided.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: This is a special model for 4-H. It takes children from short-term special-interest learning activities (like the zoo or parks programs) to longer term learning such as backyard activities. It is a two-way flow: special interest groups may learn that 4-H exists as a resource and 4-H may learn that special interest areas are resources for them.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: Staff have struggled to understand their unique funding and positions in relation to 4-H. They have, over the long term, developed a model for urban 4-H programs.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Growth of the program. The demand for services exceeded capacity, so the program has expanded. County officials continue to fund these programs and expansion of programs.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: There have been requests for backyard materials by others in the state.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Through short meetings, word of mouth. Also through media and requests for materials from adjacent counties.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: Hard to understand 4-H policies; time

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Old models for 4-H. Need to redefine 4-H. We always have to explain ourselves to extension people.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Work with other county agencies, schools, parks, and volunteers.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not obtained.

NAME OF PROGRAM: School Enrichment

CITY, STATE: Kansas City, Kansas

PROGRAM AREA: 4-H

GOAL: For children in schools to learn about where food comes from.

TARGET AUDIENCE: First to fifth graders.

MAJOR SUPPORT SOURCES: State university specialists; 4-H foundation grant; school system.

SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Information not applicable.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Develop slides and package materials for elementary children. They learn the whole process of bread making, see slides on wheat growth, and mix up bread in the classroom. A kit comes with the slides, pre-measured ingredients, and aluminum baking tins.

HOW IS IT INNOVATIVE: New area of study, interdisciplinary approach.

WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS: Observations of students.

DIFFUSION OR REPEATS: Repeated in schools, waiting list for material.

METHOD OF DIFFUSION: Through school system.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: We didn't have technical expertise in areas of this program.

BARRIERS TO DIFFUSION: Information not obtained.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES: Good relations with schools.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LEVELS OF EXTENSION: Information not obtained.