The Journal of Extension

Volume 61 | Number 1 Article 4

5-4-2023

Maximizing the First-Year Planning Period for Scholarly Publications: Implications for Prospective CYFAR Grant Recipients

Sothy Eng
University of Hawaii, Manoa, sothy@hawaii.edu

Manca Sustarsic
University of Hawaii at Manoa, msustars@hawaii.edu

Nancy Ooki
University of Hawaii at Manoa, ooki@hawaii.edu

Heather Greenwood
University of Hawaii at Manoa, heather8@hawaii.edu

Christine Hanakawa
University of Hawaii at Manoa, chanakaw@hawaii.edu

Recommended Citation

Eng, S., Sustarsic, M., Ooki, N., Greenwood, H., & Hanakawa, C. (2023). Maximizing the First-Year Planning Period for Scholarly Publications: Implications for Prospective CYFAR Grant Recipients. *The Journal of Extension, 61*(1), Article 4. https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.61.01.04

JOURNAL OF Extension Ideas at Work Volume 61, Issue 1, 2023

Maximizing the First-Year Planning Period for Scholarly Publications: Implications for Prospective CYFAR Grant Recipients

Sothy Eng[1], Manca Sustarsic[1], Nancy Ooki[1], Heather Greenwood[1], and Christine Hanakawa[1]

AUTHORS: [1]University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Abstract. One of CYFAR's unique features is the built-in planning year for all grant recipients. We present our evaluation team's approach during year 1 to establish a foundation and plan for scholarly publications during funding years 2–5. The systematic literature review provided the team with a better understanding of the culture and context of the project's target population. Collaboration between PI/Co-PI and Evaluator served as a powerful tool to achieving this goal. Not only does this model benefit future CYFAR grant recipients' and Extension professionals' curriculum development and program evaluation, it can also inform recruitment efforts and community partnership development.

INTRODUCTION

The Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Grant Program was created in 1991 by the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CREES) and is now housed within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The program's purpose is to support sustainable community-based projects that promote positive developmental outcomes among vulnerable children, youth, and families. Furthermore, CYFAR provides its project staff with mentoring, problem solving, professional development, and technical assistance (USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, n.d.).

This Ideas at Work paper discusses the evaluation team's strategy for developing a scholarly publication in the first-year planning period of the five-year CYFAR-funded project Creating a Village (the Village). The Village is a multi-level educational intervention in Hawai'i supported through the incorporation of several positive youth development models.

One of CYFAR's unique features allows grant recipients to use their first year to plan for the program implementation, including connecting with local organizations and schools for participant recruitment, finalizing the educational intervention, and hiring and training staff to manage project sites. These activities are conducted by the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) while the Evaluator obtains approval of the evaluation and data collection protocol. In this paper, we show that the planning year provides an opportunity for the Evaluator to go beyond data collection planning to include peer-reviewed scholarly manuscripts (Braverman, 2020; Wilkinson & Carroll, 2019). This academic approach provides the team with a richer background and context of the current state of research to include methods, measures, and youth development frameworks that are applicable to the population the project serves.

YEAR-1 EVALUATION MODEL

The typical role of an evaluator is to conduct summative evaluation that measures outcomes based on the pre-determined goals (Rossi et al., 2004) as well as formative evaluation that offers suggestions for future program

improvement (Jayaratne, 2016; Patton, 2014). While Braverman (2020) argues that "evaluations also can contribute to disciplinary knowledge about program theory," in recent years, limited funding of Extension programming has required evaluators to report beyond basic outcomes (Franz & Townson, 2008; Lamm et al., 2013). Wilkinson and Carroll (2019) note that generating peer-reviewed academic products is one of the tasks expected by Extension professionals to contribute to knowledge dissemination. Our experience suggests that the Evaluator has the potential to play a contributor role that expands beyond a typical program evaluation.

CYFAR's first-year planning period was a timely opportunity to examine scholarly work and to create a bridge between the literature and program implementation by enriching the implementation team with comprehensive research and best practices relevant to the population the Village serves. Our evaluation team conducted a systematic literature review of studies conducted in the past decade among the Pacific youth, resulting in a manuscript ready for a journal submission. In addition to best practices, the literature review informed the Village on recruitment and partnership development that aligned with Bovitz et al.'s (2018) argument that it is important not to have a "preconceived notion of the methods you will use to develop and implement programming when working with a new community."

The evaluation team met weekly to create a structure of our systematic literature review and discuss the review process and progress. We first determined the program scope, demographics, and geographic areas related to our program characteristics and the population that we serve, limiting ourselves to studies published in the past decade. We then examined the relationship between youth development and program/research outcomes among Pacific youth by synthesizing the types of programs, research, methods, measures, frameworks, and major outcomes presented in each study. Table 1 depicts the step-by-step approach to the literature review that we employed.

Findings of our review pointed to the importance of cultural and community engagement for Pacific youth (Okamoto et al., 2014). These adolescents are overwhelmingly subject to disparities related to education and health, and as a result, they exhibit increased risky behavior (Helm & Okamoto, 2013). The review informed us of the importance of cultural integration in the curriculum to implicitly connect youth to the community and to the program, thus resulting in a more successful program implementation.

RESOURCES NEEDED

Regular team meetings helped to build relationships with team members and establish a dynamic environment in which all members contributed to and learned from the dialogue (Kelsey & Stafne, 2012). Rossi and colleagues (2004) note that although Extension professionals may understand the theory as related to the program, working closely with program staff is crucial for everyone to understand the reasons why a program is believed to work. Moreover, the evaluator's credibility "depends on a mutually respectful relationship" with the project leaders to be able to inform practice within a local context (Patton, 2011, p. 25). Thus, a close collaboration between PI/Co-PI and Evaluator and the team's support for scholarly activity served as a basis to fund a 20-hour-a-week Graduate Assistant (GA) position to assist the Evaluator.

Our team's PI, Co-PI and Evaluator saw the value of hiring a doctoral student GA to be a key member of the evaluation team. Besides data collection and analysis skills, the GA position requirements included research experience and scholarly writing skills. We recognized that doctoral students are potential candidates because of their academic experience and commitment to scholarly work.

IMPLICATIONS

The Village evaluation approach prioritizes the CYFAR's research element and has the potential to increase the academic rigor of funding years two through five. The authors believe that future CYFAR grant recipients can adopt this model (Figure 1) to maximize the first-year planning phase for potential scholarly publications.

Joint collaboration between PI/Co-PI and Evaluator can serve as a powerful tool to contribute to the literature, which is useful for both academics and practitioners. PIs and evaluators may find this model particularly helpful as they develop curriculum and plan for program evaluations. Since building trust with community stakeholders is one of the key factors for developing successful and sustainable programs (Bovitz et al., 2018), our approach equips county-based Extension faculty and professionals with an understanding of the culture of a community, which can positively affect recruitment efforts and community partnership development.

Table 1. Summary of Our Literature Review Approach

Step	Task	Process description	Outcomes
1	Identify criteria	• What is the gap in the existing literature? • What is the objective? • Who is our target population? • What type of programs/research are we interested in? • Where are the research/programs implemented?	Identified inclusion criteria: • Article reported findings or evaluation of youth programs for youth populations in the Pacific; • Article reported findings of a program or research study among at-risk youth; • Article focused primarily on youth and adolescents (ages 10–19); and • Article was published between 2010 and 2020.
2	Develop search protocol	• What terminology can be used for our search keywords? • What Boolean operators can we use for each database?	Our search protocol included combination of: • Place names ("Pacific Island*" OR "Hawaii*"); • Relevant subjects (Youth OR Adolescence OR "Early adolescence" OR "youth at risk" OR "at risk youth"); and • Program types ("Youth program" OR "mentorship" OR "mentor* program").
3	Identify library databases and/or specific journals	• What databases do we have access to? • What databases will yield results most relevant to our review? • What journals publish studies relevant to our review?	Identified library databases, in the fields of: • Education; • Psychology; • Medicine; and • Social sciences. Identified journals that focus on youth development: • Journal of Youth and Adolescence; • Journal of Extension; and • Journal of Early Adolescence.
4	Conduct electronic database/journal search	• How do we restrict the results to review only most relevant sources?	We limited our results to: • Resource type: articles; • Peer-reviewed journals; • Dates published: from 2010 to 2020; and • English language. The database search yielded 612 results.
5	Screen abstracts	• What studies do not meet our criteria, and thus, we can eliminate?	Following the abstract review, we eliminated: • Articles that did not meet our inclusion criteria; and • Duplicate articles across databases. We retained 29 articles.
6	Identify additional sources	• Are there other sources referenced in the studies we retained that are relevant to our review?	We searched within the journals of those articles based on similar keywords and inspected the reference lists to identify additional sources. We identified 10 additional articles.
7	Review full-text	• What sources are, in fact, relevant to our review?	After an in-depth reading of the 39 retained articles, we further determined their eligibility to our review. The final, eligible number of articles reduced to 35.

Table 1. (*continued*)

Step	Task	Process description	Outcomes
8	Analyze content	What tools can help us extract information from each study? E.g. data extraction coding sheet, coding software	We developed a literature review coding template and spreadsheet that was filled out for each reviewed article. These tools helped us record: Research/program characteristics; Methodologies used; Youth characteristics; The level of youth risk; Location and timing of research/program; Outcome goals and measures; Implications. We used the templates for data synthesis and analysis.
9	Summarize main findings	How do we summarize main characteristics, commonalities, and differences across all reviewed studies? E.g. thematic analysis, statistical analysis	In our data analysis, we first approached data inductively to identify patterns and codes that emerged in our raw data. Second, we employed deductive approach to compare identified codes with the youth developmental outcomes.
10	Write-up	How do we connect literature review to the main purpose of our review? How do we highlight specific characteristics that we find important? E.g. visual presentation (tables, figures) What implications does the review have for Extension professionals and practitioners?	Finally, we wrote up our findings in a way that directly corresponded to our research questions. The literature review revealed three main youth developmental outcomes dominating the studies: health and wellbeing, social-emotional development, and cognitive development. Using a table, we summarized the types of programs/research and theoretical frameworks used in the reviewed studies. Implications suggested that youth development programs should draw upon cultural resources and a sense of belonging, the two most effective protective factors identified. This may lead to positive cognitive changes as youth make the decision to enter postsecondary education and the workforce.

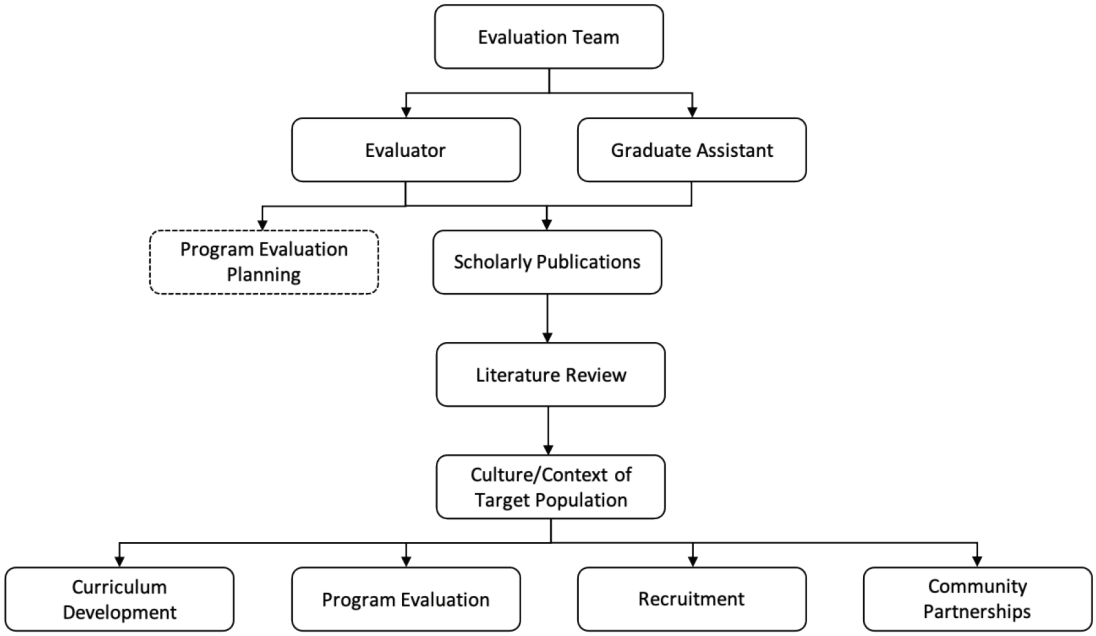

Figure 1. Year-1 evaluation model.

REFERENCES

Bovitz, L., Staffen, M., Eppinger, L., & Kesely, A. (2018). Best practices for establishing positive 4-H youth development programming in urban at-risk communities. *Journal of Extension, 56*(1). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol56/iss1/6/

Braverman, M. T. (2020). Publishing Extension evaluations in academic research journals: Some recommendations. *Journal of Extension, 58*(2). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol58/iss2/4/

Franz, N. K., & Townson, L. (2008). The nature of complex organizations: The case of Cooperative Extension. In M.T. Braverman, M. Engle, M.E. Arnold, & R.A. Rennekamp (Eds.), *Program evaluation in a complex organizational system: Lessons from Cooperative Extension*. New Directions for Evaluation, 120, 5–14.

Helm, S., & Okamoto, S.(2013). Developing the Ho'ouna Pono substance use prevention curriculum: Collaborating with Hawaiian youth and communities. *Hawai'i Journal of Medicine & Public Health: A Journal of Asia Pacific Medicine & Public Health, 72*(2), 66–69. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23463854/

Jayaratne, K. S. U. (2016). Tools for formative evaluation: Gathering the information necessary for program improvement. *Journal of Extension, 54*(1). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol54/iss1/7/

Kelsey, K. D., & Stafne, E. T. (2012). A model for evaluating eXtension communities of practice. *Journal of Extension, 50*(5). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol50/iss5/1/

Lamm, A. J., Israel, G. D., & Diehl, D. (2013). A national perspective on the current evaluation activities in Extension. *Journal of Extension, 51*(1). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol51/iss1/20/

Okamoto, S., Helm, S., Pel, S., McClain, L., Hill, A., & Hayashida, J. (2014). Developing empirically based, culturally grounded drug prevention interventions for Indigenous youth populations. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research, 41*(1), 8–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11414-012-9304-0

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. The Guilford Press.

Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (7th ed.). Sage Publications.

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. (n.d.). *Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR)*. https://nifa.usda.gov/program/children-youth-and-families-risk-cyfar

Wilkinson, D. L. & Carroll, J. B. (2019). Inclusive scholarship: Extension program participants as poster coauthors. Journal of Extension, 57(3), https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol57/iss3/12/