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Mechanisms of local participation in extension programming : a study of local participation in Massachusetts extension activities.

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MECHANISMS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION PROGRAMMING:
A STUDY OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN
MASSACHUSETTS EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

A Dissertation Presented

by

JOHN C. PONTIUS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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School of Education

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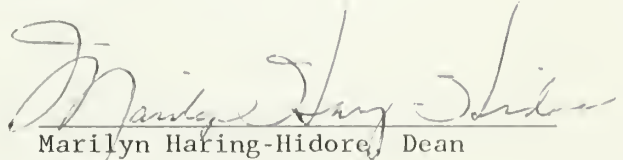
David R. Evans, Chairperson of Committee

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David Kinsey, Member

Robert Christensen, Member

Robert Christensen, Member

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School of Education

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ABSTRACT

MECHANISMS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION PROGRAMMING:
A STUDY OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN
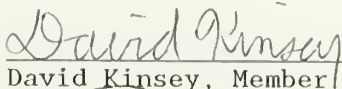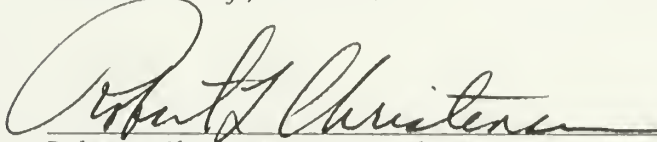MASSACHUSETTS EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 1989

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M.A. OHIO UNIVERSITY

Ed.D UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by: Dr. David R. Evans

The focus of this study is the examination of local or client par-
ticipation in Cooperative Extension programming activities, specifi-
cally program development and planning, in Massachusetts. To accom-
plish this a general model of the process of participation is devel-
loped based on a review of literature concerning participation.
Writers who have dealt with extension approaches such as Rogers,
Mosher, Bennett and Oakley are consulted for what they consider to be
important dimensions of participation within extension. Writers such
as Cohen and Uphoff and Kinsey are examined for additional perspectives
from rural development and nonformal education.

The model relating to program planning and development is then
applied to a variety of mechanisms used by Extension staff in
Massachusetts to include local participation in their programming
activities. The mechanism used by Extension field staff for including
local participation are identified and analyzed to determine which
allow for effective local participation. Several cases are then
examined using the portion of the general model applicable to program
planning and development. The purpose of this examination is to
determine how local participation occurs within the context of an

often used mechanism for client participation, the program advisory committee. The case studies that are analyzed include one indepth case and four shorter cases. All are cases of Extension agents who are working in western Massachusetts with program advisory committees.

Recommendations are made in the final Chapter concerning how an extension system might enhance the effectiveness of local participation. Recommendations focus on what agents and administration can do to enhance local participation. Recommendations include a mentoring system to help agents who are not familiar with participation, the need for autonomy for agents working with participatory groups, and the need for flexibility on Extension's part for what participatory groups do and for the processes they follow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Participation of client groups in nonformal education programs is
not a new idea. Writers have examined participation in nonformal edu-
cation from what many would think is every perspective. Local partici-
patory mechanisms have been built into many development projects and
programs in all parts of the planet. The Cooperative Extension
Service, the nonformal education branch of the land-grant colleges in
this country, historically invites local participation in its edica-
tional programming and many feel such participation is crucial to the
Extension mission. Claar identifies local participation as important
to the development of any extension system.[1] A. T. Mosher identifies
what he feels is the essence of Extension in America as the inclusion
of local participation in Extension programming activities.[2]

Extension in America has been criticized for an apparent lack of
contemporary relevance. Extension is seen as either providing programs
that are trivial or not focusing enough on agriculture.[3] The Extension
system's response has been to formulate national issues that have been
identified by farm leaders, politicians, researchers, and others as
important. These national issues are:

 1. The identification of and support for alternative agricultural
    opportunities.

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[1]J. B. Claar, D.T. Dahl, Lowell H. Watts, The Cooperative
Extension Service: An Adaptable Model for Developing Countries,
(Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, no date), p. 13.

[2]Arthur T. Mosher, Thinking About Rural Development, (New York:
Agricultural Development Council, Inc., 1976), pp. 132-134.

[3]Donald Lambro, "Uncle Sam's Ten Worst Taxpayer Rip-offs,"
Reader's Digest 129, (July 1986): 63

2. The building of human capital among youth.

3. The support for and improvement of the competitiveness and profitability of American agriculture.

4. The conservation and management of natural resources.

5. The maintenance of the family and its economic well-being.

6. The improvement of the nutrition, diet and health of Americans.

7. The revitalization of rural America.

8. The maintenance of America's water quality.[4]

These national issues have in turn been presented to state Extension offices as guidelines for the focus and approach to programming activities. The issues have won congressional support. Now the problem for Extension county staff is to find a way to provide programs both relevant to their counties and related to the national issues.

Extension agents in the United States are confronted with the need to provide programs that are relevant to their counties. These programs, however, are to be based on a set of nationally developed issues. Writers on Extension such as Claar, Kelsey, Hearnes and Mosher state that local participation is the key to Extension in America. Is local participation in Extension programming a means to increasing the relevance of national Extension programming issues?

When Extension agents are asked how they include local participation in their activities almost all have an answer, but are they really discussing participation? Extension agents need a means to clarify their conception and perception of local participation. Participation

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[4]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, Cooperative Extension System National Initiatives, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, January 1988), pp. 4-5.

has several dimensions to it and for Extension agents to be able to understand and make effective use of local participation they need to be familiar with these dimensions.

Participation includes such issues as who participates, how do they participate, in what do they participate, what influence do participants have over programming decisions, to what ends can participation be effectively employed and what mechanisms currently used by Extension agents are effective in allowing for local participation. Writers have discussed these issues as discrete entities. Some writers such as Oakley[5] and Cohen and Uphoff[6] have discussed these issues as interrelated issues. How these issues fit together into a model that can be used to analyze local participation in Extension is a unique and necessary departure. Such a model can be used to familiarize agents with the various components of local participation and aid them in allowing for effective local participation in their programming activities.

Thus Extension agents find themselves in an era in which their potential audiences are stressing the need for Extension programming to be more relevant to local needs. The national level is trying to respond to this need by the development of a set of national issues on which Extension programming is to be focused. Agents need to make these issues locally relevant. Participation of local populations in

[5]Peter Oakley, The Monitoring and Evaluation of Participation in Rural Development, (Draft report for FAO, photo-copied, November, 1983), pp. 9-10.

[6]John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff, Rural Development Participation: Concepts and Measures for Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation, (Ithaca: Rural Development Committee, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1977), pp. 5-10.

the development, implementation and evaluation of an agent's programming activities may assist the agent in localizing national issues and being locally relevant. However, Extension agents lack a complete understanding of the dimensions and uses of client participation in Extension programming. Hence, a model is needed that describes participation in terms of Extension programming activities to help agents in understanding the various dimensions of participation and how it can be used. The purpose of the model would be to aid in the analysis of participatory efforts to determine where participation is working or not working and what dimensions of participation need reinforcement or improvement.

Purpose of the Study

This study will be concerned with how local participation in Extension programming activities takes place in the Massachusetts experience. The study will develop a model of participation and investigate the mechanisms used by Extension staff that encourage local participation in Extension programming. The mechanisms which allow for effective participation and the implications in using these mechanisms will also be identified and discussed. This study will focus on these issues because of several factors: the historical need on the part of extension systems and agents for effective mechanisms of local participation; extension practitioners need to be clear about what constitutes participation; and the need to be clear about the circumstances surrounding the use of particular participation mechanisms by an extension system in the United States.

Given these factors this study proposes to answer the following primary question:

4

How well and under what conditions does Extension in Massachusetts provide for effective local participation in Extension programming activities?

The key word in this question is "effective" and a preliminary defini-
tion of effective participation would include such ideas as: partici-
pation that meets Extension's needs; participation that helps develop
useful educational activities which meet the needs of Extension
clients; participation that meets the needs of those contributing
their efforts to help Extension; and participation that is effective in
the decision making process associated with programming activities.

In attempting to answer this main question the study will answer a
set of implementing questions the answers to which, when taken
together, should provide an answer to the primary question. The
implementing questions for this study are:

How has Extension's historical and structural development enhanced
or limited local participation in Extension programming activi-
ties?

What model would be useful in identifying effective local partici-
pation in Extension programming activities?

What mechanisms are used by Massachusetts Extension staff to pro-
vide local participation in programming activities?

How effective are mechanisms of local participation in Extension
programming in Massachusetts and what conditions limit or enhance
their effectiveness?

What actions should be taken by an extension system to enhance
local participation in its programming activities?

These particular implementing questions are being addressed for a
variety of reasons. How Cooperative Extension developed and its orga-
nizational structure may have important consequences for whether and
how local participation in Extension programming takes place. Without
a tradition of participation both Extension practitioners and potential
audiences might have little inclination for participation. If the

5

organization's structure limits participation, the study, in determining this, should be able to make recommendations regarding structural changes that could enhance participation.

Developing a general model that describes participation and aids in its analysis in terms of Cooperative Extension activities will be particularly useful. Such a model will provide a concrete base and point of departure for any discussion of mechanisms used to encourage participation. Rather than talking about abstractions and conceptions that might be foreign to an Extension agent, the model will be focused on the stages involved in an Extension approach to education.

Massachusetts Extension agents, it is assumed, approach local participation in their programming activities similarly to agents in other states. The identification of the mechanisms that these agents use to encourage participation will provide a set of examples to analyze using the model developed in this study and will form the basis for answering the fourth question. Answering the fourth question will provide the reader and Extension workers with a basis for the selection of mechanisms that will allow for local participation based on the effectiveness of those mechanisms.

In answering the final implementing question a set of recommendations will be developed that would lead to the enhancement of local participation in Extension programming activities. Recommendations will focus on how to take advantage of both the model that has been developed and the mechanisms analyzed in the study to enhance local participation in Extension programming activities.

In the second Chapter of this study the context of Extension in the United States is examined. There is a brief overview of the

historical development of Extension in the United States. Within the context of the overview the role of farmers and farm activists in providing for educational opportunities for farmers is presented. In the remainder of the chapter there is a presentation of the organization of Extension at both the federal and state levels in the United States. This presentation includes a description of the structure of Cooperative Extension in Massachusetts which is the context within which Extension staff work and in which they provide opportunities for local participation in their programming activities.

In Chapter Three a general model of participation is developed drawing from writers on participation in such contexts as Extension community development, adult education and general social and economic development in LDCs. The model is developed as a means for examining and analyzing participation as it might occur at any stage of any Extension activity. Criteria for participation are developed to help in determining the scope, influence and effectiveness of participation. These will serve as a basis for the analysis and determination of the quality of the participation that takes place in the various mechanisms used for local participation by Extension field staff in program development and planning.

Chapter Four provides an analysis of data collected in interviews with field agents of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension in the four counties of western Massachusetts. Part of the general model developed in Chapter Three is used to analyze five alternative mechanisms that are used by Extension staff to include local participation in their program planning and development activities. Program planning and development activities were selected for study for several reasons,

they set the course for activities that are to be implemented, they allow for a narrower setting for the study, they can be a discrete set of activities, and participation of local people in Extension activities is most likely to occur here. The Chapter compares the five mechanisms employed by Extension staff to include local participation and identifies those that have the potential for allowing high quality effective local participation.

Chapter Five examines five case studies of the use of one of the mechanisms of participation, the program advisory committee. One case study is extensive and the other four are very brief. The cases are set in western Massachusetts. The focus of the Chapter is an analysis of how this mechanism of participation is used by Extension staff and the purposes to which it is put. The Chapter ends with comments on the effectiveness of the mechanism, selection of participants and methods that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the program advisory committee.

The final Chapter draws some general conclusions from the study and makes some recommendations for Extension administrators and staff interested in the mechanisms for local participation that are examined in this study.

Significance of the Study

This study is unique in its development of a general model of participation and the application of that model to Extension activities in Massachusetts. Extension in the United States, although expected to encourage local participation in its programming activities, has received little study as to how this is accomplished. Writers on participation have not examined whether and how Extension in the United

States allows for participation. Extension agents are expected to encourage participation, but they are often unable to define the dimensions of participation and its potential uses. This study is significant in that it applies the work of writers on participation to Extension in Massachusetts and analyzes whether participation is accomplished and how. The model that is developed is important because it will provide Extension workers with a means to discuss and analyze their efforts in encouraging local participation.

Limitations of the Study

While a general model of participation would include all phases or stages of programming activities the scope suggested by such a model for a single study would be too large to be completed with the time or resources available to the study. Thus the study of particular instances of Extension activities is limited to program planning and development.

Group dynamics and its role in participation is very important. Whether a group achieves a high level of participation and performs effectively depends a great deal upon the dynamics of the group. The role of the agent in establishing a dynamic that enhances the effectiveness of participation is paramount. However, the consideration of group dynamics is beyond the scope of this study. Consideration of group dynamics will receive some comment, but it is not included in the focus of this study.

The study is limited to the Extension agents working in the western four counties of Massachusetts. In terms of the demographics of the audience in the region, these counties provide a fair representation of the potential state-wide audience for Massachusetts Exten-

sion. The organization, the activities conducted by field staff, and the staffing of various positions in these counties is consistent with the organization and programs of Extension across Massachusetts.

While there are committees organized on both state-wide and regional bases by Extension staff to advise state-wide or regional programming, they will not be included in this study. The focus of this study is on mechanisms used locally by field staff to include participation in program planning and development. The term "local" is used to describe the county or sub-county level of Extension programming activities.

The word extension, when capitalized, refers to the Cooperative Extension system in Massachusetts and the United States, the context should make it clear which of the two is being referred to. In lower case "extension" refers to extension education and the activities associated with extension education. Extension systems other than Extension will be referred to as "extension systems."

Methodology of the Study

Chapters Two and Three are based on literature reviews of Extension and participation. Chapters Four and Five are based on data collected from interviews of Extension field staff in western Massachusetts. Interview data was collected for this study by means of several different interview schedules which can be found in the Appendix. The interview schedules are based on the dimensions of participation that are identified in the model developed in Chapter Three. Thus the collection of field data provided a test of the utility of the model of participation in analyzing mechanisms used by Extension staff to allow local participation.

The purpose of the first interview schedule was to determine the mechanisms used by Extension staff in western Massachusetts to encourage local participation in their program planning and development activities. Twenty of the thirty-three western Massachusetts agents were interviewed by telephone to determine whether and how they included local participation in their planning activities. Agents were selected for this interview on the basis of location and Extension program area. Equal representation of each county office as well as equal representation of each Extension program area was achieved. Agents with one year or less experience were excluded from the survey as it was assumed that they had not had sufficient time to establish mechanisms for allowing local participation. This meant the exclusion of two of the thirty-three agents.

Seven of the twenty agents interviewed by telephone were selected for further interviews that were conducted face-to-face. These interviews were conducted to determine how various mechanisms for local participation are used by these agents. Agents for these interviews were selected using the following criteria:

Each of the four western Massachusetts counties must be represented.

Each Extension program area must be represented.

Each agent must use at least one mechanism to encourage local participation.

The second set of interviews had several goals. The first purpose of these interviews was to determine the role of county boards of trustees in agents' program planning and development. The second purpose was to investigate how these agents used other mechanisms to include local participation in their program planning and development

activities. The program planning and development stage of the general
model developed in Chapter Three was used as the basis for this set of
interviews. Thus these interviews became a test of how well the model
could be used for the investigation and analysis of local participation
in Extension program planning.

A third set of interviews was conducted with four participants in
the Berkshire Food and Land Council, the group that is the major case
study of Chapter Five. Again the model of participation was used as
the basis for the structure of the interviews conducted with this
group. The purpose of these interviews was to provide a perspective
besides that of the agent on the quality and effectiveness of partici-
pation in the Berkshire Food and Land Council. Three of these par-
ticipants are moderately to very active in the council's activities,
the other one is less active. Each participant was interviewed
separately at either their home or place of work.

A Final Comment

Writers on nonformal education often approach participation from
the perspective of empowerment. Cooperative Extension does not always
share the perspective of these writers. Empowerment, while important
to many who work in Extension, is not the focus of Extension. Informa-
tion transfer and education to efficiently meet the economic, social
and environmental needs of the people it serves is given in a recent
U.S. Department of Agriculture publication as the purpose of Exten-
sion's activities.[7] While empowerment might be implied by this
statement the more explicit statement is Extension's need to achieve

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[7]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, Cooperative
Extension System National Initiatives, p. 3.

efficiency in its programming activities. For many in Extension participation becomes a means for improving community political ties and for effective management of educational activities. For some in Extension participation is also a means for empowering the people they work with besides providing them with the means to information and education. Empowerment is not explicitly explored in this study, the dimensions of participation are explored in the study. The model used for the exploration of these dimensions will provide the Extension worker with a means for analyzing and discussing participation. A clearer understanding of the dimensions of participation will aid the Extension agent in using participatory mechanisms, whether the agent's focus is the empowerment of clients, more effectively managed programs, or enhanced community connections.

CHAPTER II

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Cooperative Extension system is a relatively complex nonformal educational system, funded by national, state and county budgets, that is part of a formal educational system, the land-grant university system. The Cooperative Extension system refers to the national system of state Extension Services located at land-grant institutions that receive some coordination and a portion of funding via the United States Department of Agriculture and its Extension Service division.

Each state's Extension organization is associated with the state's land-grant college and relies upon knowledge generated within or collected by the researchers of the land-grant college as a basis for educaional programming to a wide and varied clientele. Educational programming is intended to be responsive to local educational needs or problems that are identified by County Extension agents who work at the county level within a particular state Extension organization. Thus Extension is a nonformal education system, funded by several governmental jurisdictions, administered within a formal education system, staffed at county, multi-county, and state levels, providing education at local, sometimes rural and sometimes urban, levels. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of the historical development of Cooperative Extension, the role of farmers in that development, and the structural organization of Extension at Federal and state levels. This outline will provide a context for examining mechanisms of local participation in a later chapter.

<u>Roots of the Land-Grant System</u>

A set of Congressional acts established the land-grant system.
These acts started with the Morrill Act of 1862 and ended with the
Smith-Lever Act of 1914. These laws were promulgated because of the
pressures put on politicians by the agricultural community of the
nineteenth and early twentieth century. The agricultural community of
the day was able to organize and educate itself and establish a tradi-
tion of political participation and advocacy. Their efforts contri-
buted to the democratization of the scientific and scholarly agenda of
what was to be the land grant system.[1] A brief description of the
early educational and organizational efforts of the agricultural
community follows.

From the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries there were
many formats used for farmer education among them were: agricultural
societies, farmers' institutes, the Grange, and other non-institutional
formats. In 1811 a Western Massachusetts farmer, Elkanah Watson, orga-
nized the first agricultural society in the country in Pittsfield, the
Berkshire Agricultural Society. This idea became quickly popular and
by the late 1860's there were over 1300 agriculture societies providing
educational opportunities-successful farmers discussing their methods-
as well as organizational opportunities.[2] Local agricultural societies
led directly to the establishment of state agricultural societies and

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[1]George R. McDowell and David C. Wilcock, "Lessons From
Institution Building Efforts in Africa: US University Experiences
Building Colleges of Agriculture," paper presented at conference of
Association of U.S. University Directors of International Programs,
Fort Collins, July 8-10, 1986, pp. 6-7.

[2]Roy V. Scott, <u>The Reluctant Farmer</u> (Urbana: University of
Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 10-15.

later to the creation of state boards and departments of agriculture.
Thus agricultural societies provided education and a powerful structure
that could speak on behalf of farmers to the rest of society.[3]

Agricultural fairs were another early form of education for
farmers. Again Elkanah Watson was responsible for an agricultural
first as he organized the first of what has been known as the modern
agricultural fair.[4] In 1810 Watson and over two dozen other Berkshire
farmers displayed their livestock, providing information on their
husbandry methods to viewers.

Agricultural journals were another form of early agricultural edu-
cation. In the nineteenth century over 3,600 farm periodicals appeared
in North America. These journals focused on new crops, improved
tillage methods, fertilization, breeding of livestock, and other
appropriate topics.[5]

The Grange was an important force in organizing farmers as well as
providing educational opportunities for farmers. The Grange was the
first example of farmers' organizations such as the Farmers'
Educational and Cooperative Union and the American Society of Equity
which provided not only education but put pressure on government to
improve the lot of farmers through, among other methods, education.[6]

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[3]Lincoln D. Kelsey and Cannon C. Hearne, Cooperative Extension
Work (Ithaca: Comstock Publishing Associates, 1955), p. 12.

[4]Scott, The Reluctant Farmer, p. 15.

[5]Ibid., pp. 18-22.

[6]Ibid., pp. 39-60.

<u>The Morrill Act</u>

All of this activity at grass roots level accomplished more than just providing education to farmers. Politicians were persuaded to support agricultural knowledge through the provision of funds and institutions for the study of agricultural science. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided grants of public land to states for the establishment and maintenance of agricultural colleges. There was to be at least one college per state that would focus on the branches of learning relating to agriculture and the mechanic arts.[7] A second Morrill Act of 1890 required that southern states make provisions by which Blacks might share in the grants by creating the "1890 institutions," colleges of agriculture for black students. Thus the first function of a land grant instiution, resident instruction on improved agricultural methods, was established by the Morrill Act.

Thus, the beginnings of the "Land Grant System" were established by the Morrill Act of 1862. Colleges were established to educate farm children in modern agricultural methods. Although the colleges were built, it was soon recognized that practical research was needed to support the teaching of agriculture as well as meet the needs of the farm community. The Hatch Act was passed in 1887 and it provided funds for research on scientific agriculture. The Hatch Act created what is known as the "Experiment Station", the second functional aspect of a land grant institution, which motivated faculty to conduct research to improve agriculture. The Hatch Act stated explicitly that the results of experiment station research should be made available to farmers.[8]

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[7]Kelsey and Hearne, <u>Cooperative Extension Work</u>, pp. 27-28.

[8]Scott, <u>The Reluctant Farmer</u>, p. 138.

Almost from the beginning agricultural colleges and their experiment stations tried to reach farmers by means of bulletins that described the results of their research. There were a variety of problems that arose: distribution of bulletins was difficult; farmers were not able to understand the technical content of the bulletins; not all farmers were able to read; few farmers were inclined to make an attempt to get the bulletins much less act on the information contained in them. Leaders of land-grant institutions searched for ways of being able to influence large numbers of ordinary farmers. Beyond bulletins attempts were made to develop correspondence courses and to answer questions directly by letters to farmers. Attempts to provide education for farmers was uncoordinated, haphazard and spotty among the land-grant colleges operating in 1900 and farmers as well as land-grant leaders were unhappy over the poor educational programs provided farmers.[9] Kenyon Butterfield, President of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, chaired the extension work committee of the land-grant colleges and played a major role in the creation of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

The Smith Lever Act

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the Extension Service, a national system that was to be a county, state, federal partnership for farmer education. The Extension Service was to be part of the land-grant system, the third functional role of the agricultural colleges. Under the act the scope of Extension's effort was to cover the entire

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[9]Ibid., pp. 138-139.

rural field: farm production and marketing and the development of better home, community and social conditions.[10]

The Smith-Lever Act was amended in 1953, but the mandate that it holds for Extension has remained primarily the same since 1914: Extension exists to give instruction in agriculture and home economics and other related subjects to persons not attending the agriculture colleges by means of demonstrations, publications, and otherwise.[11] The principal provisions of the act establish a complex nonformal education organization. The provisions include: Cooperative effort at local, state, and federal levels; wide scope of work; work to be educational in nature; an emphasis on the demonstration method of education; federal funds based on a formula that considers rural and farm population; and a set of identified limitations for the spending of federal funds.[12]

The cooperative character of the mission of Extension has a state Extension organization being necessarily responsive in at least three directions at once: local, state and federal. Extension activities are mandated to be focused on local (generally county in scope) needs, but must be carried on in connection with the land grant college. Extension administration at the land-grant college must agree to local Extension activities and summarize the local plans into a state plan and then forward them on to USDA-Extension Service administrators for their approval. Today this procedure of plans passing up the ladder to Washington is carried out on a four year basis. Extension at the USDA

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[10]Kelsey and Hearne, Cooperative Extension Works, pp. 81-82.

[11]Ibid., pp. 29-31.

[12]Ibid., pp. 29-31.

must approve these plans before federal funds will be released to the state Extension organization.

The Smith-Lever Act provided for a wide scope of work for Extension. Educational activities were to be carried out with people not attending or resident at the land grant college. The wording of the act allows for practically any type of educational activity: providing instruction in agriculture, home economics and subjects related thereto.[13] Today the broad language of the Smith-Lever Act, as amended, allows for less rural States such as Massachusetts to work with more urban clientele without being concerned about not having a specific mandate to do so. Such programs as home horticulture, stress management and nutritional planning, often seen as urban programs, fall within the Smith-Lever mandate.

Extension's specific role is that of instruction. Extension work is a function of the land-grant college and the Morrill Act provides that these colleges are to teach. The Smith-Lever Act specifies that Extension's work shall consist of the giving of instruction.[14] Thus technical assistance or the making of recommendations, while often performed by Extension workers, is not necessarily the role of Extension.

The Smith-Lever Act goes so far as to suggest instructional methods for Extension activities: instruction "through field demonstrations, publications, and otherwise."[15] The emphasis on demonstration is because of the work of Seaman A. Knapp and his work in

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[13]Scott, The Reluctant Farmer, p. 311.

[14]Ibid., p. 311.

[15]Ibid., p. 311.

farmer education. Knapp used the field demonstration method with great success in the South in the early years of this century.[16] His using farmers to operate and maintain field demonstrations, his belief that object lessons were the only effective way to influence farmers, and his belief that field agents should have farming experience permanently influenced the shape and methods of Extension work.[17]

Federal funds to state Extension programs are disbursed according to a formula that has been reworked since the original Smith-Lever Act. However, funding is still based on rural and farm based population which leaves states with lower rural populations receiving less federal support. From the beginning of Extension, it could be said, the cooperative in Cooperative Extension has been in reference to the cooperative nature of funding for Extension activities in a state. In 1983, on the average, approximately 38 percent of Extension's budget, nationwide, came from the federal level, 44 percent came from the states, and 18 percent came from local governments.[18]

The Structure of the Extension System in the United States

While the organization of Extension may differ widely from state to state there are some generalizations that can be made. This section will outline how Extension is organized at the federal level and make

[16]R. K. Bliss et al., The Spirit and Philosophy of Extension Work, (Washington: Graduate School, United States Department of Agriculture, 1952), pp. 36-45.

[17]Edmund deS. Brunner and E. Hsin Pao Yang, Rural America and the Extension Service, (New York: Columbia University, 1949), pp. 8-16.

[18]Paul D. Warner and James A. Christenson, The Cooperative Extension Service: A National Assessment, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), p. 15.

some generalizations about how Extension is organized at other
levels.

Extension at the Federal Level

The actual size of the Extension bureaucracy waxes and wanes with
Presidential and Congressional support. Extension exists as one of
many agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture at the federal
level. Basically the federal level exists to disburse federal funds to
Extension at the state level and to provide such back-up activities as
evaluation, coordination, training, and administration. The federal
administration has very little control over Extension programs in the
states other than to make sure that program plans and reports are
provided to the federal level. For congressionally mandated programs
such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), a
program for users of food stamps, the federal level has somewhat more
control of program activities than of other Extension program areas--
agriculture, home economics, 4-H, and community resource development
(CRD). This second group of programs have coordinators at the federal
level who try to help members of particular program areas in the states
be aware of what is going on in other states. Figure 2.1 is an organi-
zation chart of the USDA Extension Service.

```
                        Administrator
                             |
    |------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
Agriculture     Home Economics     Natural     Program     Management
                                   Resources   Develop-
                                               ment
```
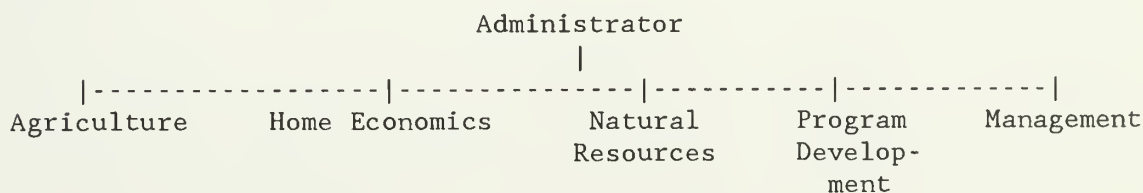
Figure 2.1 USDA Extension Service Organization Chart[19]

_____

[19]"USDA-Extension Service Directory," 1986. (Photo-copied).

Each program area or "division," as mentioned before, has a variety of sections responsible for coordinating and supporting programs at the state level. The following outlines the kind of program support offered by the agriculture "division" of Extension-USDA.

Agricultural Economics: Agriculture Economics and Public Policy; Grain Marketing; Livestock and Meat Marketing; Dairy Marketing; Farm Management.

Agriculture Engineering: Weather and Emergency Preparedness; Water Resource Management; Cotton Ginning Engineering.

Livestock and Veterinary Sciences: Poultry Science and Small Animals; Dairy Production; Veterinary Medicine.

Plant and Pesticide Management: Integrated Pest Management; Pesticide Use and Impact Assessment; Pesticide Coordination and Applicator Training; Soil Science; Agronomy.[20]

State Level

An interesting aspect of Extension is the idiosyncratic approach to organizational structure that is displayed across the county. Depending upon the state, local Extension offices are: Totally autonomous, a part of the land-grant college in the state, or possibly a blend of the two. In some states Extension agents are on the faculty of the land-grant college. In some states Extension is a department of the land-grant college.

Generally, at the state level Extension reflects the organizational picture of the federal level of Extension: an administrative unit with various program leaders (EFNEP, 4-H, agriculture, etc.). At the state level there are also the various land-grant college academic departments to which might be attached "state specialists" who perform a wide variety of Extension functions. Academic departments are expected to contribute appropriate researched based input to Extension

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[20]"USDA-Extension Service Directory," 1986. (Photo-copied).

programs. The concept of appropriate varies from state to state. The following chart, Figure 2.2, indicates the various linkages among the roles of the land-grant college and the Extension mission.

```
                           Land-grant College
     |-------------------------------|---------------------------|
Resident                        Experiment                 Extension
Instruction                       Station                   Service
     |                              |                          |
          Academic Departments                           Programs
                |                                        |- CRD
                |                                        |  Agriculture
          ------------------------------------------|  Home Economics
                                                         |  4-H
                                                         |- EFNEP
```
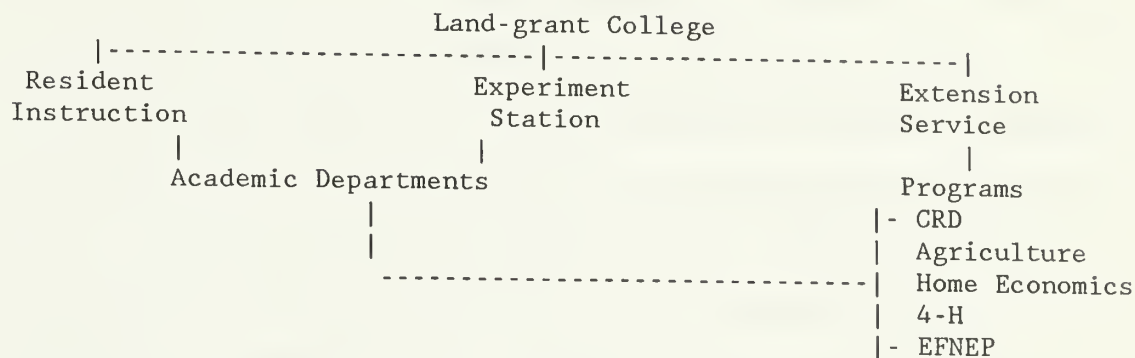
Figure 2.2 Organization for Extension at the State Land-grant

Extension at the County Level

Extension educational program activity tends to take place at the county level. The county is the focus of extension activity.[21] Plans for activities originate at this level as do demands for activities. While there may be state organized activities, these activities generally respond to local needs. A fairly common formal mechanism for local input into Extension programming is the county advisory board or county board of trustees or extension council or some combination of these names.[22] The county Extension office reflects the structure or organization at the state and federal levels and there is a capacity at the county level for the administration and delivery of programs relating to EFNEP, agriculture, home economics, CRD, and 4-H. County

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[21]Warner and Christenson, The Cooperative Extension Service: A National Assessment, pp. 100-102.

[22]Kelsey and Hearne, Cooperative Extension Works, p. 142.

agents are able to rely on university staff for assistance when
necessary in carrying out local programming.

The Extension county office tends to be organized along the same
lines as the state level. Administration at the county level tends to
be more facilitative than programmatic; administrators focus on
acquiring resources not on providing leadership in program development
and implementation. State program leaders provide guidelines and sup-
port in program development and implementation. Depending on the
state and the county there may or may not be Extension agents
designated as specialists in a particular program area. One agent
might be responsible for all areas. Thus a county "program organiza-
tion chart" might appear as shown in Figure 2.3.

```
        Administration ----------|
                                 |
P       Agriculture ------------|
R                                |
O       EFNEP ------------------|
G                                | ----------------|----------------State
R       CRD --------------------|                 |
A                                |                 |
M       4-H --------------------|                 |
S                                |                 |
        Home Economics ---------|                 |
                                                   |
                                        Advisory Council
```
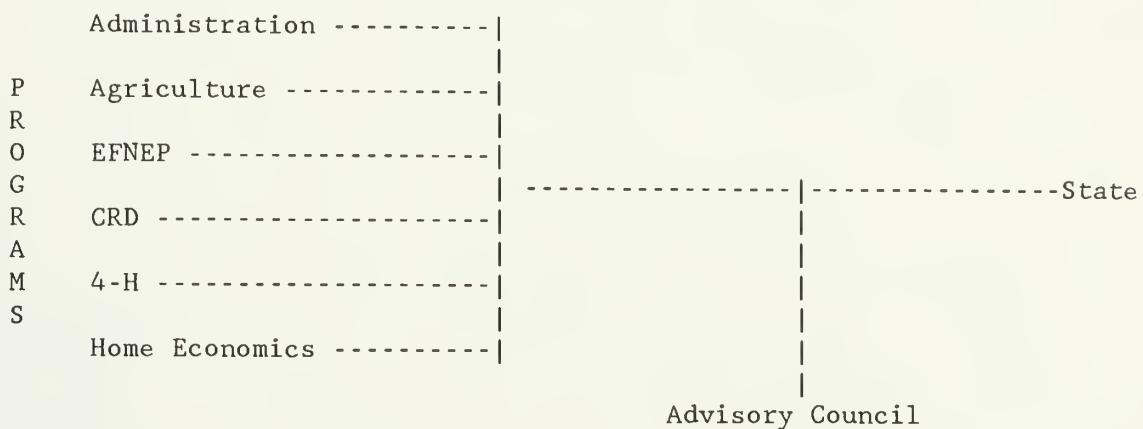
Figure 2.3 County Extension Organization

Extension offices tend to operate autonomously. They do not
operate as a "branch office" of a large centralized organization. The
county offices are expected to respond to local needs while making use
of the support and expertise of the land-grant institution.[23] Ideally

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[23]Warner and Christenson, The Cooperative Extension Service: A
National Assessment, p. 101.

the Extension county office--land-grant relationship works in such a way that county agents identify problems based on client needs. If the agents cannot solve the problems, the problems are referred to land-grant staff. If the information is not on hand, whatever research is necessary takes place to develop a scientific answer to the problem and this knowledge is passed back to the agent and hence to the client.[24] This paradigm explains the ideal, but in truth the researchers' agenda may be controlled by other than Extension or Extension client needs.[25] Thus, Extension staff rather than land-grant researchers often carry out research necessary to meet the needs of clients.

The Structure of Extension in Massachusetts

The following text is from a memo presented by the Associate Director of Extension in Massachusetts to the Massachusetts Rural Development Committee which was investigating the role of Extension in Massachusetts.

Extension conducts statewide, informal education programs in every county of Massachusetts. The objectives of educational programs conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service are to improve the income-producing skills and quality of life of people by providing educational assistance to:

- efficiently produce farm and forest products while protecting and making wise use of natural resources.

- increase the effectiveness of marketing-distribution systems.

- optimize development as individuals and as members of the family and community.

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[24]Everett M. Rogers, "Key Concepts and Models," in Inducing Technological Change for Economic Growth and Development, ed. Robert A. Solo and Everett M. Rogers (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), pp. 94-99.

[25]George R. McDowell, "Access to College of Agriculture Research Resources: Who Controls the Researchers' Agenda?," paper presented at Rural People and Places Conference, Grantsville, PA, October 22-24, 1986.

- improve levels of living while achieving personal goals through
  wise resource management.

- improve communities through effective organization and delivery
  of services.

- develop informed leaders for identifying and solving community
  problems.

Extension education involves people--people of all ages who have
needs, concerns, and interests.[26]

As mentioned earlier, the actual organization of any particular

state's Extension service is likely to be idiosyncratic. Massachusetts

Extension is, for the present, organized along lines that no one else

has taken. While Extension exists at state and county levels, who is

employed by whom differs by county across the state as the sources for

county budgets. Massachusetts Cooperative Extension has county offices

in fourteen counties. All but three counties are funded as part of the

University of Massachusetts budget voted upon by the state legislature.

The staff in these counties are employees of the University of

Massachusetts. The three remaining counties receive the majority of

their funds from their county governments and their staff are employees

of their county governments. Indeed, federal monies find their way to

these three counties as well as to the rest of the counties, but there

is a great deal more concern in the three counties about county budget

issues than University or State budget issues.

Extension in Massachusetts has the five basic educational programs

to be found in any state: CRD, 4-H, agriculture, EFNEP, and home eco-

nomics. At the state level at the University of Massachusetts,

Amherst, the land-grant college in Massachusetts, Extension adminis-

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[26]Robert G. Light, memo to Massachusetts Rural Development
Committee, no date. (Photo-copied).

tration is located in the College of Food and Natural Resources. Federal funds, known as Smith-Lever funds, come to the College of Food and Natural Resources to support Extension activities in the state. A major share of those funds are disbursed from the college to the academic departments in the college in varying amounts based on the size of the Extension effort in each department. Generally, each department has at least one faculty member with a percentage of his or her time paid for by Smith-Lever funds and thus with an obligation to commit a certain amount of time to Extension activities. This Extension commitment may range from a very small percentage of time to as much as fifty percent. Many departments employ individuals known as "state specialists" who receive 100 percent of their financial support from Smith-Lever funds and who are expected to commit 100 percent of their time to Extension activities. The state specialist often acts as liaison between field staff and academic departments and is seen as the person who will be the primary support person for programs dealing with a particular subject matter: a dairy specialist in the Department of Veterinary and Animal Science would be responsible for the department's Extension dairy program and might not teach or do any research. Extension funds also support technicians and other support staff in the academic departments. The following chart Figure 2.4, is a graphic representation of the organizational structure of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension.

```
                Dean CFNR/Director of Extension
                              |
                    Associate Director
                              |
                              |              |Communications
      Personnel------------Deputy Director-------------|
                              |              |Services
                              |
        |--------------|--------|----|------|------------|----------|
Administration      EFNEP    CRD  |  Agriculture    4-H        Home
  Services                        |                          Economics
                                  |
                                  |
                                  |
              14 College ------------|
              Departments            |
                                     |
                                     |
                                     |--------------County Commissioners
                                     |                    |
                                     |                    |
                                     |--------------Board of Trustees
                                     |
                                     |--------------14 County Offices
                                                    County staff as:
                                                    administrators
                                                    and agents in
                                                    4-H, CRD, EFNEP,
                                                    Ag, & Home Ec.
```
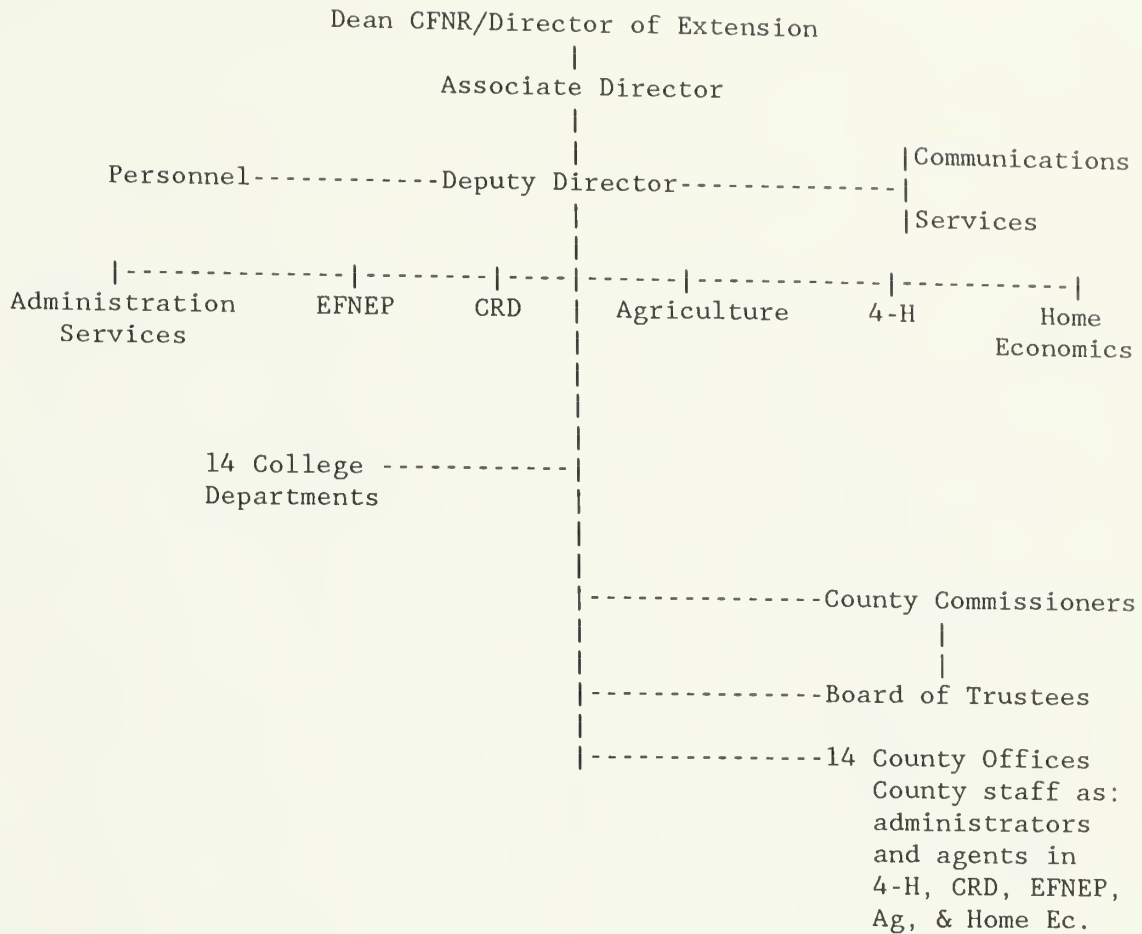
Figure 2.4 Organization Chart of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension[27]

Massachusetts has two types of county or field staff: the "county

agent" or "agent" and the "regional agent" or "regional specialist."

The county agent works in one of the five program areas that

Massachusetts Extension operates (CRD, 4-H, etc.) and is located in a

specific county and responsible for her particular program area in that

county: the Worcester County CRD agent works in Worcester County on

CRD related issues. Regional specialists or agents, while they may be

located in one county, are expected to carry out Extension activities

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[27]Cooperative Extension, "Cooperative Extension-1987-Organization
Chart," (Amherst: College of Food and Natural Resources, University of
Massachusetts, 1987).

in a multi-county or regional basis within their subject matter and program areas: The Western Massachusetts Regional Farm Management Specialist serves the four western counties of Massachusetts regarding farm management issues.

Massachusetts Extension educational programs reach a wide range of audiences. The following table identifies the number of people that agents had face-to-face contact with by educational program area. While the agriculture program had contact with over 35,000 people, there are only about 6,000 farms in the state. The other individuals are people contacted by Extension's Home Horticulture program, a sub-division of the agriculture program. This data was collected by Extension's administration for purposes of reporting to Extension at the Federal level. The numbers represent people contacted by Extension agents from October 1, 1987 to September 30, 1988.

Table 2.1 Distribution of Massachusetts Extension Client

Contacts by Program Area for 1987-1988

Program Area	Number of Clients	Percentage of Total
Agriculture	35,639	10.2
CRD	14,868	4.3
4-H	76,465	21.9
Home Economics	29,722	8.5
EFNEP	191,914	55.1
Total	348,608	100.1

Summary and Implications for Local Participation

Agriculture in America existed for about 300 years before the land-grant system and Extension were created. During those three centuries farmers, as they sought to increase their standards of living, developed a variety of organizations and methods for acquiring

the knowledge that would help them to be better farmers. Much of this early educational and organizational activity depended on individual, and often wealthy farmers, but mass movements developed such as the Grange, agricultural societies, agricultural institutes, and the Farmers' Alliance which provided political support for a more formalized national extension system. Early demands by farmers for more and better education of farmers provided a model which ensured their participation in the Extension system that was eventually formed in the twentieth century.[28] State and local farm organizations and other client based organizations in Massachusetts continue this historical process by demanding Extension responses to their needs.

While Extension in the states receive federal funds the majority of the funds are state or local funds. This involvement of local and state jurisdictions in the support of Extension activities leads to substantial state or local influence over two factors, positions and programs and a role in evaluation of personnel and programs.[29]

Given these two factors, which imply a need for strong local input into Extension activities, Extension organizations have developed in the various states which differ from each other and seem to be related to how the individual states believe they can best respond to local demands. In Massachusetts a few counties have elected to maintain county Extension from their county budgets. The rest of the counties

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[28]Gerald M. Britan, "Innovative Approaches to Agricultural Extension: An Overview of AID Experience," draft of report for Agency for International Development, February 1987. (Photo-copied).

[29]J. B. Claar, D. T. Dahl, and L. H. Watts, The Cooperative Extension Service: An Adaptable Model for Developing Countries, (Urbana: International Programs for Agricultural Knowledge Systems, no date), p. 7.

have allowed the budgetary control of Extension to pass to the state, but they still demand some formal input into Extension programming. Thus the organizational structure of Extension, at least in Massachusetts, appears adaptable and dynamic.

These three factors combine to have several implications for Extension and client participation in Extension activities.

Interest in and a desire to participate in the formulation of Extension programming on the part of farmers, farm groups and other clientele groups;

State and local funding support for Extension and activities and thus an interest in program results;

Idiosyncratic, complex and often dynamic state Extension organizations to accommodate the first two factors;

Implications of Extension's Development and Organization

There are several potential implications of the development and organization of Extension for participation. The following are potentially important implication for local participation in Extension programming activities.

Expectations of participation. This has particular relevance for farm groups as they have long played a major role in forming the Extension agenda. These expectations are held by both clients and members of Extension. Such expectations could lead to the domination of opportunities for participation by traditional client groups such as farmers in a situation where farm groups no longer form the majority of the potential Extension audience. Strong individuals may play dominant roles and act to exclude other individuals from opportunities for participation. Thus Extension has the potential for high levels of participation at the local level, but it needs to be careful and maintain a participation that is representative of its potential audience.

32

Funding sources. As state and federal funds play a dominant role in the support for local Extension activities those levels may come to dominate the establishment of Extension's agenda. Already this can be seen in the development of national issues by Extension. Such issues can act to preempt local participation or alternatively become foci for local participation.

County as the focus of Extension activity. As programs tend to be delivered at the county level and these programs tend to be the result of locally expressed needs with a concomitant high level of local "ownership" in the activities, there is the possibility of county Extension programming being in conflict with the vision of state Extension leadership. There is often the tendency to try to limit county autonomy on the part of central leadership. Local participation can be used to support county programming autonomy. Central leadership could seek to render local participation ineffective by means of central directives. Thus a tension exists among levels of Extension concerning autonomy and how this tension is resolved can effect the quality of local participation.

Participation as ratification. Whether there exists strong central leadership or whether county offices are totally autonomous, there is always the possibility that local participation may have little input and merely serve to ratify decisions made elsewhere. Whether this situation exists might be dependent on a variety of things: strength of client groups and their ability to make input; the perspective of local and state Extension leadership; the skills and willingness of Extension agents to allow for participation; the flexi-

bility allowed field staff to be responsive to locally identified problems.

County Extension staff work within the tensions described here and these tensions push and pull staff into or away from the use of mechanisms that allow for local participation. This is the organizational context within which the Extension field staff use mechanisms that may or may not allow for effective local participation in their programming activities.

CHAPTER III

LOCAL PARTICIPATION

This chapter will discuss local participation in Extension activi-
ties with a focus on developing a set of criteria that will be useful
in determining a model for effective local participation in Extension
programming. By establishing a set of criteria that will help in the
analysis of effective client participation a working definition of what
makes up the process of participation will be arrived at. Participa-
tion is dynamic and may occur in any activity at several different
levels, the criteria identified in this chapter will help in revealing
the dynamic nature of effective client participation as it applies to
Extension activities at the local level.

The Elements of a Model for Participation

Participation of clients in the educational process has been an
important theme of writers on nonformal education. These writings, as
much as they have dealt with education, have had implications for the
process of extension education and economic development. Extension
practitioners and researchers in America, international economic devel-
opment workers and thinkers, and nonformal education writers have had
to confront the role of clients in the process of education and devel-
opment. Their work has helped to determine criteria and definitions of
participation as well as its potential costs and benefits. A survey of
some of the thinking on participation is important in order to estab-
lish possible criteria basic to effective client participation in
Extension activities.

As this is an investigation of client participation in Extension
activities two related sources of writings will provide the focus in

the review of definitions and criteria of participation: works by
Extension writers and workers (both in the U.S. and abroad) and inter-
national economic development literature.

Extension and Participation in the United States

From its inception workers in and developers of the early Exten-
sion system felt it important to involve local clientele in Extension
programming. Organizers of a farmer improvement program in Binghamton,
New York, in 1912 created a farmers' committee to participate in the
planning and implementation of its program.[1] As these types of farmer
improvement programs developed across the country there was a consis-
tent recognition of the need to include clients in programming
efforts.[2] Not only were these programs seeking to guarantee local par-
ticipation in program planning and implementation, but funding for the
programs was also based on contributions from local governments and
clients and businesses.[3] Thus even before Extension was created by the
Smith-Lever Act of 1914 a precedent was established for the involvement
of local governments, clients and other local organizations in the
funding, planning and implementation of farmer improvement programs.
As the land-grant universities organized their Extension systems they
took note of this precedent.

The early development of the Extension organization in Iowa helps
to illustrate the manner in which local clientele was involved in
Extension activities. County farm bureaus were established early in

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[1]Roy V. Scott, The Reluctant Farmer, (Urbana: University of
Illinois Press, 1970). pp. 263-264.

[2]Ibid., pp. 264-287.

[3]Ibid., pp. 254-287.

the century. They were given a legal status or relationship to Exten-
sion in Iowa, in many cases they were organized by Extension. These
organizations and their importance to Extension work was recognized
almost immediately by what was then Iowa State College. A 1933 publi-
cation of the college stated that the association between Extension and
their Farm Bureaus provided: an important source of funds; help in
adapting the program of the college to local needs; local participation
in planning and implementation of programs; the development of local
leadership; local interest in Extension; and continuity to Extension
programs.[4] At a later date when there was criticism of the mingling of
public funds with Farm Bureau funds, an Extension agent suggested that
a plan be adopted by Iowa that had been adopted in many states that
called for county Extension committees. These committees were to focus
on program planning and needs identification as well as representing
local clientele in applying to local governments for funding.[5] Such
county committees became the most common form of local participation in
county Extension activities by the 1940's.[6] Mumford, writing in 1940,
points out several important factors which he believed were basic to
Extension's being able to influence and change behavior among farmers.
Among these points he included: programs are determined in cooperation
with local people and Extension is responsible to local people.[7]

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[4]J. Brownlee Davidson, Herbert M. Hamlin, Paul C. Taff, A Study of
the Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics in Iowa, (Ames:
Collegiate Press, Inc., 1933), pp. 115-117.

[5]Ibid., pp. 130-134.

[6]Frederick B. Mumford, The Land Grant College Movement,
(University of Missouri: Agriculture Experiment Station, 1940), p.
140.

[7]Ibid., p. 140.

Extension as a national organization as well as at state and county levels continues to stress the need for direct involvement of clientele in the process of planning and carrying out of programs.[8] Warner and Christenson, writing in 1984 in a national assessment of Extension, continue at least what is a normative belief of writers that are part of the Extension system that local participation in planning and implementing Extension programs is important.[9]

Up to this point this section has dealt with an historical perspective of what Extension workers and writers thought were essential factors in conducting agricultural Extension activities and organizing for those activities. These essential factors begin to provide us with a hint as to what historically Extension has felt important criteria in program development and the role of clients in program development: essentially in planning, implementing, and to some extent in funding. Implied is that all clients will benefit in the form of increased knowledge, attitudes and skills as well as standard of living as a result of Extension programs, not just those who have participated in planning, implementation and funding.

A. E. Mosher has written extensively about extension and what contributes to successful extension. His particular perspective has been to draw on the American experience in extension and to identify its essence in order that it could then be transferred to lesser developed countries (LDCs). Part of the essence of the U.S. Extension system is

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[8]Paul D. Warner and James Christenson, The Cooperative Extension Service: A National Assessment, (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), p. 87.

[9]Ibid., pp. 86-88.

that it works cooperatively with rural people based on their needs and interests.[10]

Rogers in his various books on diffusion analyzed the role of the change agent/extension agent. Rogers spent much of his time analyzing U.S. Extension efforts and then he turned to applying those results to development in LDCs. The focus of much of his work is the relationship between the agent and his clients:

"Change agent success is positively related to:

- his client orientation;

- the degree to which his program is compatible with clients' needs;

- the change agent's empathy with clients;

- the extent he works through opinion leaders."[11]

Although none of this requires truly meaningful participation, it does imply that Rogers recognized the need for at least a client focused program. Rogers states that the diagnosis of needs is facilitated by client participation in planning and that commitment to decisions is increased when clients are part of the decision making process. Importantly Rogers also makes the point that who participates, in this case innovators or laggards, helps to determine who benefits from programming.[12]

The following diagram is Rogers' conception of how local participation can influence the research of a land-grant university and focus it

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[10]A. T. Mosher, _Thinking About Rural Development_, (New York: Agriculture Development Council, 1976), p. 133.

[11]Everett M. Rogers and F. Floyd Shoemaker, _Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach_, (New York: Free Press, 1971), p. 248.

[12]Ibid., pp. 237-238.

on client needs. Although this paradigm does not always function as portrayed, it does indicate the ideal of how research can be based on local client needs as identified by the clients.

```
-------------------------------------------------------------------
|                    Research System                              |
|          Function:  Create and develop innovations.             |
 -----------------------------------------------------------------
                            |
                            |
 -------------------------------------------------------------------
|                   Change Agent System                           |
|          Function:  Translate Client needs to researchers       |
|                and diffuse innovations to clients               |
 -------------------------------------------------------------------
                            |
                            |
 -------------------------------------------------------------------
|                     Client System                               |
|          Function:  Recognize needs for research and            |
|                      adopt innovations.                         |
 -------------------------------------------------------------------
```
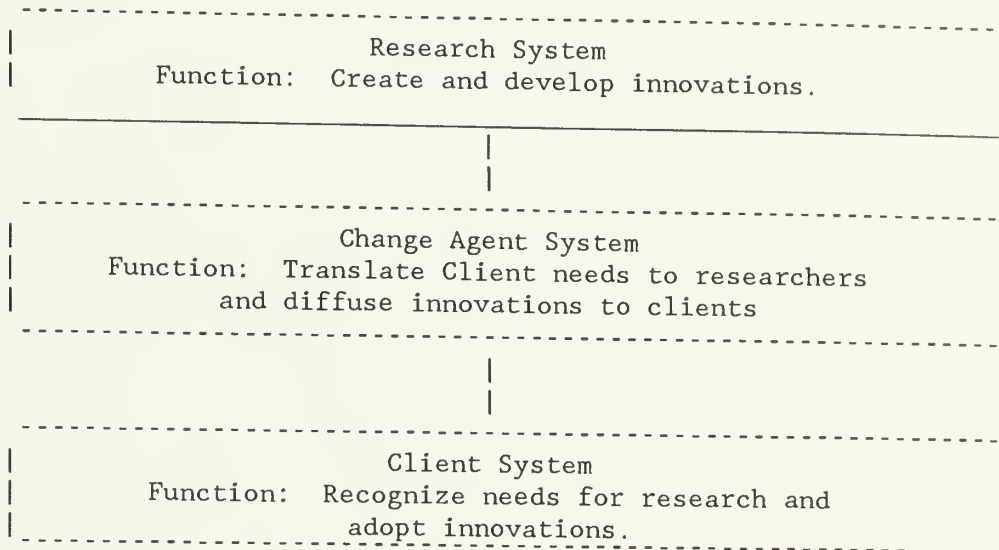
Figure 3.1 Client Participation in Definition of Research Needs[13]

Besides identifying the fact that who participates in the planning and implementation of Extension activities tends to focus benefits of those activities on clients of similar characteristics Rogers points out another important issue. The agent should be aware of the consequences of his/her activities.[14] Again he implies that the agent can only learn this through focusing on clients and that this awareness arises through effective client participation.

Community development is one focus of many Extension programs in the United States. Extension has been the major organization in the

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[13]Robert A. Solo and Everett M. Rogers, eds., Inducing Technological Change for Economic Growth and Development, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), p.96.

[14]Everett M. Rogers and Rabel J. Burdge, Social Change in Rural Societies, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1972), p. 374.

U.S. attempting to establish the practice of community development education with the purpose of providing learning experiences to increase the effectiveness of community development. Community development is seen as a process of group action to bring about social and economic change.[15] Bennett writes that all the people affected by a change should participate in bringing about the change.[16] He admits that this is an ideal, but goes on through a series of questions to identify areas where local participation should take place in the community development process:

- definition of issues

- formation of project goals

- decision making

- implementation[17]

M. Koneya makes the point that participation is not enough for community development to take place. Citizen participation can cover a wide range from a very nominal role in an autocratic process to a role of initiating action and bringing the larger organization (Extension) to act on citizen defined issues.[18]

Thus community development literature in Extension in the U.S. begins to add more criteria to help define effective participation. As well, the literature begins to hint at a matrix where one axis consists

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[15]Austin E. Bennett, Reflections on Community Development Education, (University Park, PA: Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, 1986), p. 11.

[16]Ibid., p. 47.

[17]Ibid., p. 47.

[18]Mele Koneya, "Citizen Participation is Not Community Development." Journal of the Community Development Society of America 9 (Fall 1978); pp. 23-29.

of criteria of effective participation and the other axis defines a range of "types of participation" from a nominal type to an initiator or active type.

Extension and Participation in the International Context

The U.S. model of Extension was used as the basis for the development of Extension systems in the LDCs after WWII. Stavis writes that a critical element of the model was not integrated into most international versions of the model: local participation by farmers in extension activities.[19] The reasons for this could be complex, including: lack of understanding of the significance of local participation or reluctance on the part of recipients to give farmers a role in what were often seen as government activities.[20] Britan in evaluating the USAID experience with agricultural extension also states that key factors that enabled Extension in the U.S. to play a major role in agricultural development included substantial local payment of Extension costs and strong local control over agent activities.[21]

Extension systems in LDCs have taken a variety of forms, but are, unlike the U.S. model, generally centrally controlled and distinct from agricultural research agencies. Multi-lateral organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and The World Bank have worked to improve these systems. The World Bank has developed and put into place in several countries, most success-

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[19]Benedict Stavis, Agricultural Extension for Small Farmers, (East Lansing: Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, 1979), p. 10.

[20]Ibid., p. 10.

[21]Gerald M. Britan, "Innovative Approaches to Agricultural Extension: An Overview of AID Experience," (Draft report for USAID, photo-copied, February, 1987), pp. 50-51.

42

fully in India, its own version of an extension system, the Training and Visit System. Staff and consultants for both FAO and the World Bank have contributed to the literature on extension programs and their implementation in LDCs.

Oakley and Garforth in their text written for use in the field by extension agents stress the importance of client centered extension activities. They place particular emphasis on the need for farmers to be involved in planning activities.[22] Local extension programs should reflect client needs and strive to mobilize local resources to meet these needs. Oakley and Garforth suggest that it is the agent's responsibility to develop farmers' organizations where none exist. These organizations should function as farmers' not the agent's organizations. Their role would be to help in planning and implementing extension activities.[23]

Agricultural Extension is a reference manual developed by FAO to assist extension administrators and staff in developing and carrying out extension activities. While the manual is long on abstraction and short on application several points are made in reference to local participation in extension activities. L. H. Watts notes that a characteristic of a strong extension system is continuing farmer input to guide activities.[24] J. L. Compton states that farmers should participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of extension

[22]P. Oakley and C. Garforth, Guide to Extension Training, (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1985), pp. 106-107.

[23]Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[24]L. H. Watts, "The Organizational Setting," in Agricultural Extension: A Reference Manual, ed. Burton E. Swanson (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1984), p. 29.

programs.[25] A further important point is that farmers' participation

should result in direct and immediate material benefits.[26] Sofranko

talks of participation in terms of farmers participating as learners

as the concern of extension activities. He identifies farmers' par-

ticipation in program development and implementation as a strategy to

recruit farmers to extension activities.[27]

Field staff of FAO are emphatic in the importance they place on

the need for farmers' participation in extension programs. The primary

stress is on farmers participating in both the planning and execution

of programs, in effect becoming extension agents.[28] N. Minett stresses

the need for clients to be involved in both formative and summative

evaluations as both planners and implementors as well as in program

design and implementation.[29]

The literature on "Training and Visit" systems and the system

itself appears to disregard the issue of local control and partici-

pation of farmers in the design or implementation of extension activi-

ties. Farmers are linked to the system through extension workers who

[25]J. L. Compton, "Extension Programme Development," in Agricultural
Extension: A Reference Manual, ed. Burton E. Swanson (Rome: Food and
Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1984), pp. 108-117.

[26]A. J. Sofranko, "Introducing Technological Change: The Social
Setting," in Agricultural Extension: A Reference Manual, ed. Burton E.
Swanson (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
1984), p. 67.

[27]Ibid., pp. 66-68.

[28]S. Z. Moczarski, "Farmer Participation in Agricultural
Programmes." Training for Agriculture and Development, (Rome: Food and
Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1976), pp. 1-11.

[29]N. Minett, "Participatory Education for Women: A Framework."
Training for Agriculture and Development, (Rome: Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United Nations, 1985), pp. 61-69

are urged to listen to and observe farmers' problems, but extension
workers are responsible to a centralized mechanism. Research within
the system is to be based on the observances of extension workers and
through occasional visits by staff from higher level to the field.[30]
Provision for farmer input into planning is made by means of positions
for representative farmers on various planning committees in the system
hierarchy.[31] The focus of the "Training and Visit" literature is
almost exclusively on the supply side, it is a system focused on infor-
mation delivery.[32] "Contact farmers", a few farmers in a specific area
who are the focus of the extension agent's efforts, are expected to
spread information received from agents through their informal networks
with other farmers. This is the role in which local farmers partici-
pate in the Training and Visit System, as volunteer contact points for
both agents and other farmers.

Peter Oakley in preparing a report for FAO on monitoring and
evaluation of participation provides the beginnings of a summary of
the elements of participation as viewed by writers on extension.
Oakley identifies four "types" of participation that concern the
different contexts for participation:

> involvement: clients are provided the opportunity for being
>   involved in project decisions relating to objectives and
>   strategy.
>
> community development: clients participate in project activities,
>   but no base or structure is provided for continued action.

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[30]Daniel Benor and Michael Baxter, <u>Training and Visit Extension</u>,
(Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1984); pp. 1-80.

[31]Ibid., pp. 132-135.

[32]Gershon Feder and Roger Slade, "The Impact of Agricultural
Extension: The Training and Visit System in India." <u>Research Observer</u>
1 (July 1986): 146.

organization: a formal organizational structure is developed or provided within which participation can take place.

empowering: clients are able to gain access to and share in resources required for development and are able to participate actively in projects.[33]

These broad categories of participation build on each other and describe the different contexts for local participation in extension activity. In a particular project some but not all of these types might occur (for example the middle two types appear to be mutually exclusive).

Oakley goes on to describe several key areas to be observed regarding the type of participation that may occur:

process: the qualitative nature of the participation that is taking place.

structure: the structure within which clients are participating, its impact on process and the representative nature of those participating relative to those who are to share in the benefits of the project.

relationship: the focus of the relationship encouraged by participation could engender independence and self-reliance or maintain continued dependence.

mechanisms: the activities in which participants are involved: planning, establishing objectives, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

action: the encouragement for participants to identify and solve problems on their own initiative, to take action on their own.[34]

Oakley suggests that monitoring and evaluation of activities should be participatory in nature.[35] He then identifies the stages in

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[33]Peter Oakley, The Monitoring and Evaluation of Participation in Rural Development, (Draft report for FAO, photo-copied, November, 1983), p. 3.

[34]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[35]Ibid., p. 49.

the monitoring and evaluation where participation could take place: in the identification of what is to be monitored/evaluated, in determining how the monitoring/evaluating is to proceed, in selecting who is to do the monitoring/evaluating and in the analysis and interpretation of information collected.[36]

Crouch and Chamala collected and edited papers from around the world for two volumes on extension and rural development. They isolated four important points that would increase the likelihood of successful efforts in extension education and rural development programs: continual research and evaluation of conditions in rural communities; the need for flexibility on the part of change organizations and change agents; the need to include clients in determining needs and goals in planning and implementation of activities; and the importance of client populations participating in the benefits of projects.[37] A paper from Australia demonstrates the importance of client participation in planning and its relationship to successful extension related activities.[38] Even though in Australia extension is an organization that is heavily centralized and top to bottom in its approach it recognizes the need for client participation.

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[36]Ibid., p. 24.

[37]Bruce R. Crouch and Shankariah Chamala, eds., Extension Education and Rural Development, 2 vols. (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 2: xxv-xxvi.

[38]J. P. Blencowe, A.E. Engel, and J.S. Potter, "A Technique of Involving Farmers in Planning Extension Programmes," Extension Education and Rural Development, Bruce R. Crouch and Shankariah Chamala, eds., 2 vols. (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 2:65-78.

<u>A Preliminary Model</u>

Synthesizing the elements that might make up local participation in Extension activities that have been identified up to this point will provide a preliminary model of how those elements might fit together. Six broad areas for participation have been identified: planning, control of resources, decision making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation. The actual role or function that participants might have in each of these areas depends upon the tasks associated with the area, the costs and benefits to participants and Extension for client participation in any specific task, and the relative skills, knowledge and other human capital (either existing or capable of being developed) that exists among participants and Extension agents.

Two other issues increase the complexity of this preliminary model. The first is the issue of who is participating. Rogers suggested that participants will skew project activities to their own benefit. Thus participants should either be from the group that is expected to benefit directly from the activity or be able to strongly identify with that group. Categories for who is participating might include: members of the group to be benefited, non-members of beneficiary group but who can be shown to strongly identify with group, non-members of beneficiary group with no identification to that group. These categories represent a continuum that could be divided into as many categories as the analyst might care to employ. Other categories might be elites, government representatives, and so forth. The three categories that have been identified should be of use in determining the relative leverage of any group upon a project or activity of Extension.

Another important area to be considered in developing a format for analyzing the broad areas of the preliminary model of participation would be the level of or quality of participation. The level of participation relates to the range implied by the poles: nominal participation versus initiating participation. Other terms that might be descriptive of these poles are: reactive versus active, or ratification versus creation. Any particular task or area of participation may have a varying level of participation when compared to others in the project or activity.

In order to describe the various levels of participation that might occur in a project or activity several descriptors might be used. Oakley has suggested five key areas for observing participation. Of the five there is one that is similar to what has already been included in the preliminary model: mechanisms or activities in which participants are involved. The other key points to be observed that might provide an indication as to the level of participation include: the process of participation, the structure for participation, the type of relationship encouraged towards Extension (dependent versus independent), the type of action participants are encouraged to take by Extension.

Thus as a preliminary model, summarized in Figure 3.2, there are six broad areas in which local participation in Extension activities might take place. There are at least three categories of people who might participate on a local level in Extension programming activities. There is also a range of levels of quality of participation that might occur which might fall between the poles of nominal or initiating.

Finally there are four key points to be observed which will provide

more information on how the participation takes place.

	Activity	Group	Level	Key Points

1.	Planning	Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

2.	Resources	Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

3.	Decision
	Making
		Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

4.	Implementing	Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

5.	Benefits	Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

6.	Evaluation	Beneficiaries
		Non-beneficiaries
		   with empathy
		Non-beneficiaries
		   no empathy
			Nominal
			Initiating
				Process
				Structure
				Relationship
				Action

Figure 3.2 Preliminary Model of Participation

Other Writers on Participation

Cohen and Uphoff, writing in 1977, developed a model of participa-

tion similar to the above preliminary model. Their model analyzes par-

ticipation in three dimensions: what, who, how. The following is a
summary of the "what" dimension, the roles for participation.

1. Decision making would include a role for participants in
   determining what should be done and how through the following
   types of decision:

   a. Initial decisions about needs, goals, priorities, and
      activities as well as when to start the project if at
      all;

   b. On-going decisions about needs, goals, priorities and
      methods as well as whether to continue the project;

   c. Operational or administrative decisions about such things
      as meetings, leadership, membership, and personnel.

2. Implementation of the project should include the involvement
   of participants in the following:

   a. Contribution of resources such as labor, materials, or
      information;

   b. Administration of the project as employees, advisors or
      in other related roles;

   c. Enrolling in programs of the project or supporting those
      projects.

3. Participants should be able to share in the material, social
   and other benefits and costs of the project.

4. Evaluation of the project should involve people in partici-
   pating in the following activities:

   a. Formative and summative evaluation activities;

   b. Political activities on behalf of the project;

   c. Promotional activities relevant to the project.[39]

The "who" dimension of participation is concerned with whose par-
ticipation is being solicited or contributed to the activity. Cohen
and Uphoff identify two possible groups of participants: local resi-

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[39]John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff, Rural Development
Participation: Concepts and Measures for Project Design, Implementation
and Evaluation, (Ithaca: Rural Development Committee, Center for
International Studies, Cornell University, 1977), pp. 5-10.

dents and local leaders. They identify as important considerations the following:

Local Residents: consideration for participation based on relationship to project goals. The following questions can help in determining who should participate.

1. Whose participation is required for successful functioning of the project?

2. Whose participation is desired to meet project's objectives for creating and distributing benefits?

Local Leaders: in deciding whether to include local leaders or in evaluating their role the following questions should be considered.

1. How great is their role in decision making and implementation?

2. How disproportionate is their role in the sharing of benefits or evaluation of the project?[40]

The final dimension of the Cohen and Uphoff model determines "how" participation is taking place. This dimension includes six characteristics of how participation takes place and adds a seventh that describes the effective power associated with participation.

1. Impetus to participate: on whose initiative?

2. Incentive for participation: is it induced through coercion or voluntary?

3. Organization pattern: is participation structured in groups, individuals, formal or informal?

4. Direct or indirect involvement: the channels of participation.

5. Time involved in participation: is the duration of participation once or continuous?

6. Number and range of activities: the scope of participation.

7. Effective power accompanying participation: empowerment descriptors include: no power or influence, potential power

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[40]Ibid., pp. 10-15.

or influence, some power, moderate power, significant power, extensive power.[41]

The Cohen and Uphoff model identifies elements of participation that not only determine where participation can occur and how it occurs, but also determines the degrees of empowerment by means of its identifying the range of effective power accompanying participation. For each possible kind of participation that can occur, decisionmaking, implementation, benefits, and evaluation, it is possible to cross reference the range of effective power accompanying participation.

Many writers have relied on the Cohen and Uphoff model for thinking about participation. The dimensions used by them were used by Kinsey as he developed a model for participation in evaluation based on who participates, how they participate and in what they participate.[42] Kinsey develops a three dimensional reference grid that can be used as a frame-work for thinking about participation in evaluation. The dimensions include: participants, or who is participating; content, or what is the content focus of evaluation; and phases, or the stage of the evaluation (planning, design, implementation or analysis).[43] Such a grid could be used as a framework for the analysis of the kinds of participation identified by Cohen and Uphoff (decision-making, implementation, benefits and evaluation) or in the activities column of the preliminary model discussed earlier in this chapter.

Bryant and White agree with the kinds of participation that Cohen and Uphoff have identified and they go on to deal with how to deal with

[41]Ibid., pp. 10-110.

[42]David Kinsey, "Participatory Evaluation in Adult and Nonformal Education," Adult Education, 31, (Spring 1981): p. 157.

[43]Ibid., pp. 163-164.

the issues involved in managing a participatory project.[44] They describe the calculus that a potential participant goes through in deciding whether or not to participate in a project either on the management side or in project activities. They develop a simple model that states that participation will occur when the hoped for benefits of participating multiplied by the probability of their actually occurring outweigh the costs of working for those benefits. Simply put, people will participate when they sense that their benefits are likely to be greater than their costs.[45] This probability of benefit is an important factor to consider when considering participation in the context of Extension activities.

A Model for Analysis of Local Participation in Extension

Synthesizing the preliminary model with the model of Cohen and Uphoff and the Kinsey model for participatory evaluation will yield a fairly complete model that could be used in the analysis and discussion of local participation in Extension programming activities. The final model consists of four broad activity or result categories: planning, implementation, benefits/costs, evaluation. Within each category there is a set of operational decision areas where local participation might occur in Extension programming activities, the "what" of participation. For each stage there is the "who" element, who is participating in the activity stage. For each "who" there is the level of influence or control they exert in the activity stage. Finally there are a set of

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[44]Cornelia Bryant and Louise G. White, Managing Rural Development With Small Farmer Participation, (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1984), p. 8-9.

[45]Ibid., pp. 18-20.

points relating to the process of participation which summarize the process of participation in an activity or result area.

The final model recognizes that the categories originally listed as activities are really broad categories of actions that need to be taken in developing and carrying out a project. While there are four primary categories of possible activities or results that may constitute a project each category is made up of a variety of operational decision areas. The operational decisions important in the planning category are:

1. Identification of potential beneficiaries. Often referred to as the "target audience" potential beneficiaries are those who are intended by project planners to share in the benefits or losses that result from the project.[46] Defining this group is an early and important step in project planning.

2. Determination of needs. This step includes setting priorities and identifying the needs or problems that will be the focus of a project.

3. Goal and objective setting. Implied in this is a vision of a potential solution that will resolve the identified needs or problems.

4. Designing project activities. The decisions that determine the kinds of activities that will take place, the project time lines, and the results expected of each activity.

5. Identification of resource needs. The decisions related to determining the resources needed for a project both human and material and how those resources are to be obtained for project purposes.

6. Project start-up decisions. Decisions related to whether to start on a project and when to begin the project.

In order to determine the role of local participation in the planning of Extension activities it is not enough to say that there was local participation in planning. More important is an identification of how

[46]Norman Uphoff, "Fitting Projects to People," in Putting People First, ed. Michael Cernea (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 359.

broad was the role of local participation in planning. The six

decision areas identified here will help to determine how broad local

participation is in the planning of Extension activities.

The broad category of implementation includes six key operational

decision activities:

1. Resource contribution. Decisions here concern obtaining and managing the resources necessary to a project.

2. Project administration or management. Decisions focused on implementation of project activities.

3. Participation in project activities. The role of participants as teachers, trainers, moderators, site managers, result demonstration cooperators, etc.

4. Promotion of project activities. The roles of participants in promoting the project through various media or by other means such as discussion with community leaders.

5. Project monitoring. The role of participants in monitoring and formative evaluation of project activities.

6. On-going operational decisions. Decisions in this context concern relating results from monitoring activities to the modification or improvement of project activities.

Once again it is not enough to state that there is local participation

in the implementation stage of an Extension project. The range of par-

ticipation is important. The activities listed here will indicate the

importance of local participation to the implementation of the project.

Benefits and costs accrue at a variety of levels because of

project activities. Benefits and costs generally take the form of

either material gains or losses, increased incomes for example, or

social gains or losses, decreased status for example. These gains or

losses are often targeted at potential beneficiaries. However, those

who participate in the process of project delivery, in this case both

Extension and local participants, can gain or lose materially or

socially because of their participation. The project itself can gain

or lose because of local participation. Finally, another important issue relative to benefits and costs is who controls or influences the direction of potential project benefits or losses (if a group can be targeted as potential beneficiaries then someone is doing the targeting or directing). Analysis of the following points, besides yielding information on results, will provide information on the effectiveness of local participation.

1. Programming participants. The concern is how do programming participants, Extension and non-Extension, because of their participation in project activities, share in benefits or costs.

2. Project gains and losses. The kinds of gains or losses accruing to project operations because of local participation.

3. Direction of benefits and costs. Who controls the direction of the flow of benefits and costs due to project activities.

4. Potential beneficiaries. The issue is the usefulness of project activities to potential beneficiaries and the benefits or costs incurred by them because of project activities.

The evaluation segment of the model will be concerned with the decisions and activities related to both formative and summative evaluation and the local participation in them. The operational areas that will be focused on are:

1. Planning. Who participates with what control in the decisions related to planning in evaluation? The decisions to be observed include: whether to evaluate; deciding who wants to know what for what purpose; who will do the evaluation and when will the evaluation be done.

2. Design. The key decisions areas related to design in evaluation will be: the questions to be answered by evaluation; criteria or indicators; sources for responses; instruments to be used; and the schedule.

3. Implementation. The role of participants in data gathering.

4. Analysis. The important areas of concern relative to the analysis of data include: interpretation of results and their dissemination.

The model will also take into consideration in its analysis who participates in the key activities of an Extension project. The preliminary model identified three categories of potential participants: potential project beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries who empathize with potential beneficiaries, and non-beneficiaries who have no means of empathizing with potential beneficiaries. This final model will add the category of "extension practitioner".

1. Potential project beneficiaries. Those who stand to gain or lose directly because of project activities are potential project beneficiaries.

2. Non-beneficiaries with empathy. These are those who can empathize with or identify with the potential beneficiaries. An example would be a middle aged life long rural resident in a project for the rural elderly.

3. Non-beneficiaries without empathy. A rural estate owner with no farm background in a project designed to benefit small scale farmers would be an example of this category of participants.

4. Extension practitioners. These would be the staff of the extension organization associated with the project.

These four categories will identify who is participating in a project and provide some depth for the additional analytical categories of relative influence and the process of participation.

The next analytical category concerns the level of influence or control over activities that is exercised by participants in any of the participant categories described in relationship to an identified activity. The range of potential influence or control could be extensive. Cohen and Uphoff describe six different levels of influence or control under the term "empowerment": no power or influence; potential power, possible influence; some power; moderate power; significant power; and extensive power. These several choices tend to provide very

fine distinctions. The preliminary model offered two categories: nominal versus initiating.

This final model will make use of several categories but not try for the fine distinctions of the Cohen and Uphoff model as the purpose here is to be able to distinguish between varying types of participation and relative levels of influence and control. For the purposes of this model distinctions will be by the following categories:

1. No influence or control. Participants in a role of ratification that provides them with little knowledge relative to the project, allows them to express ideas but their ideas have no force; they have no control or influence over relevant decisions related to the activity being analyzed.

2. Some influence or control. Participants receive information about decisions prior to decisions; ideas and advice receive some consideration; there is some control and influence over some of the decisions related to the activity being analyzed.

3. Cooperation. Participants are fully informed regarding relevant project decisions; there is an opportunity to modify or veto decisions; there is a sharing of influence and control over decisions related to the activity being analyzed.

4. Extensive influence or control. Participants are fully informed and make decisions without review; extensive influence or control is exercised over decisions related to the activity being analyzed.

The final category of analysis in the model concerns key points relevant to the process of participation: the structure or pattern of participation, the scope of participation, the relationship of participants to Extension, the impetus or incentive for participation, and the effectiveness of participation. These points are summative in nature as they tend to summarize information found elsewhere in the model although the fourth and fifth points may provide additional data on participation in a project.

1. Structure or pattern or participation. Is participation by groups or individuals and is it direct or indirect? An example of group participation would be working with a

farmers' cooperative. Direct participation would mean the involvement of all the members of the cooperative. Indirect participation would mean that a representative part of the group participated.

2. Scope of participation. Summarizes the involvement of participants in an activity category, it refers to the number of activities that non-Extension staff are involved in.

3. Relationship with Extension. The focus is on the dependence or independence of non-Extension participants vis-a-vis Extension, their ability to initiate activities and their dependence on Extension for direction.

4. The impetus for participation. At issue is the determination of why participants participated, who initiated the participation, and was coercion involved.

5. Effectiveness of participation. The focus is on the following: Extension's needs are met; participants' needs are met; useful contributions to programs are made; useful contributions to operating decisions are made.

Point five may require some additional explanation. Extension's needs or the agent's needs as far as effectiveness of participation is concerned could be unending, but here the issue is the maintenance or enhancement of Extension's profile. There is a political necessity for Extension to promote itself and be able to take some credit for its activities or be able to extend its network and contacts with those who could support Extension politically.

The issue of participants needs is also important. Participants must benefit in some way from their participation. The effectiveness of the mechanism within which they are participating relates to whether the participants realize some benefits from their efforts.

The last two points relate to the effectiveness of the inputs and decisions made by participants within the context of the process or mechanisms that they are participating in. The emphasis is not on the evaluation of the end results of the activities or decisions, rather the level and usefulness of the contributions made are what is being

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considered here. Has the process allowed for contributions or decisions that were effective in planning and developing Extension educational activities? Did the participants make a difference?

The following chart, Figure 3.3, summarizes the final general model of participation for any programming stage. The decision or action areas can be listed across the top axis, this is one dimension of participation. Along the side are the criteria relevant to two other dimensions of participation. Placing these dimensions along two axes allows a graphic demonstration of the relationship of these dimensions. A list of key points forms the final dimension or set of issues of the model.

```
. Decision       |        |        |        |        |
  . Areas        |        |        |        |        |
     .           |        |        |        |        |
        .        |        |        |        |        |
  Criteria .     |        |        |        |        |
     of     .    |        |        |        |        |
Participation  . |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
Participants     |        |        |        |        |
                 |        |        |        |        |
  Potential      |        |        |        |        |
   Beneficiaries |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
 Non-beneficiaries|       |        |        |        |
    with empathy |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
 Non-beneficiaries|       |        |        |        |
    without empathy|      |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
 Practitioners/  |        |        |        |        |
    agencies     |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
Influence        |        |        |        |        |
                 |        |        |        |        |
  None           |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
  Some           |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
  Co-op          |        |        |        |        |
-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
  Extensive      |        |        |        |        |
-----------------------------------------------------
```

Key Points

Structure of Participation
Scope of Participation
Relationship with Extension
Impetus for Participation
Effectiveness of Participation

Figure 3.3 Model of Participation for any of the Four Program Stages

Summary

The intention of this chapter has been to develop a model for the analysis and discussion of effective local participation in Extension programming. A second intention of the chapter was that the model

might lead to the identification of a working definition of the process of participation. The model that has been developed describes the process of participation in several dimensions: the people involved in the process, the activities in which participation occurs and the levels of influence or control exercised by the various people involved as participants. The purpose of the model is to provide an analytical framework for participation as it occurs in a given project or context; it identifies the nodes where participation might occur, the kinds of people that might be participating and the levels of control various people might have over the activities in which they are involved. The model is not intended to be prescriptive nor does it provide a tidy definition of participation. The model does indicate how complex the process of participation can be as well as forcing a recognition of the dynamic nature of participation.

As the model does develop an analytical framework for looking at the process of participation it does provide the components for a definition of participation. Those components include who the participants are, the range of activities they participate in, their influence over the activities, and the context of their participation. Given the model a practitioner in nonformal education can define for him or herself what participation means in the context of his or her work.

The model will be used in the ensuing chapters to describe and analyze how Extension agents allow for local participation in their work. The analysis will be limited to only one set of activities, those relating to planning and developing programs and projects. This

should provide information on how well the model can be used for
analysis of participation as well as how participation takes place.

CHAPTER IV

MECHANISMS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION

There is a range of mechanisms or processes that field staff of
Massachusetts Cooperative Extension make use of to include local par-
ticipation in their program development and program planning activi-
ties. In this chapter these mechanisms will be identified and analyzed.
They range from the very formally organized mechanism of "County Board
of Trustees" to the very informal "Key Informant." The following list
includes all of the mechanisms used by staff in Western Massachusetts
and they are arranged from most to least formal.

    County Boards of Trustees
    Program Advisory Committees
    Project Committees
    Non-Extension Organized Committees
    Key Informants

Methodology

This chapter will make use of information obtained through inter-
views with Extension agents and participants in their committees in the
western four counties of Massachusetts, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden
and Berkshire counties. The region is administered through an office
in Northampton in Hampshire County by a regional administrator. Each
of the counties has an office that county agents work out of. All
Extension program areas are represented in every county and there are
also five regional specialists in agriculture that work out of various
county offices but are responsible for the entire region. The western
four counties are representative of the Extension system as it appears
in the counties through out the state. Urban and rural, poor and
middle class, minorities and white, female and male populations make up
the potential learners for Extension in the western region as they do

across the state. Of the thirty-three Extension agents in the region, twenty were interviewed using a very short list of questions to elicit information on the mechanisms they used for including local participation in their planning and development activities. Selection of agents was stratified to yield a representative sample by program area and location. The sample is also representative of the total population's tenure with Extension, age and gender. From this list seven agents were selected for a more intensive study to develop case studies of how they used various mechanisms for local participation in their program development. The breakdown of agents available to this study and included in the study by county and program area is summarized in the following table.

Table 4.1 Agents Available for Study and Agents

Included in Study

| | Home Ec. | | CRD | | Ag. | | 4-H | |
	Total	Study	Total	Study	Total	Study	Total	Study
Berkshire	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	1
Franklin	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
Hampden	5	2	0	0	3	3	3	1
Hampshire	2	1	0	0	2	2	4	2
TOTAL	11	7	3	2	8	6	11	5

The analysis of the participatory mechanisms used by Extension agents will make use of the model developed in the last chapter. A truncated version of the general model will be used in this analysis, the portion of the model applicable to the program planning and development stage. Figure 4.1 summarizes the portion of the model used in this chapter for the analysis of mechanisms used by agents.

Planning and Development	Board of Trustees	Program Advisory Committee	Project Advisory Committee	Non-Extension Groups	Key Informant
Participants					
Potential					
Beneficiaries					
Extension Practitioners/other					
agencies					
Empathetic					
Non-empathetic					
Decision Areas					
(level of					
influence)					
Identification					
of audience					
Identification					
of Needs					
Determination of					
Goals/Objectives					
Designing					
Activities					
Resources Decisions					
Start-up Decisions					
Key Points					
Structure of					
Participation					
Dependent/Independent					
Impetus for Participation					
Effectiveness					
Meets Extension's needs					
Contributes to education					
Meets needs of participants					
Benefits Extension's operational decisions					

Figure 4.1 Model Used to Compare Extension Agents' Mechanisms of Participation.

The model in this chapter will be used to compare the identified mechanisms used for local participation in Extension. The kinds of

participants included by various mechanisms will be noted. The average level of influence of participants in key decision areas will be identified as to whether it is none, some, cooperative or extensive for each mechanism. The summary points and effectiveness points will round out the comparison.

Mechanisms for Local Participation

This section will briefly describe the mechanisms used by Extension staff to include local input and participation into their planning and programming activities.

County Boards of Trustees

County boards of trustees are used by Extension systems in every state. This mechanism for local or county input has been a part of the way Extension has operated since its beginnings. County Extension offices are expected to organize and maintain these committees. The term used to describe this committee varies as does its functions. Generally, this committee functions in an advisory capacity and is made up of individuals with some interest in the activities of Extension. These individuals may be locally prominent people or simply those able and willing to articulate local needs and to provide Extension with a connection to the communities it serves.[1]

The typical Extension County Board of Trustees in Western Massachusetts is made up of nine members. The membership generally represents the potential beneficiaries of Extension programming, but this may vary depending on the local situation and the role of the board and county commissioners in selecting members to the board.

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[1]Kelsey and Hearne, Cooperative Extension Works, p. 142.

How Boards of Trustees are organized and function is based very much on the county's Extension administrative and programming needs. In a sense the board of trustees is the Extension county administrator's board and he or she is the primary influence on how a board operates. Thus how boards function varies from county to county depending on the view of the administrator. In the Western Region there is a single administrator for all four counties and she is changing the roles of the boards of trustees in her counties to be both more representative of the populations of the counties being served by Extension and more active in program development.

Counties are changing how they recruit members to their boards. County Extension staff now play a much larger role in recruitment and the boards themselves have the final say in who is a member of the board. One county has created an associate system that tries to have potential members serve first as associates and then "graduate" to full board membership.

The role of the board of trustees may be characterized as passive. Trustees learn of Extension programs after they have been developed, they learn of changes within the Extension system after the fact, they often are asked to ratify decisions made elsewhere in the system. Their most important role has become one of providing political influence at the county and state level in order to maintain Extension's share of the state budget. According to agents they have been very useful in this role, however they have no role as trustees in the development or planning of agents' programming activities.

Trustees have served to support particular program areas in decisions over distribution of Extension resources. Staff mentioned the

support that 4-H has received from trustees and their commitment to maintaining 4-H programs. Trustees tend to participate because of their interest in a particular program area and thus they focus on those areas. This often tends to lead to conflict among trustees as well as a tendency to inhibit change in programs as trustees have typically wanted to see maintained those interests that they bring to the board.

Program Advisory Committees

Typically a program advisory committee is organized by an Extension agent to provide local input into a program that he or she is conducting in a county or region. There are agents who have combined with other agents working on similar programs to create state-wide program advisory committees. Some 4-H and agricultural agents have done this. The agent might have as many distinct advisory committees as he or she has discrete programs. The committee would exist over the period that the program exists and meet as frequently as necessary to fulfill its role. Typically members are recruited by the agent, they represent potential beneficiaries of the program or those who can empathize with them. When appropriate some members of the committee may be drawn from other agencies that the agent would be cooperating with to carry out his or her program.

A program advisory committee is usually driven by the activities that are identified by it for the agent. Agents use these committees in many ways ranging from simple feedback on an agent's ideas to program development, management and evaluation. The kinds of decision areas that the committee may be involved in vary depending on the agent and his or her purpose and the committee members. The level of influ-

ence that participants have over any decision area also varies depending on the agent. Some agents seek to have committee participants extensively influence the direction of the program, others severely limit the amount of influence available to participants.

Project Advisory Committees

Project advisory committees are usually established by an agent to advise and assist the agent with a project that is limited in time, usually up to six months, and scope, usually a fairly limited goal. An agent might create a project committee to assist in implementing a specific task identified by a program committee. Typically they are used to develop and implement a single educational event or series of events, a conference for example.

The agent would recruit the members for this committee and they might represent a cross-section of potential beneficiaries, empathetic and non-empathetic non-beneficiaries, and other agents or agencies that might have a shared goal in common with the agent. These people would participate for the life of the project. The project and the tasks necessary to implement the project would drive how and when meetings take place as would the style or needs of the agent as well as committee members.

The amount of influence of committee members over any particular decision area varies based on the agent and the skills of the members of the committee. The decision areas that committee members would contribute to would also vary according to the agent and members. Some agents feel, for example, that when it comes to designing actual learning activities they should do that with very limited input from committee members.

Non-Extension Organized Committees

Extension agents often participate in committees or boards that have been organized by other agencies or groups such as the United Way, YMCA or the Farm Bureau. While typically the agent has no organizing function in this group he or she is usually cooperating to contribute to a specific activity or program that is consistent with his or her job as an Extension agent. Agents mention that they get lots of ideas from such groups for projects and resources that can help in their efforts outside of the group that they are participating in.

These groups may take several general forms. Agents participate as board members of various agencies and in such cases play a role that the agency director has determined for board members. For the agent this type of group participation serves to ground him or her in the realities confronting another agency in the agent's county. The agent thus has a chance to network, be better informed about the situation in the county, and develop ideas for his or her own work. Agents may also participate in groups that serve a purely networking purpose such as a professional women's group. Again the agent may find him or herself learning more about local conditions, discovering others with common interests and work objectives, learning about local needs that he or she might address, or finding out about resources that might support his or her activities. Another form that non-Extension organized groups might take on the local level is a purely task oriented group formed to implement a particular project. In such a case the agent is usually there to provide his or her expertise on a subject or skills in organizing educational events.

Often, because of their participation in such a group, agents find themselves working on a particular activity that is planned and implemented by the group. Typically the agent would provide what resources or skills she or he has to the project identified and planned by the group. The non-Extension organized group may continue on a long or short term basis. The agent would likely participate as long as the goals and objectives of the group coincide with his or her goals and objectives.

Key Informants

A final method that agents mention as a mechanism for allowing local input to their program development is through key informants. Agents often identify key individuals who they think are able to inform them about important needs and provide feedback on agents' ideas for meeting these needs. Typically the key informant is also a potential beneficiary, but there are those who might be considered "experts" on a topic or a population and their needs. These individuals, who may not be potential beneficiaries, may or may not be empathetic to those who would be potential beneficiaries.

How agents use key informants is the least formalized mechanism used by Extension staff to allow for local input into their programs. The breadth or depth of the input achieved through this mechanism is not the equivalent of that obtained through other mechanisms. Key informants, while often potential beneficiaries, are not generally representative of the whole population that could benefit from the agent's educational activities. The key informants are often those people that the agent finds most congenial, knowledgeable, or accepting of his or her ideas. People in the Extension agricultural program tend

to use this mechanism more than others. Key informants and agents share information, but there is no obligation for either party to do more with the information than use it for their own needs. Thus the key informant is not usually looked at as one who could pass information on to others, such as a key farmer in a T and V system, and isn't selected on that basis. Agents, while they often might, are not obligated to use what they have learned from a key informant in any of their programming activities. The lack of formality of this mechanism, while it may help to personalize the information exchange between agent and key informant and thus reveal at least the basic facts and situations confronting the key informant, does not provide any specific mechanism for ensuring use of the input from the key informant. This requires the agent to be able to analyze and synthesize the information from many key informants before he or she can make useful programming decisions.

Analysis of Mechanisms

This section will analyze the five mechanisms introduced in the last section that Extension staff use for including local input or participation in their program development decisions. The analysis will address the issues identified in the last chapter as being important to the process of local participation in program development: who are the participants, to which decisions and at what level of influence do participants contribute, some general comments on the process of participation, and the effectiveness of the participation from a primarily Extension perspective.

An important focus of this section is to determine whether a mechanism allows for participation on the part of community members in

Extension agents' planning and development activities or whether they provide an opportunity for input. Participation would be occurring if community members were involved in the whole process of the planning stage at some level of influence. Input would be taking place if community members were generally not involved in more than a few decision areas of the planning stage and that this involvement was of very little influence in the agent's planning and development process.

Board of Trustees

A board of trustees operates with a perspective that is supposed to be inclusive of all of the county for which the particular county Extension office is responsible. The programs that staff intend to deliver, the potential beneficiaries of those programs, the resources required by the programs and the profile of Extension in its provision of educational activities are meant to be included in what a board considers and reflects upon.

The Participants. Generally participants are representative of the potential beneficiaries of Extension programs in a county. That is the board members could potentially find some of the programs presented by Extension directly useful to them. Closer inspection reveals, however, that boards are not representative of the populations being served by all of Extension. While boards are mixed in gender they are poorly representative of minorities and lower income families. This is likely to be due to what Extension expects of board members in terms of influencing county policy and support for Extension. Board members need to be articulate, in contact with the politically influential in the county, and willing to spend their time on behalf of Extension

trying to influence local and state resource decisions in favor of Extension.

Recruitment procedures for board members have greatly influenced who participates on the board. Requiring a county commissioner or their representative takes up at least one chair on the board. The influence of the county commissioner(s) on who else is selected to the board begins to establish a board of the politically influential, but it perhaps also begins to establish a group of people without empathy to those that Extension views as its audience of potential benefi- ciaries. The program interests of staff and their attempts to place people on the board that would support a single program area can also generate a board that has little empathy for those who could benefit from other types of Extension programming.

Thus boards of trustees, based on who participates on them, provide a very narrow basis for Extension agents seeking direction as part of their program planning activities. As individuals, outside of the context of board meetings, board members may be able to provide useful comments to help Extension staff as they develop their programs.

Decisions and Influence. Within the context of the decision areas that go to make up program planning and development, Extension staff find themselves unable to access the board of trustees for their par- ticipation. Staff identify three decision areas where board members have made some contribution to their program planning activities in the context of board meetings: the identification of potential benefici- aries, the identification of beneficiaries' needs, and the identifica- tion and acquiring of resources.

Extension agents have said that the context of board meetings has not been a place for them to be able to discuss program planning issues. Board meetings tend to be business oriented and focused on the Extension system's needs. Consequently the board hears about Extension programs after the fact or are presented with decisions that have already been made. The formality of the board's meetings limits the board's ability to be involved in programming decisions. Both staff and board members have expressed disappointment over the inability of the board to be involved in Extension's programming activities and decisions.

The Process of Participation. Some of the important issues here have already been alluded to. Board members as individuals represent indirectly some of the potential beneficiaries of Extension's activities. Their participation is limited to a few decisions areas. The existence of their role is dependent on Extension, there is little room for an independent board that actually has a great deal of control over Extension's activities. Like the boards of many organizations, boards of trustees in Extension tend to have little participation in the activities of the organization. Boards of trustees are limited to a mostly "input" role relative to agents' planning and development activities.

Effectiveness. The effectiveness of the boards can be looked at from several perspectives. In this study the emphasis is on the perspective of the agent and the Extension system although the comments of board members have also been included. Staff agree on the following: the board of trustees is a formality in terms of their programming; the board does not set policy or program directions for

staff; the board is good at providing feedback on their ideas; and the board is politically important to Extension. In relation to Extension's needs in general the board is most important and is highly effective in promoting Extension within the county and the state for the purpose of maintaining Exten- sion's resource base and connecting it to other organizations with similar roles at the county level.

Board members have complained about what appears to them to be the formality of their role. Those members who are action oriented feel that they benefit little from their membership on the board. Those members who have been able to play a role in supporting a specific program area of Extension through their board membership are pleased with their participation and feel they have accomplished something.

The "Board of Trustees," while often presented as a way of allowing local influence over Extension county programs, appears to be focused to a large degree on maintaining the political support necessary for Extension to exist in Massachusetts. Extension county agents are not unhappy with this role for their boards. For western Massachusetts Extension agents, boards of trustees have not been an effective means for allowing local input into their program planning and development. This tends to force them to look elsewhere if they want such input.

Program Advisory Committees

The mechanism that has been termed "Program Advisory Committee" is among the most popular of mechanisms used by Extension staff to include local participation in their programming efforts. Fifteen of the twenty agents surveyed responded that they used some form of a program advisory committee during the last two years as part of their program-

ming activities. Of those responding that they used this mechanism, five were 4-H agents. The 4-H program is strongly based on using committees of volunteers who are responsible for working with youth to manage the direction of their programs. The 4-H agent becomes a resource person to these committees as well as a trainer for the volunteer youth leaders who make up these groups. The youth leaders are parents and other adults, often participants in 4-H programs themselves when they were young, who are interested in leading a group of youth in a particular educational activity. A 4-H agent might have several groups led by volunteers that are interested in particular topics, for example horse programs. The volunteer leaders would form a committee for guiding the horse programs and the 4-H agent would work with this committee having little actual contact with the youth in the horse program. Other activities are managed similarly by 4-H agents, especially their youth fairs.

Other Extension agents use such committees to provide guidance to programs that they might be conducting. These may be broadly or narrowly construed programs, the agent's entire home economics program or only a particular aspect of that program such as a home based business program. During the past two years, of the agents who are not 4-H agents, two have started advisory committees to manage volunteers or program areas, two began the period with broad program committees and have ended them, one has maintained a broad advisory committee for several years, three have used advisory committees for long term narrow programs, and two have been involved only in state-wide program advisory committees.

The Participants. Within the 4-H programs the volunteers and in some cases youth that make up program advisory committees can both be construed to be potential beneficiaries of the 4-H programs. The youth are likely to benefit directly and the adults indirectly as parents of the youth that are involved or potentially involved. The adults, if not seen as potential beneficiaries, could be termed as being empathetic to the youth and their needs.

Agents other than 4-H agents tend to recruit for their program advisory committees potential beneficiaries or members of agencies working in supporting areas that are empathetic to potential benefici- aries of agents' educational activities. In one case an agent mentioned recruiting a non-empathetic individual to sensitize the individual to the potential beneficiaries and their needs relative to his or her activities. In some cases an Extension state specialist has been part of an agent's local or state-wide committee.

Agents mention a variety of methods for recruiting members to their committees. Some seek members based on a representative format so that all of those groups that their program would serve are represented. 4-H agents find that their volunteers recruit others, that former 4-H youth volunteer, or that youth bring their parents into the programs. Other agents find that as they work on various projects in a community and as they work toward developing a program they are able to identify individuals who have the skills and abilities to help them. A combination of these approaches to recruitment is probably typical. In all cases participation is sought on a volunteer or interest basis and no agent admits to forcing participation.

Decisions and Influence. Extension agents that have organized
program advisory committees use them in all of the decision areas that
have been identified as being relevant to the program planning and
development stage: identification of potential beneficiaries,
identification of needs, identification of program goals and objec-
tives, designing activities, identifying or acquiring resources, and
start-up decisions. If the categories of none, some, cooperative and
extensive are used to describe the levels of influence that partici-
pants have in any particular decision area the following can be said
about the level of influence that participants have relative to these
decisions.

1. Participants have the least amount of influence over decisions
    relating to the identification of potential beneficiaries and
    resources. In these areas their influence typically falls in
    the category of "some," they have some input that is listened
    to, but the decision is really controlled by the Extension
    agent.

2. The most influence participants have is within the decision
    area relating to needs identification. For some agents out-
    side of the 4-H program this is the decision area that they
    think is crucial and they want outside influence.

3. Other than the decision areas identified in the first state-
    ment above, the level of influence for the rest of the
    decision areas falls into the cooperative category.

4. 4-H agents typically state that they attempt to empower
    volunteer leaders to manage their own programs. There are
    other agents who share this intention of empowerment as well
    as agents who are not interested in empowering their advisory
    committees.

The Process of Participation. Participants are selected as indi-
viduals representing particular groups or categories of people in the
general population of potential beneficiaries. Some agents, typically
4-H, but there are others, are interested in creating committees that
could operate independently of the agent and encourage them to do so.

The role of the participants and the committee and the process of their participation in an agent's program planning and development depends on how the agent defines that role and process and his or her skills in working with the committee.

Participants as well as agents state that, while they are generally asked by either an agent or other participants to join an advisory committee, they participate because of a shared interest in the general purpose of the committee, a feeling of being able to help their community or some group in their community, new contacts among people and thus learning from others about the issues they are working on, and the importance of the issues that the committee is focusing on. Although participants are typically asked to participate in an advisory committee, that is they don't usually ask to join, they become involved for a variety of reasons that are their own and that working on the committee helps to fulfill.

The process of participation in program advisory committees has the potential for allowing participation for community members in an Exten sion agent's program planning and development. While it is also possible for an agent to limit the actual level of influence of com-mittee members to a very low level, this is a mechanism that can be used for local participation in program planning and development.

Effectiveness. The program advisory committee, from the Extension agent's or Extension's point of view appears to be effective on several counts. Agents think that one of the best uses of this mechanism is for giving direction to their programs. 4-H agents use this mechanism to manage most of their programs, they find it effective in making the best use of their time and effective in empowering volunteers to run

their own programs. Of the other agents who are currently using this mechanism, two have advisory committees that have extensive managerial control over the program areas and two have advisory committees to whom they are giving more control over planning. Thus nine of the twelve agents using advisory committees have found it capable of a major planning role and highly useful in their educational activities.

As long as participants find a match between the purpose of the program area that the advisory committee is meant to focus on and their own interests, the program advisory committee can be effective in meeting the various needs of its participants. A 4-H agent stated that when there was divergence between the interests of the individual and the interests of the committee, both were frustrated.

Program advisory committees are not created to perform the kind of political role that seems to be the focus of the role of the board of trustees. Advisory committees are program focused, their usefulness in promoting and sustaining Extension is through the creation of good educational activities that benefit the populations they are meant to serve. Participants through their own contacts can play political roles that may enhance the program's stature in a community. Typically Extension agents don't use advisory committees in a political role, but there is a potential for them to be used in such a role.

Project Committee

Of the twenty agents interviewed four have used what has been identified as project committees in the last two years. Typically these projects have resulted in an educational event or series of events. They have all been short term projects ranging from a few months up to a year.

The Participants. Typically the participants in a project com-
mittee represent the potential beneficiaries of the project, but they
might also represent agencies or others with an interest in the project
and empathetic to the potential beneficiaries. Potential beneficiaries
provide insight on needs, appropriate goals, activities, and some ideas
on resources. Members from agencies often are sought out for help in
the area of resources, as workshop leaders on a topic or to identify
potential sources of expertise or materials needed to implement the
project, as well as their other insights. An agent would recruit
people to a project committee through contacts with people that he or
she knows would have an interest in the purpose of the project. If an
agent finds that he or she lacks a well rounded committee this initial
set of contacts is used to locate more members. As the project com-
mittee tends to be very action or task oriented, recruitment is often
focused on finding members based on skills relevant to the tasks to be
implemented. For example, recruiting water quality specialists to help
supply information to a project on water quality issues. One agent
created a project committee of potential beneficiaries who found they
needed to learn skills to complete their tasks. The agent found this
process to be important for the participants as they were able to leave
the project with something they had gained and the project was stronger
for their efforts.

Decisions and Influence. The project committee appears to be the
mechanism, organized by Extension staff, that allows for the greatest
influence of participants over the planning process for the project.
Participants are involved in all of the decision areas of the planning
process. The level of influence of participants is lowest in the deci-

sion area related to project start-up, falling in the category of "some influence." In the categories of needs identification and setting project goals and objectives participants have "extensive influence." In identifying potential beneficiaries, designing activities and identifying or acquiring resources the level of influence falls into the category of "cooperative."

The Process of Participation. A project committee is typically dependent on Extension for its formation, focus and activity. Participation is for a short period of time and is often task oriented such as writing a promotional flier, contacting individuals to deliver workshops, identifying activities and planning their implementation, etc. Individuals in the committee often represent larger groups and organizations such as a farm commodity association or a housing association.

One agent went to a group with an idea for a potential educational project for that group. The agent organized a project committee of members from the group to plan and implement the project. This was a case where the group participated directly in a project shared with Extension.

The actual process of participation is dependent on the agent's vision of how he or she would like the process to take place and his or her skills in managing the process of participation. There is the possibility for there to be a high level of influence by community participants in the planning and development activities stages of a project through this mechanism.

Effectiveness. Agents who have used this mechanism in the last two years in western Massachusetts report that it has been very

effective for them in terms of achieving such ends as project direction and planning. Those who have used this method have also found that it allowed them to create the political good will needed to sustain the project they were working on. This mechanism allowed them to bring in those whose support was needed for a project to continue in the community and be successful.

Operationally the agents have found this mechanism useful as they have found the process of decision making within their project committees to be effective. Also their project committees have allowed them to be broad based enough to tap into a range of resources that would have been otherwise unavailable to them.

In terms of being able to contribute to the educational activities of the agents this mechanism is used as the management tool for making educational activities happen for the agents using it. These agents report being able to acquire broader based institutional and community support for their projects by using project committees than if they had implemented the project on their own.

Agency participants in project committees find them beneficial as they are short termed. Project committees also provide a means for agency participants to achieve their own work related objectives. For example child care specialists have work related to educating child care providers about appropriate methods and state regulations. An Extension project focused on these issues would attract such a person because it would help him or her to achieve his or her job objectives. Potential beneficiaries benefit because of what they learn in terms of skills and contacts with others working within the project focus.

Non-Extension Organized Committees

Extension agents report that they often participate in committees organized by associations, organizations, or networks with which they are affiliated. Such participation often informs their own work and sometimes results in projects of their own. Agents find it possible to work on another agency's committee and remain focused on only one part of the committee's activity. A committee may be preparing to stage a series of programs on an agricultural topic and a given agent will only have to contribute on that topic that he or she is expert such as potatoes or training methods. Thirteen of the agents surveyed identified non-Extension organized committees as a mechanism they use for allowing local input into their programming activities. This study addressed how they worked on a non-Extension committee project rather than how the committee informed the agent's work.

The Participants. Who participates in such committees depends on who is organizing the committee. An agency or organization will recruit to a committee those that they feel may be useful and that utility is based on the organization's philosophy as well as its capacities. Agencies tend to recruit other agencies with occasional potential beneficiaries participating. If the organization is made up of potential beneficiaries, such as a farm commodity group, more potential beneficiaries, will participate than in agency committees. Agency organized committees, if they are trying to organize a project that is meant to benefit a population in the community other than other agencies, will often have non-empathetic members on the committee.

Decision and Influence. From an Extension agent's point of view, working on a non-Extension organized committee provides him or her with

an opportunity to be the participant and to not worry about facili-
tating the participation of others. Such participation is also based
on the agent's skill or area of knowledge so she or he can participate
with confidence and tends to do so in those decision areas that relate
most to him or her. One agent stated that she tends to work through
existing community committees looking for issues that she can make an
impact on. She works with a group based on what she can do for the
group. As adult educators many Extension agents find themselves having
an extensive influence on activity design. The other decision areas
are left by the agent for others to exert their influence.

The Process of Participation. Generally, the process of
participation reflects the emphasis of the group or person organizing
the committee. Looked at from an Extension agent's perspective the
process is one that is quite independent of Extension. The committee
could take directions that are not consistent with Extension's
directions and the agent would continue to participate based on how the
committee's focus tended to coincide with his or her own focus. This
mechanism allows for input into an agent's work by community members,
but does not allow for participation in the planning or development of
the agent's activities.

The length of participation could be long or short. Groups or
individuals could be participants (an agent could be working on a
cooperative's project or the committee could be made of members
representing other groups or just themselves). The impetus to partici-
pate is often based on the project focus and how important it is to
the members of the committee.

<u>Effectiveness</u>. Working on committees organized by other groups allows an agent to achieve his or her job objectives and share out some of the planning and development issues that he or she would normally be required to manage. This mechanism, while it isn't one that could establish a broad agenda for an agent, could be used to fill out some directions for an agent. Participating in non-Extension organized committees does effectively achieve some political objectives related to maintaining a presence for Extension in community affairs and creating an awareness among the committee members of what Extension can do. As well, participation on one person's committee may obligate that person to help the agent at a latter date. Extension's role with a particular committee can get lost in the eyes of the general public, they will see the sponsoring organization of the committee to be the one deserving of the credit for the results of the committee's activities.

Non-Extension organized committees may contribute to the provision of educational activities and may not. This mechanism, if focused on educational projects can help to make the agent effective in the delivery of educational activities. If the group is not action oriented, it will be a poor contributor to the agent's role of educator.

This mechanism can benefit Extension agents both in terms of the resources available for his or her efforts and through the sharing of decision making responsibilities. However, it isn't necessarily the case that this will happen, control of the group and its activities are out of the hands of the agent and thus there is always some risk from the point of view of how the agent's or Extension's operations can benefit from this mechanism. This is also true for other participants

and how they might benefit from the mechanism. An agent in organizing
her or his own committee can determine whether or not participants
benefit from their participation in her or his committee. An agent
can't guarantee that others will benefit from participation in a
committee that she or he didn't organize.

Key Informants

This least formal of all mechanisms used for input by Extension
agents has been used by nine of the twenty agents surveyed in this
study, predominantly by agriculture agents. One reason why more agri-
culture agents find this a useful tool than other agents is that agri-
culture agents have historically tended to work on an individual basis
with their potential beneficiaries. This allows the agent to hear what
individuals have to say about their farms and, based on their credi-
bility with the agent, inform the agent's programming.

Participants. Potential beneficiaries, other agencies, those both
empathetic and non-empathetic to potential beneficiaries are partici-
pants in the mechanism. If an agent falls into the trap of trying to
build a general model of his potential audience based on selected key
informants he or she could be led astray because of a selection bias.
Agents who use this method must be sure to reach enough key informants
so that all of their potential population is represented.

Decisions and Influence. Key informants, as far as agents tend to
use them, provide information relevant to identification of the needs
or problems of a population. When an "expert" is a key informant the
information synthesized may be broadly based, when an individual is
presenting her or his information that information is based on experi-
ence. The actual level of influence that a key informant may have over

90

the final selection or determination of what needs or problems will be addressed by an agent's activities is very low.

The Process of Participation. In fact there is no participation with this mechanism. There is an opportunity for input, but there is no participation in the decision making process. This is a process that is focused on individuals and their relationship with the agent.

Effectiveness. In general this mechanism does not go very far in meeting Extension's needs. The agent may end in responding quickly to a key informant's needs or problems, but key informants do not provide enough to plan the entire direction of a program. The right key informants may benefit the agent or Extension politically if they are influential and if they find the agent responsive to their statements.

Key informants might provide direction for a project or educational event, but the agent will have only him or herself left to organize the event. Key informants may provide the problems for an educational event to focus on, but they won't be able to help the agent organize and stage the event unless the agent can organize them in some way at which point they become more than just key informants.

Summary

Of the five mechanisms used by Extension agents in western Massachusetts for involving community members in decision areas related to the program planning and development stage only two of them, the program advisory and project committees appear to have the potential of participation with high levels of influence. Some agents are using these mechanisms at those levels. Other agents are using these mechanisms but because of their purpose or skills they are not using them to provide community members with a high degree of influence in their pro-

gram planning and development. The next chapter will present a series
of case studies to examine how program advisory committees are being
used to provide high levels of influence to community members within
the context of agents' planning and development activities. Program
advisory committees will be studied because more agents are using them
and how they operate is similar to project committees.

Figure 4.2 is a summary of this chapter's analysis of the mecha-
nisms used by agents to allow for input from potential beneficiaries
and others into their program planning activities. The format of the
chart follows the model developed earlier. The row across the top
lists the mechanisms to be compared. The column along the side lists
the criteria used for comparison.

	Board of Trustees	Program Advisory	Project Committee	Non-Extension Groups	Key Informant
Participants					
Potential B's	x	x	x	x	x
Extension Practitioners/other agencies	x	x	x	x	x
Empathetic	x	x	x	x	x
Non-empathetic	x	x		x	x
Decision Areas (influence)					
Ident Audience	some	some	coop	na	na
Ident Needs	some	coop	extensive	some	some
Determine Goals/ Objectives	na	coop	extensive	na	na
Design Activities	na	coop	coop	na	na
Ident Resources	some	some	coop	na	na
Start-up	na	coop	some	na	na
Key Points					
Group or Individuals (G or I)	I	I	I or G	I or G	I
Direct or Indirect (D or I)	I	I	D or I	I	na
Dependent/Independent (Dep or Ind)	Dep	Dep-Ind	Dep-Ind	Ind	Dep
Impetus for Participation (Extension -Ext. or Independent - Ind)	Ext	Ext-Ind	Ext-Ind	na	Ext
Effectiveness					
Meets Extension's needs	high	med	med	low	low
Contributes to education	low	high	high	low to high	low
Meets needs of participants	low-med	med-high	med-high	na	na
Benefits Extension operational decisions	low	med-high	med-high	maybe	na

Figure 4.2 Summary of Comparison of Different Participatory Mechanisms

Table 4.2 summarizes the data collected by telephone survey from

agents. The numbers represent total agents reporting in the

affirmative regarding a particular heading. For example, four of the seven home economics agents have received training in working with groups. The headings represent the types of mechanisms used by agents to encourage local participation in their activities, some agents reported using more than one mechanism. The agents were asked whether they had received any training in working with groups and the column headed "With Training" summarizes their answers. Answers varied from half day workshops on group dynamics to three day workshops on working with groups to college courses on the subject.

Table 4.2 Agents, Their Mechanisms for Local Participation
and Their Training in Group Processes, by Program Area

Program Area	Agents	With Training	Program Advisory	Project Committees	Non-Extension Committees	Key Informants
Agricul-ture	6	1	2	0	0	5
Home Ec.	7	4	5	3	6	2
CRD	2	1	1	1	2	1
4-H	5	5	5	0	2	1

Two tendencies are indicated by the table. The more technical the nature of the information specialization of the agent, the less likely the agent will be using a group to encourage local participation. Agriculture agents exhibit this trend. The second tendency is that agents with training in working with groups are more likely to be using some kind of group to encourage local participation in their activities. As comparison of 4-H agents and agriculture agents reveals this tendency.

CHAPTER V

THE BERKSHIRE FOOD AND LAND COUNCIL:
A CASE STUDY

The chapter will use a part of the model developed in Chapter
Three to analyze a program advisory committee created by a Berkshire
County Extension agent to help in conducting her activities. The focus
of the chapter will be to more closely examine an example mechanism to
determine how local participation occurs in the planning and develop-
ment of Extension activities. Issues that will be addressed include
the conditions that are important to making the process effective and
suggestions in using this mechanism.

Following the Berkshire case study information collected from
interviews with four other agents about their use of program advisory
committees will be synthesized and presented. The purpose is to
provide the reader with several views on the use of program advisory
committee by Extension staff. Through this synthesis the range of how
this mechanism is used, why it is used in different ways, and why it
has been useful to those who have used it will be addressed.

The data for this chapter was collected through in-depth inter-
views of Extension staff and participants in program advisory
committees in western Massachusetts. The program advisory committee
has been selected for study because it is the one mechanism most often
used by Extension staff that allows for participation at more than just
the input level. Project committees are also used, but in many ways
they tend to operate like an advisory committee, only they exist for a
shorter period. What we learn from a study of program advisory com-
mittees should also hold for project committees.

The Program Advisory Committee

The Berkshire Food and Land Council (BFLC) is a committee orga-
nized by a county agent in Berkshire County to help her plan, imple-
ment, and evaluate Extension activities relating to the food system in
southern Berkshire County. The council has been operating for the last
18 months.

Context

Berkshire County is among the most rural counties in
Massachusetts. Over the last 20 years there have been drastic changes
in the county as there have been in all counties. There are fewer full
time residents in the county now than twenty years ago. A local real
estate agent reports a mailing list of second home owners in the county
with over 20,000 names on it. Rural communities that were once based
on natural resource activities such as farming, logging and mineral
extraction have seen that economic base eroded. The people who worked
in those industries are either unemployed, gone, or commuting to other
towns for work. Most towns in the county have experienced an in-migra-
tion of people as second home owners or commuters. The result has been
that communities are fractured, farming activities are on a smaller
scale, and town governments are looking for means to sustain their
historical characteristics as well as providing for continued develop-
ment and increased demands on their services.

The agent whose work is the subject of this case has spent much of
her ten years as an Extension agent working on food and community
issues. She has conducted projects that have focused on helping people
to access healthful food as well as helping people produce good food.
Besides providing educational opportunities for people in her county,

one facet of her work has been to create situations that help community members to become leaders in their communities.

One method that she has used to prepare people for leadership roles is to put them in positions of responsibility and influence in all stages of the projects or programs that she conducts. She has done this through project or program advisory committees.

In March of 1987 the agent began to plan a program that would assist in educating and organizing communities around the issues relevant to the food system of South Berkshire County. She had selected the term "food system" because it defines a holistic approach to issues that are often treated as discrete, but which are interdependent in the community context. The issues relevant to a food system include:

1. Food production. The methods used for producing food and the factors associated with food production, land, capital and human resources.

2. The environment. The impact of food production on the environment is important as well as the natural resources that are available to food production.

3. The social context. Successful and sustainable food production requires a supportive and knowledgeable community context as much as it requires an amenable natural environment.

4. Food consumption. The market for food and the demands found in that market help to drive the kind of food produced, the methods that are used to produce food, how food is made available to the market, and the viability of food producers.

The agent understood how these issues interact and wanted to develop a program that would address all of them.

In the initial developmental stage the agent analyzed her resources for addressing these issues and discovered that the necessary resources existed. Within the Extension system the agent had access to other knowledgeable people who could address specific technological issues and provide support. In the county a network of people existed

that could also provide her with specific support relevant to the county.

She also reviewed what she saw as the demand for a program that would deal with all of these food system related issues from diverse segments of the population:

1. Local town officials were concerned about development and the pressures it was placing on their services as well as its eroding what they saw as the character of their communities.

2. Farmers were concerned about the context they were operating in, more people knew less and less about them and their farming activities, housing development was eroding their land base, they were looking for products and production and marketing systems that would maintain their viability.

3. Consumers were concerned with development issues, access to food, and maintaining the character of their communities.

4. A wide variety of agencies focused on various aspects of the food system were having difficulties making the kinds of impacts that they thought were important.

To verify that the issues identified were indeed important and that potential beneficiaries she had identified existed the agent met with various people in the county. She spoke with a reporter and editor at the county newspaper, with several people working in natural resources, and with a few farmers and local government officials. They confirmed her ideas and suggested keeping the program specific to a part of the county rather than trying to cover too much of a geographic area. They felt it important to do the program well and a narrowly defined geographic area such as South Berkshire County with its generally similar communities would be best. In June of 1987 the agent began to identify and recruit people to participate in her program advisory committee.

Since June of 1987, the council has grown to twenty-four members who have participated at various levels. Some have been more active

than others depending on the projects of the council and the time they have available for council work. Ten people have been the core of the council and have shared in steering the activities of the council. The council has carried out several projects to educate themselves and others: a World Food Day event in October of 1987 was focused on creating an awareness among people in southern Berkshire County of how local and world food issues are related; 5,000 copies of a farm map that listed 67 farms with retail outlets of their own products was printed and distributed with the intention of increasing those farms' sales and informing residents of the farms that are active in their communities; study circles were established to educate council members and others about issues relating to the food system nationally and locally; a seminar/conference was held to create an awareness of and interest in development planning methods that have worked in various communities.

Participants

The agent developed a list of the categories of potential beneficiaries of her program. Potential beneficiaries could be narrowly defined as those who directly receive economic or social benefits in a program because of their direct participation in the program's educational activities. The definition could be expanded to include those who indirectly benefit from a program either because they learn from participants or because they benefit from others economic and social gains. The agent in this case took a broad perspective on who could potentially benefit from the proposed program and included both direct and indirect potential beneficiaries in recruiting for the council. Direct beneficiaries were identified as farm operators, local govern-

ment officials and users of the south Berkshire natural resource base. Indirect potential beneficiaries included residents who were interested in managing their towns' development, food consumers, and residents who would gain or lose because of changed zoning laws due to towns being more careful about planning their development.

The agent went through each category identifying people who might be interested in participating. She also contacted other agents and key informants for suggestions of people from southern Berkshire County who should participate. Some of these prospective participants were people the agent knew from her previous activities, others were names on lists that were new to her. She contacted them all by letter and telephone and set up a meeting for June of 1987 to begin the process of establishing her program advisory committee. She had identified over fifty names as possible participants for that first meeting.

The agent's plan was to invite her initial list of people to participate in a meeting that would introduce them to her vision of a possible program. The first meeting would focus on creating an interest among those participants and defining problems to work on relating to food system issues. A second meeting would begin to see how committed people were to the group by actually identifying something to do. Ensuing meetings would attend to program goals and other activities. The important thing was to get the group functioning on activities they identified using their own resources. This would begin to develop a sense of their actually being a group. As the group became established the agent hoped it would be able to recruit new members and this has happened.

Members of the council have given the following reasons for participating:

"Involvement with the council provides wider contacts and an opportunity to participate in activities that are important to my community and interesting to me."

"I am interested in land/open space preservation."

"I am interested in communities being able to control their own development."

"My notion of community is a community of people living on land and interested in the well being of others in the community."

"To help people who care about the quality of life in the Berkshires and to work to maintain that quality."

"To protect and preserve open space."

"To provide an example of local people working to maintain and sustain their communities assets."

"To work to inform the community about land use and food production."

"To explore and share new ideas."

"To present to the communities the many alternatives available."

"To promote agriculture and a rural lifestyle."

"To maintain the rural qualities of southern Berkshire County."

Decision Areas

This study has identified six general categories of decision areas involved in the planning stage for Extension educational activities. The case study will follow these categories and address them in the order that they arose for the Berkshire Food and Land Council.

Identification of Potential Beneficiaries. For the Berkshire Food and Land Council no conscious decision has ever been made to limit itself to one particular set of potential beneficiaries. From the first meeting discussion has always been in terms of the residents of southern Berkshire County. This area is made up of 15 towns and it has

been assumed by the BFLC that the potential beneficiaries of projects
that they developed would be in those towns. As a specific project is
identified and developed particular segments of the populations of
these towns are identified as potential beneficiaries of the project.
When the BFLC decided on a map project to identify farms with retail
outlets they also identified the following who would be direct benefi-
ciaries of the project: the farmers who were listed on the map through
their increased sales; lower income elderly and other rural lower
income groups who could access what are often less expensive and higher
quality food sources; second home families who would become better
informed about farms in their communities.

Identifying Needs. About twenty people met at Monument Mountain
High School with the agent on a June evening in 1987. The agent
explained the purpose for bringing them together, to work on food sys-
tem issues, defined the term on the "food system" and asked paticipants
to talk about what they saw in their communities as issues relating to
the agent's proposed focus. Each participant was asked to contribute
his or her ideas. This discussion developed a general description of
the problems or issues confronting communities in southern Berkshire
County relevant to the food system.

Some of the remarks that were made included:

"Sheffield is confronted with a private landfill proposal that
will be a depository for waste from through-out New England."

"Youth don't know about agriculture, what it means to farm."

"Agriculture in the county is changing. It is no longer dairy.
There is a big shift to horticultural crops."

"Individuals feel powerless to deal with land use issues. We
need a responsible way to help people feel connected to land use
issues."

"Towns don't have strategic land use plans in place, if they do residents don't know about them."

"There are sustainable methods of agriculture that farmers can find viable, but they don't know about them. They pursue traditional methods."

"The public is unaware of the important land use issues and how they can be dealt with."

"Rural poverty persists. There are people in the county that live extremely isolated lives. I know people that have never been to Pittsfield. Having them be involved in land use and food system issues is important, but possibly too far removed for them to see the need."

"People with second homes are changing our communities, they like to see farms, but having a working farm next to them is too messy for them."

"The services that our towns are being asked to deliver are becoming too expensive to deliver."

"Locally produced food never gets to people in the county. It gets sent off and never comes back. Who knows what is in the food we end up eating. We have to have locally produced food that we know how it was grown, who grew it and what's in it."

"Our land is going to houses, we soon won't need to worry about locally grown food."

Participants were asked to identify some actions that could be taken to deal with these issues. The following are some of their ideas.

Creation of a farm match to match unused land with farmers that can use it.

Creation of an information network to help new people in the county make use of the resources in the county.

Creation of nutrition programs for adults and children that involve local agriculture.

Creation of a farm map to let people know where farms are.

Use of the school system as a source of education about farms. Student projects around modeling the future.

Educational workshops on land use issues and solutions.

This meeting had several results that were important to the agent. First of all, the group identified a set of problems or needs that coincided with those identified by the agent's research and discussions with people in her county. The meeting reinforced that people in the communities of southern Berkshire County felt that these were important problems that had to be resolved.

Secondly, the meeting served to introduce people to each other. They learned that others in their communities shared similar concerns. The meeting helped to clarify the situation for people and presented a possible means of working with these people on shared concerns.

Finally, participants were able to agree that some actions needed to be taken. Participants learned from each other that there were lots of possibilities for action. They also discovered that the Extension agent was prepared to develop a program that could put into motion some of the ideas that were presented.

Defining Goals. A second meeting was scheduled to more carefully consider the issues that had been identified during the first meeting and to bring together those participants that were interested in working as part of a program that would be focused on those issues. At this meeting the agent asked for a volunteer to chair the meeting and this method, a "revolving chair," has been continued for all general group meetings.

Discussion followed the general direction of the first meeting, but it became focused as members decided they wanted to identify some potential projects. The following projects were identified according to three basic criteria: interest on the part of the members in the project; a need for the projects; the projects could be done by the

group or people that the group could recruit. The list included the
following:

Determine the extent to which towns in southern Berkshire County
had developed and implemented strategic plans.

Develop a farm match that would put farmers or potential farmers
in contact with people who had land that they wanted farmed.

Begin to lobby on behalf of women in the Women with Infant
Children program (WIC) to have the Great Barrington Farmers'
Market included in the Massachusetts Department of Food and
Agriculture's voucher program. This program provides food stamp-
like vouchers to WIC participants to be used at farmers' markets
in selected sites across the state.

Create a clearing house for information related to resource issues
in the program area.

Develop a map of farms with retail outlets in south county.

Carry out a World Food Day Activity.

Several people volunteered to work on two specific projects and

the activities of BFLC began to take shape. Sub-committees were formed

to discuss plans of action. The World Food Day activity took priority

as it was to take place in two months time and it seemed easy to accom-

plish. This gave members a chance to test themselves and their group's

ability to work together. The retail farm outlet map would be another

and later project.

Preparing for the World Food Day event slowed the process of the

group in establishing its goals. However, holding an event gave the

group a sense of purpose and proved to its members that they could work

together to both learn about local and world food issues and provide

education to others about those issues. Staging an event also helped

the group establish a public profile.

While the group worked on its World Food Day project it also began

the process of defining its goals. Another meeting was held to do this

as well as discuss project planning, but project planning dominated the discussion. The agent then proposed using a somewhat modified "Delphi" process to develop and select the group's goals. The agent mailed to members of the group, at this point 20 people, a set of questions that they were to respond to:

1. What are three goals that you would propose as a focus for our action group?

2. Why have you participated in this group?

3. In order for this to happen, I need the group to?

4. Why would you lose interest in the group if?

The purpose of the mailing was to determine what direction the group should take, what members wanted to accomplish by means of the group, and why members would cease to participate in the group.

Results of the mailing yielded 18 potential goals. This list was sent back to the 20 group members and they were asked to rank the five statements they most agreed with as goals for the group and return their "short lists" to the agent. The results from the first "Delphi" round were:

Encourage conservation and wise use of natural resources and agricultural land.

Protect and preserve open spaces.

Counter mindless development.

Encourage local sustainable food production.

Encourage consumer consumption of locally produced nutritious foods.

Influence environmental quality.

Promote our own successful local endeavors to achieve sustainability.

Assist other groups with similar concerns.

Match would-be farmers with available farmland.

Be a source of information.

Encourage legislators/local officials/policy makers to support the needs of Massachusetts and Berkshire County agriculture.
Be an example of local people taking responsibility for these things.

Increase membership and resources of the group.

Learn more/be better informed about farm and food issues.

Facilitate suitable on-site housing for farm workers.

Figure out if one can work, live and sustain life on the land for ourselves.

Help traditional farmers switch to sustainable methods.

Knit the farm/food community together.

The responses to the other questions were returned to the participants so that they would understand each other's motivations for taking part in the group. Those responses were as follows:

Why have you participated in this group?

"So that people who individually care about the rural quality of the Berkshires could work together intelligently to defend that quality."

"To be helpful."

"To achieve the protection and preservation of open spaces and be an example of local people taking responsibility for these things."

"So that the public would learn of its needs and assets concerning land for basic food production, and that some practical steps might be taken to promote the satisfaction of those needs."

"Exploration of the possible."

"To explore and present to the community the many alternatives available for agriculture practices and land use."

"So that agricultural enterprises may be promoted and the components of a quality rural life could be enhanced and protected."

"So that the agricultural and aesthetic integrity of this area would be maintained."

In order for this to happen, I need the group to?

"Think out strategies towards the council's goals and work toward their fulfillment."

"Develop more information, technical, practical, economic models, and alternatives, on food and land use as well as on solid waste and water quality issues to determine what we might realistically do."

"Hang in there and be creative."

"Give consideration to the idea of presenting the many alternatives to the community and help me in its organization and presentation."

"Keep on."

"Identify ways to keep agricultural land viable."

"Take action to protect agricultural lands from development."

Why would you lose interest in the group?

"if we diffuse our energies over too many projects without getting into specifics."

"If we are unwilling to spend some time learning the nittygritty."

"If we go for a long time without accomplishing anything."

"If we become politicized."

"If one person's agenda dominates the direction."

"If we are unable to reach agreement on and focus our efforts on particular goals."

"If none of the above is accomplished."

The "short list" of goals determined by the Delphi process was presented to the group at a meeting in early 1988. That short list contained 13 goals that members at the meeting analyzed. The group found that the 13 goals could be summarized into six statements that fell into four general categories. The following are the goals that the Berkshire Food and Land Council identified for itself after four

months of discussions and through the Delphi process. They are listed in order of priority.

Conservation

Goal: Safeguard, conservation, and wise use of natural resources and agricultural land.

Local Food Production

Goal: Encourage local sustainable food production.

Goal: Encourage consumer consumption of locally produced nutritious food.

Establish an Activist Model

Become a prototype of an action-oriented grassroots group addressing the entire farm to food picture for the area.

Generate Community and Political Support

Promote local efforts to achieve sustainability.

Ensure support of local and state officials for sustaining local food and agriculture.

In developing and planning projects the group has followed a process for setting project goals and objectives that has sought to be open to those who want to make input. A recent project was a day long workshop on local development issues. The BFLC agreed that such as event should take place with the general purpose of presenting to local officials and residents successful methods and cases of activities related to conservation of natural resources, encouragement of local sustainable food production, and the promotion of local efforts to achieve sustainability. All members of the BFLC were notified of the project and of the date of the first meeting to plan the project. Six people attended the meeting and established objectives for the event: increased awareness of successful methods for saving farms; increased understanding of rural planning; and increased awareness of community

actions that can provide a future for farms. The council member who had proposed holding the event was asked to chair the project planning committee. The Extension agent supported the work of the project committee.

Designing Activities. Typically the BFLC works with the agent to design the activities of any of its projects. As has been mentioned elsewhere the role of BFLC members in a particular project relates to their skills and interests. For the World Food Day Project the sub-committee as a whole designed the event, a potluck supper, a local poet reading a poem on the character of south Berkshire County, and a panel consisting of a farmer, a conservationist and the local state representative that would discuss the inter-relatedness of local, state and world food issues.

The person who suggested the "Farm Map" project asked to be responsible for it. She had conducted similar projects and would work with the local Community Action Program to collect data for the map. The BFLC defined criteria for selecting who could be on the map, what towns were to be included and two other council members asked to help on the project.

A third project that developed was a "study circles" project. The council tried to conduct its general meetings so that it not only could take care of its project related business, but also so that it could inform itself on the issues relating to the goals it had selected. Every meeting had an educational segment. A representative of the American Farmland Trust was invited to one meeting to discuss land trusts, how they work and what his organization did to support them. During February and March, when holding a meeting is difficult in the

Berkshires because of the vagaries of the weather, the council decided to do small group research projects on a variety of topics and report back to the large group during the first spring meeting on their research results. Several topics for research were chosen, the national farm price picture, local institutional purchasing of local farm products, tracts of land worthy of preservation and feminist thinking about food, resources and agriculture. Members joined with the study group they were interested in and invited public participation as well.

The "rural development seminar" was designed by the sub-committee that was established to develop the project. The sub-committee sought to select for presentations various methods or ideas that had been successfully applied in the County or in settings similar to southern Berkshire County. Six workshops were designed, three of them based on locally successful activities and three on ideas used in areas outside of the county. The agent was responsible for bringing to the attention of the sub-committee the three non-local cases. The sub-committee liked her ideas and agreed to them. The overall structure of the day was developed by the sub-committee chair.

Identifying and Acquiring Resources. Resources for projects conducted by the BFLC have come from many sources, both locally and from outside the county. As project sub-committees proceed in their development of a project they report back to the council at general meetings on their progress. During general meetings all members have a chance to comment on the projects and make suggestions about them. During these reports there is often an opportunity to discuss the resource

requirements of a project and how to acquire the needed resources whether human or otherwise.

The World Food Day project was a potluck and council members as well as non-members provided dishes for the meal. All of the speakers were local speakers and the sub-committee identified and recruited them. Funds for printing promotional materials and rent for the Grange hall where the event was held were acquired from entrance fees for the event.

The "farm map" project had rather large resource requirements. One reason for working with the Berkshire Community Action Program was that they could make contributions to the project and they saw the project as useful to many of its clients (as stated elsewhere the project was intended to help inform elderly and limited resource families about local food sources). Community Action committed volunteers for data collection, funds for defraying costs, and found other funds to support the work of the Council member leading the project. The council approached the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture for funds to cover the printing of the map and received $2,000. The members of the council also worked on collecting data for the map and on the design of its layout.

The "rural development seminar" required both funds and human resources. Council members and presenters were needed to carry out a variety of activities involved in staging an event that would have several hundred people attending it. Funding for the event would come from entrance fees which covered promotion of the event, costs associated with using Monument Mountain Regional High School, film rental, and food.

Thus the BFLC has had to find ways to acquire resources to support its activities. For the most part the council has relied on its events to support themselves. When necessary the BFLC has been able to access outside people and funds to help with its activities. Often these outside sources have been made available because of the association of the BFLC with Extension, but just as often it has been because of the members of the BFLC.

Start-up. Exactly when the decision to start-up a project is made is often hard to identify chronologically. Does this occur when someone provides an idea and it generates a project? Does start-up take place when objectives are set for the project? Does designing the activities indicate that the project is going to happen or does it wait until the resources for the project are lined up? Start-up decisions are probably made as project development passes through each planning stage. What is the audience for the project? If there is one go on to the next stage. Do the problems addressed fit the council's goals? Go on to the next stage, and so on until all of the planning stages have been completed. This process for the start-up decision suggests that the council or its project sub-committees are making the start-up decisions as the project progresses and can decide to stop at any point.

The farm match idea is an example of a project that has potential beneficiaries, but has not been acted on. The project was so difficult to design and required so many resources that the Council rejected it after having had a group study its potential. The World Food Day project had a decision in favor of start-up almost immediately. The

113

project was discussed by the council, appeared as though it could be accomplished and went forward.

The Process of Participation

The process of participation has as much to do with who are the participants and their level of influence over the decisions that a group is making, as it does with a description of how the Council has operated in its meetings. However, there have been instances of methods or style that have helped to create a more participatory atmosphere and set precedents for how the Council would work. The agent's commitment to keeping the process open has forced members to take a role in leading the meetings and making decisions. Each meeting has been chaired by a different person. This "revolving chair" has helped to limit the control that any individual might have over the group. The Delphi process used to identify goals has also kept the process open. The agent exercised some control in bringing the group together and setting some limits on what she was prepared to work on, the "food system." Within that context the members of the council tended to take over.

Participants commented on the processes used during BFLC meetings and had the following to say about what went well and where there was room for improvement.

> "Delegation may be too much at times, the revolving chair should be stopped and the agent permanently chair the meetings."

> "There was a lot of time spent in achieving consensus over goals, less time could have been committed to this."

> "Lots of time has been needed for us to get to know each other and make commitments, but the process has helped this along. The period of adjustment takes a while."

> "The open process of goal identification and obtaining commitments from people was good."

114

"The efficient methods used for achieving consensus was important."

"Delphi method used in goal determination was good. Getting goals down has been important, achieved a shared vision."

"Committee process has been a success, we need to keep it open and encourage all to contribute."

According to our model there are some other factors relating to the process of participation that can be examined. The members of the group are acting as individuals, they represent segments of the population of their communities, but not in any formal manner. The scope of participants' involvement has included the total range of possible decision areas related to program planning and development.

The impetus for members participation came from Extension in that they were invited to participate. They would not be participating if the Council and the program were not responding with activities that they think important. Additional members have joined the Council having heard of it and its activities. Thus the impetus for participation has been shared between the agent and the members.

The Council exists because the agent created the possibility for it to exist as well as the parameters for its activities. The agent is also able to draw on Extension resources to support Council activities. If nothing else her free access to such things as telephone and postage is a great help to the council. Council members have acted independently of Extension in some decision areas. Whether the Council would continue without Extension is doubtful. If it did so, it would be with a much lower profile. The BFLC is dependent on Extension, but its members are able to set directions for BFLC independently of Extension.

Level of Influence. The agent was asked to evaluate the level of influence that Council members had over the different decision areas

related to the planning and development process of her "food system" program. She stated that she had made every effort to provide an opportunity for the Council to have extensive influence over all of the decision areas. She believes that the Council has taken advantage of the opportunity and has had extensive influence over all of the decision areas relating to the planning and development stage of this program. From her perspective the Council has been the initiator in the decision areas related to planning.

Participants who were interviewed regarding the Council's level of influence over decision areas did not fully support the agent's view. Council members were asked what they thought their level of influence should be in each decision area and what their actual influence had been. Generally, Council members thought that they should have extensive influence over the first three decision areas, identification of potential beneficiaries, identification of needs, and the development of goals and activities. For the other three decision areas, designing activities, identification and acquirement of resources, and start-up decisions, Council members thought they should have less influence. Most participants thought they should only have some influence over resource decisions and cooperative influence over activity design and start-up. Participants believe that they have actually had extensive control over the first three decision areas and cooperative influence over the last three decision areas.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the BFLC is not so much a question of educational results, but how well it has served those working through it to achieve their needs. The discussion of the effectiveness of the BFLC

116

may point to some educational results, but for the most part the following questions are the focus of the section:

How well has the council met Extension's and the agent's needs relative to enhancing Extension's profile in the agent's county?

How effective has the council been in providing educational opportunities for the potential beneficiaries of the agent's "food system" program?

How effective has the council been in meeting the needs of its participants?

How have the operations or activities of the agent benefitted because of the council?

Profile. The agent believes that in this case the BFLC has been very effective in enhancing Extension's profile. While work of the BFLC is identified as such, the Council is rarely mentioned without also mention being made of Extension's contributions to the Council. The Council has been able to bring media attention to several projects and issues that the agent feels she would have been unable to accomplish on her own. This attention has not only been on the council and its projects, it has been shared by the agent and Extension.

An example of enhanced profile would be the amount of media attention given the recent rural development seminar. Four articles appeared in three different newspapers in the county concerning the seminar. One article appeared in the editorial column of the Berkshire Eagle. The editor of the Berkshire Eagle is one of the most prominent people in the county. He is now paying attention to the Council's activities and commenting on Extension's activities. A letter to the editor following the seminar commended Extension and the BFLC for the seminar.

The council has also gone about creating alliances with agencies in the county such as the Community Action Program as the BFLC has

sought to plan and implement projects. This working with other groups
has extended the agent's network and helped to inform other agencies
about Extension's activities.

Educational Opportunities. One way of answering this question is
to determine what programs would have been offered if there had not
been a Berkshire Food and Land Council. The agent has a history of
providing fall events that have dealt with agricultural topics. This
might have continued without the Council. In fact the Council ended up
doing much the same thing by offering the World Food Day event in 1987
and the rural planning event in November of 1988.

Several educational projects were also conducted by the Council
with the agent's assistance. The farm map, the study circles, the
educational opportunities for the council and the media focus that the
Council drew to issues that it thought were important. These activi-
ties would not have been accomplished without the council according to
the agent.

The effectiveness of these additional activities has not been
thoroughly evaluated. The Council is about to evaluate whether the
farm maps drew more consumers to farms and who were the consumers that
came. The increased media attention in itself is one level of evalua-
tion. There are increased numbers of people in southern Berkshire
aware of the issues that BFLC has identified and worked to get into the
media. That awareness has resulted in communities supporting non-
Council projects. One such project is the Berkshire Natural Resource
Council (BNRC) which helps establish land trusts and other mechanisms
for farmland and open space protection. The director of BNRC openly
acknowledges the effectiveness of the council in drawing community

118

attention to development issues and hence to BNRC to seek ideas in managing their growth.

Meeting Participants' Needs. Statements about why members are participating with the council appear elsewhere in the study. The fact of continued participation supports the assumption that members' needs are being met or that they are benefiting in some way so that benefits exceed their costs of participating. The following is a list of participants' statements describing how they believe they are benefiting by participating in the BFLC.

"We are developing activities that will potentially lead toward several good things that will reward my expectations."

"Participation has benefited me by the creation of a sense of community with others with similar interests."

"Learning about the issues through the study circles benefited me as does the sharing of information."

"I have participated because of self-interest. The heightened community profile of the high school benefits the school because of the town allotments to the school's budget. The school is seen as contributing more to the communities. In addition the contacts with others with the same interests are important as is what I have learned from others."

"Staying focused on community problems and the causes of those problems has provided results and that has been personally satisfying."

"Information sharing among participants has benefited me and so has well as becoming a part of a larger network of people who are interested in some of the same issues."

"Participation is giving me a chance to work with others on what I feel is important."

"Meeting and working with others to try to arrive at solutions to problems of south Berkshire has been of benefit to me."

"Personal satisfaction from participating in activities dealing with important issues."

"The most important benefit to me has been identifying others in the community that are interested in similar topics, personal contacts made and information shared."

These comments suggest several things. People are participating because they have a need to act on a particular vision or value. They feel they benefit personally from the satisfaction they receive in acting to help solve problems that they and others have identified in their communities. Discovering that others share their interests and visions has also been of benefit to participants as has the expansion of their networks of contacts. Learning more about the issues in which they are interested or more about how they might take action on these issues has been important to them.

The other side of the equation of participation is the costs people incur by participating. The major cost named by members is their "time," their opportunity cost. People could be doing something else. One member said if he wasn't involved in the Council he could do more on behalf of a local sporting club. Another member said he doesn't normally get involved in volunteering. Both of these people mentioned having been able to accomplish something was an important benefit to them, it met their needs. Members in the BFLC seem to feel that they can absorb their opportunity costs if the time spent results in achievements.

Operational Benefits for the Agent. For the agent the BFLC has been the sole source for direction and planning in her "food system" program. Her county administrator and her board of trustees have both responded favorably to the direction that the Council has taken. Perhaps more important has been the opportunity for the agent to localize issues that are of state-wide or national interest for Extension.

Extension often has broad issues that serve to guide some of the system's general directions, but agents often have difficulty in deter-

mining how a national issue may have an impact on their own program-ming activities. For this agent the BFLC has provided her a mechanism for interpreting these issues in the context of southern Berkshire County. Agricultural profitability, clean water, managing community change are national and state concerns. The Council has been able to help the agent identify how to affect these issues on a local level by means of its goals and directions.

By having a group that can effectively plan and develop projects an agent could potentially increase his or her impact on a community. The agent has evaluated the BFLC as being very effective in all of the decision areas related to project planning and development. Their effectiveness has allowed her to focus on discrete parts of project development rather than having to be responsible for all of the decisions. While her costs in terms of time are not lessened, her impact has broadened.

The agent identified several benefits to her activities because of the creation of a program advisory board such as the BFLC. Some of these benefits have been mentioned elsewhere, but the following summa-rizes them.

> The localization of issues. The BFLC has given the agent a mecha-nism for interpreting national issues in the context of southern Berkshire County.

> Increased effectiveness. Having a council that is willing and able to identify projects that it can implement increases the impact of the agent. More is done with the same effort.

> Leadership development. The group has taken on a great deal of responsibility. For many this is their first opportunity to act as leaders. The Council has been a great support for these people.

> Increased media attention. The Council has been able to bring media attention to their activities by means of their contacts. Attention has been given to Extension and the agent. The agent

working on her own would not have been able to develop and focus this attention.

More local interest. The Council has provided credibility for the agent within the community. Council members have been effective in identifying local problems. Members of the communities of south Berkshire have responded favorably to having people they know working on these problems.

The agent has seen several benefits accrue because of her work with a program advisory committee. She feels that she has been more effective in dealing with important local issues, that she has had broader impact, the BFLC and Extension have enhanced their image, and that she is accomplishing her program goals.

The agent also feels that the major costs to her have been opportunity costs. The committee has been effective in making decisions and in planning and developing projects. She may have, however, missed opportunities to do other activities. She and her supervisors appear to think what she is doing out-weighs her opportunity costs.

Hence the Council has been effective in the area of operational decisions related to planning and development. The agent, on a scale of 1 to 10, rates the effectiveness of the council in planning decision areas between 8 and 10. The Council has provided distinct program directions that also coincide with issues that the Extension system believes to be important. This coincidence allows the agent to increase the emphasis that she can give to the council's activities as far as her supervisors are concerned.

Other Agents, Other Experiences

Five other Extension agents with advisory committees were interviewed for this study. Their experiences will demonstrate the range of purposes and uses the program advisory committee offers agents as well as some hints using it effectively.

<u>A 4-H Advisory Committee</u>

This agent, a 4-H agent, has several program advisory committees as do most 4-H agents. She uses one committee to manage an annual youth fair. The committee meets regularly over the year, is made up of youth and parents, and plans and conducts an annual youth fair that attracts several thousand people in the late summer each year. People participate in the committee because they are either recruited by committee members or learn of the committee and seek to join it. Adults participate because the event they are responsible for exemplifies and perpetuates values that they think are important for youth. Youth participate because of the opportunity to take part in a high profile event that earns them accolades from parents, other adults and their peers.

For the agent the committee and the fair have become a mechanism for developing leadership skills among all of the participants. She has provided members with a manual that defines the tasks and roles that need to be completed or filled in order to stage the fair. The committee is responsible for accomplishing the tasks and making all of the necessary decisions that are needed. The agent plays a low profile role and allows a committee chair and other elected officers to manage the committee. The agent participates in order to help the group through any rough spots.

The members of the committee participate in all of the planning decision areas with the following levels of influence.

Identification of Potential Beneficiaries	Some Influence
Identification of Needs	Cooperative
Determining Goals and Objectives	Extensive
Designing Activities	Extensive
Resource Decisions	Cooperative
Start-up Decisions	Extensive

123

Benefits to the 4-H agent have included:

Increased management skills. In order to help the committee she has had to develop her own management skills.

Recruitment. Participants have taken on the role of recruiting members for the committee.

New ideas. The committee continues to provide new ideas for the focus of the fair which keeps it current with the needs of the county.

Monitoring details. There are enough committee members to manage the details of the fair so that the agent has time to attend to other tasks.

The agent identified several major benefits to participants. The first is that they discover that they can accept responsibility for accomplishing complex tasks and carry out those tasks. This development of positive self-concept is especially useful to the youth participants. The adults achieve personal satisfaction by having contributed to their community as well as by increasing their contacts among people in the community.

An important step in gaining control over the major problem areas of the fair cycle was working with the committee to identify roles that needed to be played, tasks that needed to be completed, a calendar of deadlines, and a roster of sources for necessary resources and support. Each year this manual is reviewed by the committee and changed as necessary.

A problem that occurs every year is the committee member that is participating to fulfill his or her own agenda that is outside of the agenda of the committee and the fair. If people are unable to fulfill their needs within the context of the fair's needs they can become very frustrated and their presence is counter-productive. The committee and the agent will work with such an individual to help him or her define

their agenda and try to adjust it to fit with the fair's agenda. If
that can't be accomplished the individual is asked to drop out.

A Child Care Committee

The agent created her committee to establish a means for educating
day care providers on issues relevant to providing day care to chil-
dren. Members of the committee represent those organizations working
on day care issues and some day care providers. Members of the com-
mittee participate in all of the decision areas associated with the
planning and development stage except the start-up decision. The agent
thinks it important for her to have that decision if she is going to be
responsible for the outcome of the projects that are developed. The
committee has extensive influence over the identification of potential
beneficiaries and their needs, cooperative influence over developing
goals and objectives and resource decisions, and some influence over
the design of educational activities. The agent feels that she is the
specialist in education and with some input from the committee she
should be responsible for the educational activities.

The committee has been generally effective in its decisions. The
agent states that she has benefited from the committee as it serves to
identify and make use of a wider resource base than she would have been
able to on her own. The committee helps to create a wider network for
the agent among those involved in day care issues, among day care pro-
viders, and among agencies supporting day care providers.

For participants in the committee the agent thinks that they have
benefited in several ways. Agency representatives are working on pro-
blems that their agencies think are important and these people would
have been working on them without the committee. The committee helps

125

them to be more effective in dealing with these problems and brings more resources to bear than they would have had as individuals. Day care providers learn more about the system that exists to support them and have created contacts because of their work on the committee.

One major problem has come up among the representatives from agencies. In one case there has been a lack of continuous representation and communication among an agency's representatives. This has led to that agency not following up on its responsibilities or commitments.

A Resource Advisory Committee

The purpose of this committee is to advise the agent on the directions her work should take. The committee meets every six months and its participants represent a cross section of government agencies that would benefit because of her work and local government officials whose towns would benefit because of her work. Members participate because they have an interest in Extension helping to increase the effectiveness of public services relative to solid waste management, water quality issues, and energy conservation.

Programmatic benefits to the Extension agent include:

A narrowed focus. There is a wide range of possible issues to work on and the committee has helped her to narrow that range by providing a rationale for choices. Public servants are useful in selecting programs that will effect public services delivery.

Provides local link. Public sector members, affected by real world situations are looking for educational programs that can help them. By means of the committee the agent is able to identify with communities and their needs.

Provides some support. The group has been able to provide some resources to support her programming by lobbying at the state and county levels during a budget crisis.

Political link. The advisory group has been able to keep her aware of important political issues which has been helpful in planning some programs and avoiding others.

126

Political support. The group, through its consensual agreement on her programming, provides her with a political rationale for the programs that are selected for delivery.

The major benefit for group members has been the ability to express their ideas on issues they feel are important. The advisory group provides members with some influence over the direction of local Extension programs and thus gives them an opportunity to bring more resources to focus on issues that they think are important.

The agent pointed out a few problems she has had to face with the group. In working with this group she has had to face the prospect of being held politically responsible for her programs. Her programs are often delivered in politically sensitive areas, while the committee is behind her she is out in a sometimes indefensible position and must shield her advisory committee. When the programs work well there is no problem, when they don't she takes a lot of telephone calls.

Another major problem for this committee has been the gap between expectations and results. The group was not clear about its task when it was created, it thought Extension would meet all of the needs it brought up. Establishing the purpose and identifying the agenda of the group has mitigated this problem, but his should have been done from the beginning.

The advisory committee has been active in four of the six decisions areas related to planning and development. The committee had cooperative influence over identifying potential beneficiaries and some influence over identifying needs, goals, and resource decisions. The committee has had no input in designing activities or start-up decisions.

The agent, a home economist, has organized an advisory committee
to assist her in developing and delivering educational programs to
small or micro businesses in her county. The committee developed out
of conversations with a regional planner during which it became
apparent that there were lots of very small businesses that were not
being served by other economic development organizations. The purpose
of the committee was to bring together organizations that have
resources to assist small businesses and small business owners to
define directions for assisting and educating small business owners.

Participants in the committee include potential beneficiaries and
agency staff with empathy for the potential beneficiaries. One non-
empathetic person was recruited to the committee in order to educate
him to the needs of small business audience. He represents an impor-
tant organization interested in work place issues and the committee
felt it important that he be included. The person has come to see the
importance of small businesses and how he can help them. The agent
tried to select people based on their skills and background in order to
form a group where members skills complemented each other.

Members are participating for a variety of reasons including being
able to be more effective in their work, increased opportunity for con-
tacts, increased effectiveness in outreach and a "commitment to the
unorthodox." The committee allows members to get things done in ways
that their individual organizations or businesses are unable to use.

The agent has benefited from this committee in the following ways:

Increased effectiveness. The committee has expanded the results
of and effectiveness of her work.

Increased creativity. the committee has come up with creative ideas for dealing with the issues related to economic development.

Increased resources. The committee has helped the agent to identify and acquire more resources for projects than she would have been able to on her own.

Identification of needs. The committee has helped to improve the agent's ability to identify the needs of the potential beneficiaries of her program.

The participants, according to the agent, have benefited by being better connected to resources and information that can help them in their lives and work outside of the committee. Committee members have learned more about economic development and in doing so broadened their perspective of the issues associated with economic development. The members associated with agencies working in economic development have been able to make more effective use of their time and energy on those issues that the committee has taken up. The contacts that people have made has had a positive impact on their jobs or businesses.

One problem associated with working with the committee has been the loss of identity of Extension's role by potential beneficiaries. The committee's activities and identity sometimes clouds who is involved in the committee and who should be recognized for contributing which elements to committee activities.

Another major problem, this one related to the process of the committee's work, is the identification of objectives. Consensus on objectives is often required. When several people representing different interests are trying to agree on individual objectives they have a tendency to create objectives that are too broad. Careful facilitation is needed so that committee members feel that the objectives that are identified fit each committee member's individual agendas as well as

129

serve the needs of potential beneficiaries and conform to the purpose of the committee's goals.

The agent has found the committee to be very effective in decision making and has involved the committee in all of the decision areas related to the process of planning and development. The members have had extensive influence over identification of needs, definition of goals, and start-up decisions. In the other decision areas members have had cooperative influence.

Summary

The program advisory committee was selected for a more intensive examination in this chapter by means of a case study and several short glimpses at how this mechanism has been used by other Extension agents. The chapter provides an examination of how this mechanism is used by agents to allow for local participation in the program planning and development activities of Extension agents. By using the model developed in chapter three to analyze how the program advisory committee is used by Extension agents, the study has been able to identify a set of issues that are important in determining the quality of participation as well as the effectiveness of the committee to agents and the participants in the committee.

Participants

Agents have generally used the program advisory committee to provide an opportunity to allow for potential beneficiaries to have some say in agents' programming activities. Other categories of participants are included in program advisory committees, but generally only if they are empathetic to potential beneficiaries. The one case in which an agent recruited an individual who was not a potential

beneficiary nor empathetic to potential beneficiaries concerned an individual from an important agency and he was recruited to sensitize him and his agency to the needs of potential beneficiaries. In this case the agent reported that she and her committee were successful in accomplishing this.

Agents who use the program advisory committee select members according to a variety of criteria. Some seek a stratified representation of potential beneficiaries. Others seek those from a category called potential beneficiaries with no apparent stratification of the category. Others would add to potential beneficiaries agencies who could serve those potential beneficiaries and who are generally empathetic. Another criteria for membership has been the skills a participant could contribute.

Scope of Participation

The scope of participation for members of an advisory committee can vary. The determining factors are the agent's purpose for using a program advisory committee, his or her commitment to having participants involved in the array of decision areas, and the ability of participants to contribute to a decision area. What ever the scope of participation the agent should define that for the committee at the beginning of their activities.

One agent when interviewed thought that in general committees should participate in all planning decisions except for activity design. That was her specialty and she did not need help in that area. On the other hand this contrasted with her own program advisory committee which has some influence over designing activities, but did not participate in start-up decisions. Another of the five agents inter-

viewed avoided any committee input to designing activities and start-up decisions. These seem to be the areas that agents who want to limit the scope of their advisory committees identify as areas for only the agent's influence.

Level of Influence

Again the level of influence allowed for participants in a program advisory committee would depend on the purpose of the agent in using this mechanism. Those seeking to develop leadership skills among their committee participants try to generally provide the committee with an opportunity for extensive influence in all decision areas. Other agents tend to provide an opportunity for more influence in those decision areas that reflect the purpose of the agent in creating a program advisory committee.

Figure 5.1 is a chart that summarizes the level of influence for all of the cases presented in this chapter. The chart suggests that agents using program advisory committees to conduct leadership training of committee participants, the 4-H and BFLC cases, tend to provide greater influence to participants in all program planning decision areas than agents with other purposes. Agents other than those interested in leadership development tend to control decisions relating to activity design and start-up. These agents look to their committees to influence decisions defining audience, needs, goals and objectives. The chart also suggests that agents primarily involved in providing technical information, the child care and resource cases, limit participant decision making role and influence.

	None	Some	Cooperative	Extensive
Identification of Potential Beneficiaries		4	E, R	C, B
Identification of Needs		R	4	C, E, B
Goals and Objectives		R	C	4, E, B
Designing Activities	R	C	E	4, B
Resource Decisions		R	C, 4, E	B
Start-up Decisions	R, C			4, E, B

Cases
4 = 4-H
B = BFLC
E = Economic Development
C = Child Care
R = Resources

Figure 5.1 Summary of Case Studies

Influence is control and in discussing influence the issue is really one of power. Leadership development is about the empowerment of individuals to enable them to be leaders. Transfer of technical information leaves the agent in control and the most powerful influence in a committee, the agent is the controller of information. Economic development straddles both of these first two purposes each having something to do with economic development and thus power might be more shared between agent and participants in such a setting. Although Figure 5.1 does not completely support this line of thought, the data do not reject it either.

Effectiveness

Generally for agents and Extension the program advisory committee contributes to the effectiveness of the agent and the Extension system. Agents rated the effectiveness of their advisory committees in making decisions related to each decision area on a scale of one to ten, ten

133

being most effective. Using this scale, the overall average given by agents to the general effectiveness of their committees decision making was 8.6. The effectiveness of committees in each decision area was estimated to be: identification of potential beneficiaries, 8.4; identification of needs, 8.8; setting goals and objectives 8.4; designing activities, 7.7; resource decisions, 8.4; start-up decisions, 10.

Advisory committees are effective in setting program directions for agents. One agent was particularly emphatic about how well her committee was able to narrow the range of her activities. The advisory committee is most often very influential in the decision areas related to determining program direction: identifying potential beneficiaries, identifying needs, and determining goals and objectives.

While the advisory committee can help the agent in activities related to enhancing the profile of the agent and Extension in the community, Extension and the agent can have some problems using advisory committees. The responsibility or credit for programs can be misdirected. Extension's or the agent's role can get lost in the attribution of success for a program. The committee can potentially win all of the accolades. The reverse can also happen, the agent or Extension can be saddled with the responsibility for a failed program that rightfully ought to be shared with the committee.

One of the benefits of using the advisory committee for almost all agents is their increased contacts. In this case, increased contacts both among potential beneficiaries and those interested in issues impacting potential beneficiaries. These increased contacts account for another form of enhanced profile for Extension and agents.

Generally, program advisory committees can be effective in contributing to educational programming. Certainly agents feel that the committees help them to guide their activities in the appropriate directions. Additionally, agents feel that advisory committees can contribute effectively to designing programs and making sound decisions relative to resources.

Participants, according to agents, generally benefit from participating in advisory committees in three ways, learning more about relevant issues, increased contacts, and a feeling of satisfaction in having contributed. According to participants the above three general types of benefits hold true, but they place an emphasis on contributing by being involved in activities that yield useful results. Simply setting program directions is not enough to hold participants over time. They want to feel responsible for having created and implemented a set of activities that are helping their communities. Useful action is a benefit to participants and its results benefit their communities.

Comments on Methods

Agents have several ideas on what works well when working with an advisory committee. The Delphi process was useful for BFLC in identifying and gaining consensus around a set of goals. Having someone other than the Extension agent chair the meeting is a useful way to avoid having the agent dominate the meeting. Another method has been to elect a chair and executive committee on an annual basis.

One important first step is to define the general parameters of the committee and its potential role. One agent got into trouble when she failed to do this. One agent keeps this clear by having developed a manual that defines roles and tasks for the committee. This manual

is reviewed each year by the agent and the committee to make any necessary changes.

Another agent tries to maintain a balance among committee members of skills that are necessary for the working of her committee. One person has good facilitative skills, one good organizing skills, and so forth. She feels she lacks some of these skills and recruits to bring in people that can do what she can't do.

When agents are using the committee to develop leadership skills among participants they operate in a generally more open and facilitative manner. They allow the committee to generally chart its own course. When the scope of the committee is to be more narrow, a committee to be focused on setting program directions, the agent tends to be more directive and in control. In such a case the agent would chart the course for the committee.

Having a focus on problems or issues that matter to the participant appears important. These problems or issues may relate to participants' job related needs, their values, their visions of what should be, or problems confronting them in their lives. Having this focus from the start provides motivation for participants' work within the committee. The focus also helps participants to identify how they will gain from their participation.

Some Final Comments

The program advisory committee can be very effective in accomplishing a high level of participation in Extension program development and planning activities. That is, local participation with the broadest scope and highest influence. The key to the effectiveness of the mechanism is the Extension agents and his or her purpose in using

the mechanism. The mechanism is equally able to allow nominal or
extensive influence. The agent that has some skill in working with
groups and is motivated to share control of his or her activities could
use the program advisory committee as an effective mechanism for
allowing participation as well as accomplishing effective participa-
tion. Thus some of the conditions that will enhance the effectiveness
of participation include: appropriate purpose, an agent committed to
sharing control with participants, skilled facilitation by the agent, a
balance of needed skills and knowledge among participants, participants
involved in actions, and visibility or community acknowledgement of the
group's work.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is an investigation of how Extension agents include local participation in their programming activities in Massachusetts. The historical and organizational context for participation by the public in Extension programming activities was outlined in the second Chapter. A model was developed for analyzing participation in all possible programming activities in Chapter three. In Chapters four and five part of that model, that part appropriate to program/project planning and development, was used to study mechanisms used by Extension agents in western Massachusetts for including local participation in their program planning and development activities. In Chapter four, five different mechanisms used by agents were identified that allowed for local participation in their activities. Two of those mechanisms clearly allowed for more than just nominal input and were focused on Extension activities. In Chapter five the mechanism most often used by agents in western Massachusetts, program advisory committees was looked at in detail using one in-depth case study and several briefer case studies. This final Chapter will draw some conclusions and implications based on the earlier chapters and develop a set of recommendations that might be useful to extension staff and administrators.

Extension in the United States

The Extension component of the land-grant system in the United States developed as a result of participation by potential beneficiaries who seeking ways to become better informed about agricultural practices. Not only did the agricultural population develop its own organizations for political and educational reasons, but it also

brought pressure to bear upon the federal government to provide an educational system to support farms and farm families. Control of the non-residential division of that educational system, Cooperative Extension, was to be shared at the county, state, and Federal levels.

Thus, the historical development of Extension in the United States and in Massachusetts is one in which potential beneficiaries participated and continue to participate by means of a variety of mechanisms and organizations. Both farmers and urban audiences continue to make claims on Cooperative Extension to meet its needs either as individuals or by means of organizations that represent them. This is also true of other potential beneficiaries. Extension seeks to meet these needs and include these voices in the development of its programs by means of a variety of mechanisms.

Enhancing and Limiting Factors

Extension's historical development within a democratic tradition created a precedent for participation by potential clients in Extension's activities. Much of the control of Extension in its early days was shared with its clients.

Structurally, the organization of Extension continues to enhance the potential for local participation and a sharing of control. The autonomy of county staff is maintained within the organization of Extension. Budgets, while distributed from the central state office, do not seem to limit county staff in their response to local needs. National issues, which could limit local flexibility, appear broad enough that with local control they can be made relevant to local situations. The national issues, at least as far as the case studies are concerned, do not seem to limit the possibilities of local partici-

pation in Extension staff's planning and development activities. In many ways the national initiatives demand local participation to make them true focii of programming activities.

A limiting factor for local participation is the need for Extension as an organization to be able to claim responsibility for successes. Organizations, especially publicly funded ones, reach a point in their existence where they need to be able to identify their achievements in order to receive continued funding. Extension is at that point. Every budget cycle is a crisis. The need to point to programs and their results as Extension's programs becomes important in being able to claim shares of federal and state budgets.

This need for public acclaim may well limit the public acknowledgement given to clients as they participate in Extension activities. Agents may end by competing with their committees for acclaim. Agents may limit participants access to the means for receiving visibility. This process would lead to limiting the influence and power of participants in Extension's programming activities. While not a structural issue, this is an issue for those who mean to encourage participation. The public acknowledgement of results from participating is one of the benefits from and reasons for participation.

The Model

The model developed in Chapter three was useful in studying Extension agents' use of mechanisms intended to allow for local participation in their programming activities. Only a part of the model was subsequently used as the study narrowed its focus to looking at program planning and development activities rather than all of the stages of a programming activity.

The model has been useful in determining the quality of participation in the program development and planning stage. The model can identify discrete decision areas and help an observer determine who participates, in which decisions they participate, and the level of influence that participants have over a decision area. The model also identifies other key points that either summarize other parts of the model or suggest other issues such as how effective the mechanism has been for the agent and the participants. Thus, the model provides a systematic process for thinking about participation in the context of a particular set of decision areas and identifies a set of criteria that provides a working definition of participation.

According to the model there are several aspects to be considered in defining participation including who participates, what they participate in, how they participate, the process of participation, and the effectiveness of participation. Each of the criteria addresses an aspect of participation that can then be further refined to determine the form and characteristics of participation in a given situation. What becomes clear is that there is the possibility of a wide range of potential participation along a continuum from nominal to extensive. Each criterion is useful in helping to place on this continuum a particular mechanism or process that is said to be participatory. A mechanism that included few potential beneficiaries in only a few decision areas with a low level of influence with few benefits for the participants and the practitioner would be a nominal form of participation. An instance of extensive participation would tend towards being comprised of mostly potential beneficiaries that are active in most of

the decision areas with a high level of influence with both partici-
pants and practitioner benefiting from the process.

The model will not help a practitioner or user to examine a
technique such as brainstorming used in a particular decision area to
encourage participation. Determining how well that method was used or
how to improve its use are beyond the scope of the model. For example,
if a practitioner had conducted a brainstorming session to identify the
important problems of a particular group, the model will only be useful
in helping to determine the quality of participation. The model won't
help him or her to determine how well he or she used the brainstorming
method.

The model would be useful for an agent, depending on the purpose
for a committee, to plan for how and where participation would occur
and the level of influence of participants. This in turn might help an
agent to think about the methods he or she might want to use to achieve
the quality of participation being sought. The model might also be
useful in helping the agent to focus on issues of effectiveness and how
the participation that is intended will benefit the agent and the par-
ticipants.

The model would also be useful to agents as an aid to evaluating a
mechanism that they have been using. The model would be useful to the
agent in answering such questions as:

Did participation occur in the planned decision areas?

What level of participation occurred in the various decision
areas?

When did participation occur that had extensive influence and was
it effective in making the necessary decision?

Who was most influential in the various decision areas?

The portions of the model that were not used in this study require further examination and application. An assumption could be made that these portions would be useful in terms of studying the implementation, benefit/cost, and evaluation phases of a project. The model would most likely be useful in determining the quality of participation occurring and whether it achieved its desired objectives. The model would probably not be useful in determining how to improve an activity's effectiveness regarding its objective unless that objective related to issues concerning the quality of participation.

Mechanisms Used for Local Participation by Extension

The study identified five mechanisms used by Extension agents in western Massachusetts to allow for local input into their programming activities. Two of these methods or mechanisms boards of trustees and key informants, were found to limit participation to a very low level of input. Neither boards of trustees nor key informants allow for very high quality of participation or lasting input. The focus of boards of trustees in western Massachusetts is not programmatic or, if so, only in the most general sense. They are not intended to assist agents in their programming activities. This may differ in other states and it certainly differs from the ideas of many historians and other writers who seem to think that boards of trustees are the basis of community participation in Extension activities. The boards in western Massachusetts have only a nominal role in Extension activities.

Key informants are useful for agents in the sense that they can provide some particular examples of general trends or problems. Again, they provide some input, but don't really participate in agents' pro-gramming activities. They are widely used by agents and many agents

143

think them important in identifying issues, but they don't provide a means for real client participation in agents' programming activities. Key informants are also a very nominal form of local participation in agent's programming activities.

Committees organized by others outside of Extension serve as an outlet for agents' programming activities or as input for general directions that agents ought to look into. As an outlet they generally function as a vehicle for an agent to carry out some of her or his program directions. For example, an agent conducting a workshop for another group's conference fulfills the agent's need to provide education as a particular topic as well as aiding the committee. These committees may or may not be long term, but the agent is usually there to serve a purpose that is part of his or her general program direction. In many ways this mechanism allows for the highest level of community participation in an agent's work, but only in terms of that committee's goals. Many agents participate in these committees, but none seem to feel that they constitute a major part of their work. In terms of an agent's programming activities, this mechanism provides only nominal participation.

Project committees are important, but are not as often used to allow for local participation as program advisory committees or committees organized by others. The one field study that was conducted on a project committee found that it operated in much the same way as an advisory committee. The major difference between the two is that the project committee is usually a very short term committee and the program advisory committee is usually long term and often contributes

to the implementation of projects. Project committees can potentially lead to a high quality level of local participation.

Program Advisory Committees

The program advisory committee became the focus of this study. Of the twenty agents surveyed, twelve of them reported that they were using program advisory committees. One agent stated that in her experience their use has allowed her to be more effective than when she tried to operate without them. This study has indicated that they are effective in providing direction to agents, contributing to their educational programs, increasing their impact, connecting with local communities and their needs, planning their programs, and managing their programs. Agents point out that participants' benefits from their participation in these committees include increased knowledge, increased contacts and increased status because of committee accomplishments. Participants second this belief, but caution that they benefit most when they feel they are contributing and that feeling of satisfaction comes when they see results occurring because of their involvement.

Program Advisory Committee Participants. Participants in program advisory committee activities may risk their social status among their friends and within their community. They are taking a public role, if that role in results useful to their community participants may lose status. In the Berkshire Food and Land Council this public role is more enhanced by the fact that their activities are receiving publicity. The members of the 4-H youth fair committee are also in the public eye. Other program advisory committees may have lower profiles, but their participants are putting their reputations at stake with no

promise of any benefits except personal satisfaction and enhancement of their reputation in their communities' eyes. Thus, participants come to committees prepared to contribute and expect their contributions will be manifested in results that produce a public good and that they can be proud of.

Extension agents must recognize and be prepared to facilitate the manifestation of participants' inputs in results that meet the expectations of the participants. Some steps taken by agents with their groups that help both with expectations and with results include: at inception the group is provided with clear parameters for action; establishment of the group's agenda by the development of clear goal statements; a clearly defined set of tasks and responsibilities are presented to the group. One agent cited a group that had not had any of these and foundered, it was necessary to start over again with the group and together they defined their purpose and activities. Had the group conducted a needs survey to begin with they would have avoided their muddle. Participants should have an opportunity to assess their risks in participating, to evaluate their interest in the group's agenda, and their opportunity costs. There will be fewer surprises for them if they are aware of the course that they are expected to chart.

Uses of Program Advisory Committees. Extension agents are using community members as participants in committees for several reasons. Committees provide greater access to communities and localize Extension programs. Committees can provide an overall management team for a program or project that brings together more skills and resources than the agent would have available on his or her own. Committees offer an opportunity to develop leadership skills among members on particular

issues which often contributes to their willingness to work within their communities with or without their committees' support. Participants learn how to access a wider set of resources so that they could act outside of a committee context. Committees ground agents and provide useful direction.

Specific contexts in which agents have found that committees are useful are several: managing an annual event such as the 4-H youth fair; developing and managing a program that covers a wide variety of issues and requires several projects that are being implemented at the same time; providing a county-wide program that could potentially include a wide variety of projects that requires direction and political support from the communities that are intended to benefit. Within these contexts the uses to which participation can be put are varied. Participation is used to conduct leadership development by empowering participants to take control and manage a program. Participation provides a means for educating participants in terms of developing skills and increasing knowledge. Participation is used to organize and conduct projects. At its most nominal level participation is used to provide program direction.

Using a program advisory committee does not seem to preclude an agent from working on an individual basis with learners. The mechanism does not force agents into only using group processes for educational purposes. Except for the 4-H agent all of the agents in the cases analyzed in Chapter Four use both individual and group methods in providing education to potential beneficiaries.

Effectiveness of Participation

In Chapter three effective participation was defined as: participation that meets Extension's needs; participation that helps develop useful educational programs which meet the needs of Extension clients; participation that meets the needs of those contributing their efforts to help Extension; and participation that is effective in the decision making process associated with programming activities. As a further clarification participation that would contribute to meeting Extension's needs would be participation that helped Extension maintain its connections, political and others, at local or state levels.

In general the effectiveness of a particular mechanism used for local participation by Extension staff depends first upon the mechanism itself. Neither boards of trustees nor key informants are very effective mechanisms of participation. While boards of trustee potentially could provide Extension with a high-level profile among the politically important at the county level they are not very useful in any of the other areas that make up the definition of effectiveness in this study. Key informants are also not very effective. The agent is able to maintain connections by means of key informants but this may not be of use to Extension as it may remain a connection at the individual level and not at an organizational level. Key informants do not contribute to educational programs or programming decisions.

Non-Extension organized committees can contribute to meeting the educational needs of Extension's clientele, but this depends upon the type of group. If the group is not focused on educational tasks it may contribute nothing to Extension's educational programming. In the other areas under consideration in evaluating effectiveness non-Exten-

sion organized groups contribute little. While connections amongst individuals on such a committee may be enhanced, institutional connections are not enhanced. In fact Extension's role in the committee may be lost entirely when responsibility for committee projects is claimed.

Program advisory committees and project committees are both potentially effective mechanisms of local participation. They can gain acclaim for Extension and participants as a result of committee activities. Individual contacts can be developed by agents with influential community members. These committees can be effective contributors to educational efforts and to operational decision making. When given enough control participants can structure programs that, with agent support, effectively benefit the participants.

Conditions Limiting or Enhancing Effectiveness

At least one condition that could potentially limit the effectiveness of any mechanism of participation concerns the issue of Extension's or the agent's need for control in order to guarantee public recognition of Extension's role. While who control's the decisions involved in a program stage may not guarantee who achieves visibility or loses visibility, it is a contributing factor. The BFLC as a group has achieved public visibility because of its work. The agent working with the BFLC and Extension has also received credit for projects shared with BFLC. This is an example of how shared power and highly influential participation can provide high visibility for Extension and participants.

If an agent limits the power of participants in a mechanism because the agent fears losing credit for his work, those limitations will affect the effectiveness of the participation in other facets of

the process. Receiving public acclaim is one of the major benefits that participants can achieve. Not obtaining credit could impact participants' motivation to contribute to the work of the committee.

Another condition that would limit the effectiveness of a participatory mechanism would be the Extension organization's inability to be flexible regarding how committee's work and what their objectives are. National and state priority issues could encourage a "lock step" attitude or expectations on the part of administrators about how staff will work. Local committees can help localize issues important to the organization, but they need to have the freedom to do so in their own manner and by means of their own process. Loss of flexibility could limit a groups' scope of participation, influence, and contributions to educational programs and operational decisions.

A third condition that focuses on the agent and could impact a participatory mechanisms is really a set of conditions. These could either enhance or limit the effectiveness of the process and would include agent training in working with groups, administration support for agents using participatory mechanisms, and subject matter specialization.

Fifteen agents out of the 20 agents surveyed are either currently working with a committee that they organized or have done so in the past two years. Of those 15 agents 11 have had training in working with groups, two without training have had access informally to mentors who helped them develop the skills to manage their groups. These agents point to that support as having been crucial. Of the two agents without training, one has discontinued her group because of lack of orientation and the other admits to struggling with his group and will

be seeking help from a 4-H agent. Of the five agents who have not made use of committees none have any training in working with groups. Training or support thus seems to be important, but whether there exists a causal relationship between training and working with groups is not clear.

Home economics and 4-H agents account for 12 of the 15 agents working with local groups or committees. In managing and working with volunteers, 4-H has discovered that groups and committees work for them. Program committees are a standard operating procedure for them. 4-H agents surveyed have all had some training in working with groups. Not all of the home economists surveyed had training in working with groups, (some have identified mentors to help them), but six of the seven interviewed are working with groups. The seventh had a program advisory group, but recently stopped it. She attended a course this summer, her first on working with groups, and expects to develop another advisory committee. The leaders of these two program areas, 4-H and home economics, have encouraged their agents to work with program advisory groups.

Community Resource Development (CRD) and agriculture agents accounted for eight of the twenty agents surveyed and only three of them have local advisory or project groups. One of the CRD agents has training in working with groups and she has a program committee and project committee. The CRD program leader has encouraged his agents to work with advisory groups. The agricultural program leader has sup-ported state-wide groups related to specific commodities and most agricultural agents participate in these groups. Only two agricultural

agents have organized groups in their counties to support their work. One of them has training in working with groups.

Three things seem to be important in determining whether an agent will create and work through committees that are organized on a local basis. Program leader support for working with local committees is probably crucial. Training in working with groups is also very important. The knowledge specialization and the historical mode of delivery of technical assistance and information related to that specialization appears to be a third important factor in working with groups.

Agriculture agents tend to be specialists in a particular body of knowledge with a particular type of agricultural commodity. They have historically applied their knowledge on an individual basis with individual farmers. Based on observation, they are less skillful in working with each other in a group and have not been equipped by academic training or programmatic support to work with advisory committees. When they do operate in a committee context, it is often someone else's committee and they are there because of their technical expertise.

The purposes or uses to which participation is put can limit or enhance the effectiveness of the participation. Some purposes will enhance the effectiveness of participation others will limit its effectiveness. Purposes which can include greater influence and power tend to enhance the effectiveness of participation as participants become increasingly motivated to be effective because of the benefits that they might receive. The 4-H case and BFLC exemplify this point. In both cases participants have been given the widest scope for decision

making and control. They implement projects with high community profiles. The agents feel that in both cases these groups have been effective decision makers and the groups have contributed to major Extension educational programs. In addition participants, through the management of their groups' programs, have achieved results that have won acclaim in their communities. This acclaim has been a major benefit to participants.

Purposes which tend to limit the effectiveness of participation are those which tend to limit the level of influence of a group. The resources advisory committee has had relatively little control of projects both in terms of the scope of the decisions that they have been involved in and the influence that they have had over decision areas. This agent felt less positive about this group than other agents. Their effectiveness has been limited and at the same time they would like a larger role or control.

Some purposes for committees which could encourage effectiveness would include: empowerment of participants, leadership development, and educational program management. Some purposes which could limit effectiveness would include: simple program advisement, one dimensional program management (identification of learners) for example, and some cases of educational program management.

A final condition that could limit or enhance the effectiveness of participation are the collective skills and knowledge of the group. In the economic development case the agent selected participants to achieve the skills and knowledge needed to achieve an effectively operating committee. The BFLC is educating its members to help them

acquire skills or knowledge that they think important to the
functioning of the group.

Recommendations to Enhance Local Participation

The following is intended as a set of recommendations for Exten-
sion practitioners and administrators. Many of the conclusions up to
this point have contained implied recommendations. This section will
introduce some new recommendations and make more explicit some of those
implied in the above.

Recommendations Relevant to Extension Administrators

Program advisory committees are a mechanism that Extension agents
can use successfully to allow for local participation in their acti-
vities. Agents can manage these committees to serve their and partici-
pants' needs effectively. As Extension moves into an era in which the
national level of Extension and the state levels of Extension are going
to identify issues that Extension county agents must implement, com-
mittees of potential beneficiaries can localize those issues. Such
committees can help agents provide local contexts for those issues.
Committees of local participants can also be rewarding to local par-
ticipants. These committees can enhance the profiles of Extension and
participants as well as provide educational programs.

State-wide program committees such as those organized within the
agricultural program in Massachusetts for specific commodity groups
appear useful in determining broad directions, but they still fail to
set those issues in the context of farmers in a specific county or
region of the state. State-wide committees are focused on commodity
specific production or marketing issues. They fail to address the full
breadth of agricultural issues. State-wide committees necessarily are

narrowly based and not representative of all farmers. Often only the resource-rich and more progressive farm operators are participating in these committees. They thus are not necessarily empathetic to the needs of all farmers within a specific commodity. The same can be said of state-wide committees related to other Extension program areas. Unless there are locally organized committees, the uniqueness and special needs of the various strata of potential beneficiaries in a specific community or region can be overlooked.

The Use of Committees by Agents

Extension agents in all program areas should be encouraged to make use of committees. The program advisory mechanism is useful in determining agents' overall program directions, managing programs and empowering participants. The project committee mechanism can also be useful in implementing specific projects. The second could be a spin-off from the first, or be used to develop the first.

Agents who are unfamiliar in working with groups may begin a relationship by using project committees to organize and implement projects. As they become familiar with how a group operates and become confident in working with groups they should find it easier to think in terms of organizing a longer term program advisory committee.

Boards of trustees are useful as they are currently organized, but not in assisting agents in programming activities. They have a focus oriented to keeping Extension in contact at the county level with major issues and broad segments of the county's population. Some boards have trustees who are unhappy with their roles as trustees, perhaps because of a misunderstanding of that role. There is a need to train boards in what Extension expects of them and what they can expect from Extension.

Working with non-Extension organized committees and key informants should not be discouraged but agents need to know of the limitations in working with such mechanisms exclusively. They can lead to a narrowing of the agent's programming perspective. Such mechanisms also do not provide the support for the breadth of program activities that an agent may have to be responsible. An agent may become a "tool" of another group or key informant if he or she tends to work exclusively through these mechanisms. On the other hand such mechanisms allow the agent to keep in touch with how non-Extension people see local or individual situations and act as a check or reinforcement for the agent in his or her activities.

The participants in program advisory or project committees should represent potential beneficiaries as much as possible. Additional participants may be recruited to committees based on their skills and empathy for potential beneficiaries. Some care should be taken to stratify committees so that a category of potential beneficiaries is not overlooked.

Size of committees can be an issue. The size should suit the situation. Of the committees that were examined in some depth all but one were large groups with about 20 members. The agent can keep all involved through varied project activities. General meetings may not have all members on hand, but most members can participate as projects or ideas surface that interest them.

The agents should be able to develop their committees with regard to scope of participation and level of influence as they see necessary to meet their purposes. Agents do not need to limit the control of the committees by their participants over agents' activities. What is

important is the establishment of working goals or parameters for committees or participants.

Agents do not need to have lots of committees. Working well with a single program advisory committee will be more helpful than having ten committees to respond to and work with. Having only a state-wide committee will not be enough to help an agent in his or her work on a local or regional basis. The important issue is to have important and meaningful issues and activities for the group.

One agent in western Massachusetts reported creating an "Extension" sub-committee for a group of public officials. The main focus for the general committee was not Extension related, but the agent was able to serve the group by creating a sub-committee that could direct her for the purposes of providing educational activities to the general body. The general committee represents all the towns of the county. Thus the agent was able to make use of an existing group's organization to serve it and the potential beneficiaries it represents. This type of committee can be very useful.

When goals are achieved, relevant problems solved, or interest dissipated it may become necessary to end a particular committee. Agents report that this occurs and it is handled in a variety of ways. One way to end a committee's work, not recommended, is simply to not meet again. Another is to bring the committee to a formal close by means of a ceremony or final meeting. The important point is to be sensitive to the possible need of closing down a committee. This does not necessarily mean failure, it may well be an indication of success.

An agent may be forced to have to end his or her association with a committee as his or her program direction may be changed by outside

circumstances. In this case an agent can remain available to a group as a source of advice, but the agent needs to be clear about ending the association and the reasons for it. Agents report this happening to them and occasionally committees will go on without them.

Extension System Support for Committees

If an extension system thinks it important for agents to work with committees, agents need to know how to work with groups. Access to training on working with groups is necessary. This training could be carried out by the use of specialists within the Extension system or by bringing in experts.

Agents who have individually found mentors to advise them and to help them reflect on how they were working with groups have found that process to be helpful. This process could be encouraged by Extension by identifying those who would be willing to help others think about and improve their group methods. Another step that might be taken is the creation of a "support group" for agents working with groups. Agents who are presently working with groups and agents who will be new to the process need to talk to others about what they are doing and "compare notes."

If administrators think working with local committees to be important, they need to support the concept. Requiring agents to create and work with advisory groups may be a step that could be taken, but it would likely be resisted by some. Rewarding agents who work with advisory committees might be a better step. Rewards could take the form of merit pay awards, advisory program of the year awards or simply encouragement of agents by superiors in front of their peers.

If a system decides to make greater use of committees to allow for local participation, hire those who have worked with groups. Those who have found that creating and working through groups is effective will continue to do so. A step back from this would be to hire those who have had training in working with committees when everything else is equal. A requirement for willingness to work with committees might also be a stipulation in the hiring process.

If an extension system is going to rely on advisory committees the system needs to allow agents some autonomy and flexibility to respond to those committees. An advisory committee can help to localize a system-identified issue, but the agent needs the flexibility to allow the committee to do so in its own way. Demanding a lock-step approach to committee work or to the process of how agents will respond to a system's priority can limit the effectiveness of a working committee.

INTERVIEW FORMATS

General Telephone Survey of Extension Field Staff

1. Name:

2. Program area: Ag CRD HmEc 4-H

3. Years with Massachusetts Cooperative Extension:

4. How do you allow for local input or participation in your

    Extension programming activities?

5. What is the intention or purpose in your allowing for local input
    or participation?

6. How much influence do participants have over the following program
    planning and development decisions? (repeat for each mechanism
    used)

	None	Some	Cooperative	Extensive
Audience				
Identifying Needs				
Goals/Objectives				
Designing Activities				
Resource Decisions				
Start-up Decisions				

In-depth Field Staff Interview Questions

Board of Trustees

1. Which of the following have been mechanisms that you have used during the past two years for including local participation in your program development and planning?

   . County Board of Trustees
   . Program Advisory Group (A body that you might have organized to help you develop and conduct activities within a specific program area: e.g. commodity group, home based, business advisory group)
   . Project Group (A group that comes together for the purposes of carrying out a specific project or event)
   . Other mechanisms

2. How has a county board of trustees contributed to your program development or effected a particular project activity?

3. How many people are on your county board of trustees? How many people on your county board of trustees could be described as:

   . Potential beneficiaries of your activities;
   . Not potential beneficiaries, but could empathize with potential beneficiaries;
   . Not potential beneficiaries and could not empathize with potential beneficiaries;
   . Other agency members (specify)
   . Women . Minority Groups

4. Decisions participated in and level of participation.

Decision Areas/Level of Influence	Little	Some	Coop	Exten
1. Identification of potential beneficiaries				
2. Determination of needs of potential beneficiaries				
3. Determination of goals and objectives for activities				
4. Designing project activities				
5. Identification/acquirement of project resources				
6. Project start-up decision				

161

Decision Area	Effectiveness (Scale of 1 to 10)	Additional Comments
I. AUDIENCE		
II. NEEDS		
III. GOALS		
IV. ACTIVITIES		
V. RESOURCES		
VI. START-UP		

5. Which of the following fairly describes your perspective of the role of the County Board of Trustees with respect to your Extension activities:

    . They are a formality.
    . They ratify decisions presented to them.
    . They help to set program direction.
    . They establish policy for Extension activities.
    . They are a good "sounding board to bounce ideas off of".
    . They are politically important.
    . They provide useful feedback.
    . They are a nuisance.
    . They contribute little to Extension activities.

6. Do you ever meet with a trustee(s) outside of regularly scheduled formal meetings to discuss your activities?

7. How are members identified for the county board of trustees? (Who selects them? Are they elected? Who elects them?)

8. Why do people become trustees?

9. Is coercion used to recruit trustees?

10. Have the trustees ever organized an activity independently of Extension supervision? Describe.

162

Program Advisory Committee

or Project Committee Interview Questions

1. Did you form this group?

2. Why did you form this group? (Pressured to form group, who
    applied that pressure, your expectations of group, planned role of
    group, specific functions, other)

3. How many people are in this group?

4. How many of this advisory group could be described as: (see
    question 3 above)

5. Decisions participated in, level of influence, effectiveness:
    (see question 4 above)

6. How do people get to be members of your group?

    . They select themselves
    . You recruit them

7. How long do members remain in the group?

8. Why do members join this group?

9. How long do you expect the group to continue?

10. Do you meet with this group on a regular basis? How often?

11. How many meetings did you have in the past year with this group?
    Are they regularly scheduled meetings?

12. How many times did they meet without you in the past year?

13. Name specific benefits to your program planning activities derived
    from this group's input.

14. What decision areas do they contribute most to? Why?

15. What decision areas do they contribute least to? Why?

16. Do you ever meet with the group or members of the group
    informally?

17. Identify the benefits to your programming activities derived from
    the participation of this group?

18. Identify the major costs to you and your programming activities
    derived from the participation of this group?

19. What suggestions do you have to increase benefits from participation and decrease costs from participation?

20. What have been the major costs and benefits to the members of the group because of their participation?

21. Name the major problems in working with the committee. How would you overcome these? Why did these occur?

22. Name two successes of the committee process? How could you structure the process to guarantee these? Why did these occur?

23. Has this group ever organized an activity independently of you? If yes, describe stating results and how group felt about it?

24. Why do people participate in your group?

Non-Extension Organized Committees

1. If you participated in a committee organized by a group
    independent of Extension:

    Who organized the committee?
    What was the purpose of the committee?
    What was your role in the committee?
    How did your role in this committee differ from project
    committees you have organized?

Refer to previous formats for those questions relevant to this
mechanism.

Interview Format for Committee Members

1. Which of the following describe ways in which you have participated in Extension program development:

   . I am/have been a member of a county board of trustees.
   . I am/have been a member of a program advisory committee.
   . I am/have been a member of a particular Extension activity or project organizing committee.
   . I am/have been a member of a group independent of Extension that sought Extension support and input for an activity or project.

2. Briefly describe your role as a program advisory committee member:

3. Were you asked to participate or did you seek to participate as a program advisory committee member?

4. Why did you participate as a program advisory committee member?

5. How did you benefit from your participation as program advisory committee member?

6. With regard to Extension program development the following is a list of decision areas. What should be your level of influence in each decision area as a program advisory committee member. What has been your level of influence.

Decision Area/Level of Influence	None	Some	Cooperative	Extensive
I. AUDIENCE				
II. NEEDS				
III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES				
IV. ACTIVITIES				
V. RESOURCES				
VI. START-UP				

7. Which of the following describes your role as a program advisory committee member:

   . Decisions are/were made without my input. I was expected to ratify decisions.
   . I was/am allowed to make some input to some decisions.
   . I was/am encouraged to make some input to some decisions.
   . I was/am encouraged to make input in many decisions, our votes mattered.

8. How long have you been/were you a program advisory committee member?

9. Would you do it again? Why?

10. Did you feel this was time well spent? Why?

11. What percentage of the meetings did you attend?

12. What was the single most important benefit to you in partici-pating? How could benefits be increased?

13. What was the single most important cost to you in participating? How could costs be decreased?

14. What were/are the two major problems in the committee process in the committee in which you participate(d)? How would you improve the process.

15. What were/are the two successes you think should be carried over into every committee process? How would you guarantee these successes if you were running the process?

16. What decisions are/were you asked to be involved in that you think irrelevant or a waste of time?

17. On what program development decisions should Extension seek input from the community or potential beneficiaries.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Table A.1 Agents Tenure by Sex, Program Use of Committees

and Training for Group Work

Years Tenure	Male	Female	Ag	HEc	CRD	4-H	Agents Committees	Training For Group Work
2-5	1	2	1	1		1	2	1
6-10	3	5	2	3	1	2	7	5
11-15	1	4	2	2	1	4	4	
16-20	1	1		1	1		1	
21+	2		1		1	1	1	

Average Tenure   10.5 years
Average Tenure With Committee   10.5 years
Average Tenure Without Committee   15.0 years
Females With Committees   11 (92%)
Females Without Committees   1 (8%)
Males With Committees   4 (50%)
Males Without Committees   4 (50%)
Females With Training For Group Work   8 (67%)
Females Without Training For Group Work   4 (33%)
Males With Training For Group Work   3 (38%)
Males Without Training For Group Work   5 (62%)
Agents Trained in Working With Groups Having Groups   11
Agents Trained in Working With groups Without groups   0
Agents Not Trained in Working With Groups Having Groups   4
Agents Not Trained in Working With Groups Without Groups   5

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