

Kansas State University Libraries

## New Prairie Press

---

Adult Education Research Conference

2013 Conference Proceedings (St. Louis, MO)

---

# Giving Voice to an Important Population: Latinos and the Cooperative Extension System

Jenna B. Daniel  
*University of Georgia*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc>

 Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Administration Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Daniel, Jenna B. (2013). "Giving Voice to an Important Population: Latinos and the Cooperative Extension System," *Adult Education Research Conference*. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2013/roundtables/10>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Adult Education Research Conference by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).

# **Giving Voice to an Important Population: Latinos and the Cooperative Extension System**

Jenna B. Daniel, University of Georgia, USA

**Abstract:** As the fastest growing minority group in the United States, the Latino community is a constituency that the Cooperative Extension System is called upon to serve, and presents a challenge to the organization, its leadership, and its programmatic efforts.

## **Introduction**

In recent years, the fastest-growing group in the United States has been Latinos, with data showing that this community now accounts for one-sixth of the total U.S. population (Immigration Policy Center, April 2012). Having existed within the now defined area of the United States long before current “Americans” inhabited it, Latinos “are one of the oldest and one of the newest groups of American immigrants” (Arreola, 2004, p. 13). As this group increases in the United States, public service organizations are increasingly called upon to provide programs that meet the needs of the Latino population.

## **Relevant Literature**

Established from the belief of “empowering ordinary people through an advanced education that was excellent enough for the proudest yet open to the poorest” (Simon, 2010, p. 42), the Cooperative Extension System was created to provide education for all individual’s within the state’s boundaries who sought knowledge (Rasmussen, 1989). Knowledge historically held at the university was now offered in courses, programs, and trainings through the Cooperative Extension System.

What was a primarily agrarian society that focused mainly on agricultural and home economics endeavors has now become a “heterogeneous, urban society” (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 2002, p. 2) with a vast array of interests and needs. These changes in society are in direct relation to the United States becoming a nation of numerous cultures and ethnicities, (Bull, Cote, Warner, & McKinnie, 2004; National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 2002; Peterson, Betts, & Richmond, 2002) and today, Cooperative Extension System professionals are encountering an increasingly diverse population in the communities that they serve.

As CES’s clientele becomes more diverse, so too must its programming and services. The CES is “established and budgeted on the premise that the agency serves people...to be effective, the agency staff must be sufficiently skilled and trained to give dimension and structure to the people’s needs so that they can be defined, articulated, and acted upon” (Veri & Vonder Haar, 1970, p. 1).

In an effort to situate themselves as an organization that reflects the changing demographics of the U.S. in its clientele and workforce, the Cooperative Extension System has been central in research studies, taskforces, and strategic plans with the same objectives (Ingram, 2006; Iverson, 2008; Schaubert & Castania, 2001). Even among all of this research that exists, little of it is related to the Cooperative Extension System that speaks to the specific needs of a recently immigrated population or that

incorporates the opinion and voices of individuals from the Latino population. It is this gap that this study seeks to fill.

### **Methodology**

This qualitative research study will work to understand the needs of the recently immigrated Latino population and their perceptions of the Cooperative Extension System. The population will be identified based on Latino community groups already in existence, and focus groups will be formed. Data will be translated and transcribed. Transcribed data will be analyzed and thematically arranged. An in-depth look into the Latino population's perceptions of this organization may significantly alter the current programmatic efforts of the Cooperative Extension System.

### **Implications**

Although an array of literature is available concerning the interaction of the Cooperative Extension System and the Latino population, little empirical evidence exists that utilizes the words and voices of the Latino population. The purpose of this proposed roundtable is to explore this study and raise methodological and conceptual issues. In addition, this roundtable presents an opportunity for a collegial conversation that may enhance the purpose, methods, and process of this research.

### **References**

- Arreola, D. D. (Ed.). (2004). *Hispanic spaces, Latino places: Community and cultural diversity in contemporary America*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bull, N. H., Cote, L. S., Warner, P. D., & McKinnie, M. R. (2004). Is extension relevant for the 21st century? *Journal of Extension, 42*(6).
- Immigration Policy Center. (April 2012). Latinos in America: A demographic profile (pp. 1-6). Washington, DC: American Immigration Council.
- Ingram, P. D. (2006). The change agent states for diversity project: The catalyst team approach. *Journal of Extension, 44*(5).
- Iverson, S. V. (2008). Now is the time for change: Reframing diversity planning at land-grant universities. *Journal of Extension, 46*(1).
- National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. (2002). The extension system: A vision for the 21st century. Washington, DC: National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.
- Peterson, D. J., Betts, S. C., & Richmond, L. S. (2002). Diversity in children, youth, and family programs: Cooperative extension. *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences, 94*(2), 58-65.
- Rasmussen, W. D. (1989). *Taking the university to the people: Seventy-five years of cooperative extension* (1st ed.). Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.
- Schauber, A. C., & Castania, K. (2001). Facing issues of diversity: Rebirthing the extension service. *Journal of Extension, 39*(6).
- Simon, L. A. K. (2010). World grant universities: Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 42*(5), 42-46.
- Veri, C. C., & Vonder Haar, T. A. (1970). *Training the trainer*. St. Louis, MO: Extension Division: University of Missouri.