

Status of Extension's Urban Programming

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To learn about Extension's efforts in urban programming, Paulson sent a questionnaire to Extension directors throughout the U.S. In this article, he reports the summary of responses to the questionnaire in terms of what's currently being done, what's being planned or hopefully will be done, and what's needed in the way of "urban Extension models." Are the findings what you'd expect?

Last summer a questionnaire was sent to the top Extension administrator at each land-grant university in connection with this "urban issue." We pointed out that while considerable information is available about ongoing Extension activities at the various universities, we know relatively little about specifically urban-focused Extension programs. The questionnaire data would serve as a beginning effort to fill the gap. Each administrator was also invited to request up to two colleagues to respond, if this would enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information.

We're happy to report that 39 of the 50 institutions responded in some way. Including multiple responses from particular universities, we received 46 replies.

Information Inaccessible on Urban Extension

As the responses came in, a number of problems quickly became apparent. Four universities replied that they wouldn't or couldn't complete the questionnaire. Main reasons given were that programs couldn't be delineated according to place of residence—such as rural and urban—or that much of the high priority need is rural based not urban, or that information on primarily urban programs simply isn't available.

In some instances the respondent, usually a high to middle level Extension administrator, mentioned that a third or more of staff and budget were allocated to urban work, yet he also forthrightly stated that "my comments are based strict-

ly on a Cooperative Extension Service oriented viewpoint.” The implications might be that there is *another* viewpoint more directly urban focused that could best explain the nature of the urban activities which constitute a substantial part of total programs, but for administrative reasons this isn’t represented in the replies.

Since there’s little or no definition of urban problem areas for programming, assignment of responsibility for task implementation, and collection of information for evaluation and reporting, we can conclude that urban Extension is still too new to have become effectively integrated into the Extension apparatus.

Questionnaire Data

Types

In summarizing data in the questionnaires, three sets of information are discussed: the nature of urban-focused Extension programming, the status of urban Extension programs, and models for urban Extension.

Information is revealed about the nature of urban-focused programming through questions on definition of needs, involvements that relate to the identified needs, urban activities—considered especially innovative, and urban Extension programs that would be wanted if more funds were available.

The second body of data concerns the status of University Extension programming. This is seen from

questions on the number of staff working at least half time on urban problems as percentage of total University Extension staff, the proportion of present faculty that’s considered to have ability and interest in programming for the urban problems that have been identified, and expectation about the future of urban Extension at the particular university.

Finally, the third set of information concerns relevant models for urban Extension efforts. Three questions are used: (1) the essence of the “agricultural Extension model,” as traditionally interpreted; (2) the limitations of that model in facing urban needs; and (3) the degree to which the agricultural model is considered useful in an urban setting.

Limitations

The data compiled from these questionnaires have limitations. First, some administrators went into detail, while others were unable to give complete answers in every instance. At this time it’s impossible to know whether this variation is due to the individual who filled out the questionnaire or to the quality and dimensions of the program being described or to the questionnaire itself.

Also, a number of respondents noted that their information sources weren’t structured to provide specific data on urban-type programs, but that they’d searched for material through less regularized channels. This point is made by the following administrator:

I attempted to get the basic factual information asked for and to develop the percentages. . . . These are almost impossible tasks even though any one of us would be very interested in this specific information. The reason I say they are difficult tasks is because our budget is not broken down this way and neither is our staff time allocated in the same manner. We know we have numerous urban programs and many different staff members devoting a great deal of time to these programs. We also know that a great deal of financial support is devoted to these programs in addition to the staff resources. About the only way I know we could more accurately get this is to conduct a survey. I considered this alternative but decided it would not be fast enough. The estimates . . . have been developed after several discussions with staff members who are working in urban centers.

Thirdly, because the form of the replies varies greatly and most of the questions are open-ended making coding difficult, the material from this survey isn't easily subject to statistical analysis. The purpose in summarizing the findings that follow isn't to offer precise answers to the questions that were addressed to the Extension administrators, but to suggest trends of thinking. Some rather significant points can be made, without pretending that they're based on scientific procedure. On certain points that challenge current thinking or suggest useful directions for future analysis and policy, perhaps

hypotheses could be generated for future probing.

Nature of Urban-Focused University Extension Programs

In response to the question, "What are the two or three most critical urban needs facing your state?" 50 different need areas were mentioned. Some questionnaires listed as many as six items, others only one. Some answers were vague, such as "social problems" or "quality of living" or "planning," while others were quite specific—"constructive use of leisure time," "fiscal reform," or "dealing with population pressures." Six urban areas stand out compared to all others. They are:

- Inadequate housing.
- Youth, especially the disadvantaged.
- Consumer education.
- Employment-economic base.
- Land-use planning in and around cities.
- Food buying and nutrition, especially for low-income people.

To the question, "How is your Extension program involved, if at all, to meet the mentioned or related urban needs?" there was again a wide array of replies—40 different types of involvement. Some programs whetted your appetite for more information. They included: serving as consultants to city managers and elected officials; developing a comprehensive model for service to the aged; training for petrole-

um technicians, trade union leaders, working wives; assisting multiagency urban planning groups; demonstration apartments; educational program to point up the need for comprehensive urban planning; urban horticulture; organizing a statewide housing task force. The major volume of urban Extension activity, however, clustered in three kinds of involvement:

- Expanded food and nutrition educational programs.
- Consumer education.
- Youth work, especially through 4-H.

To the question, "What particularly *innovative urban programs* in your Extension outreach, if any, would you care to cite?" the range again was wide.

Responses included: counseling low- to moderate-income residents regarding home ownership; paraprofessional staff in vans giving block-by-block help in an area struck by the Agnes disaster; a "Dishes 'n Dictaphones for Secretaries" program; developing youth aides to build racial harmony in public schools; seminars in shopping centers; working with business, industry, and citizens to develop procedures for using solid waste; urban pest control.

The main volume of innovations that were cited took place in the same three program areas listed above: youth work, food and nutrition, and consumer education. Much of the innovating had something to do with the hiring, training, and use

of paraprofessional staff, especially in the nutrition programs.

Many new kinds of programs were described that used the mass media, especially in consumer education. Frequently two of these three program areas would interrelate as in the development of youth leaders for the nutrition program. Much of this activity had something to do with inner-city populations. Ten of the 35 university administrators who filled out the questionnaire cited no innovative urban program.

In response to the question, "What urban Extension programs would you develop if you had more funds?" again some 40 categories of program were mentioned. These included: career education, urban landscaping clinics, educational programming for women in second careers, labor management training for public officials, urban recreation, education in family planning, health education, training of the handicapped, land-use planning. There was considerable interest in home economics and management, urban home economics and management, urban home horticulture, and family living. One administrator would like to establish an applied research center to deal with urban problems.

Specific programs that would be given major emphasis were additional funds available include:

- Youth work, especially for low-income people and through 4-H.
- Housing, including educational programs on alternative hous-

ing, home maintenance, and management.

- Food and nutrition, including reaching such “stress groups” as pregnant mothers, elderly.
- Consumer education, including varied uses of the mass media.
- Employment of paraprofessionals and aides to reach low-income populations in program areas other than food/nutrition.

Present and Future Dimensions of Urban Extension

There were several questions designed to quantify the size of the University Extension faculty and budget that's allocated to urban work, and their proportion of total University Extension. Getting this answer was virtually impossible. Some administrators provided complete or partial figures, others made broad estimates and indicated that the estimates were little more than guesses, some said they were unable to answer.

In that most of the respondents are closely associated with Cooperative Extension at their universities, they often lacked detailed knowledge of the nonagricultural components of Extension, especially when there's no consolidation of all Extension services within the university.

Some administrators made efforts to grapple with the problem of calculating percentages of work time of particular faculty whose work is both urban and nonurban. This of

course depends on the definition given to “urban Extension.” That information in most instances was simply unavailable—other than in broad strokes—for an accurate assessment of allocations of time and budget to specifically urban thrusts.

For the reasons given, absolute figures on the number of University Extension faculty and staff working at least 50 percent of their time on urban problems and on the budget allocated to urban work aren't reported here.

The *percentage* of total Extension faculty and staff dedicating at least 50 percent of their time to urban programs is shown in Table 1. These 41 respondents include 4 institutions that among them have 11 responses.

The only point that the figures summarized in Table 1 might show with some accuracy is that less than one-third of Extension personnel at most of the universities are considered primarily urban.

A question was asked about the number of present Extension faculty members who are considered “to be able to and are interested in organizing programs that have relevance for the urban problems listed.” This was to get some broad-gauge estimate of the capability of present staff in programming for the problems the administrator had identified.

Given the nebulous meaning of “urban” and the likely lack of familiarity of the respondent with all faculty capabilities, this question must be considered an extremely general estimate. The significant point to be

Table 1. Urban Extension staff.

Percentage of total Extension staff at least 50 percent urban	Number of respondents*
0 - 5%	9
6 - 10	9
11 - 15	4
16 - 20	5
21 - 25	5
26 - 30	3
31 - 35	3
More than 35	3
	—
	41

*Represents 33 universities.

concluded from these 42 respondents listed in Table 2 might be their stated belief that a substantial number of their present faculty have the interest and ability to cope with urban problems.

Table 2. Faculty relevant to urban problem.

Number of faculty able to and interested in programming for urban problems	Number of respondents*
Most faculty	8
Some	24
Few	7
Very few	3
None	0
	—
	42

*Represents 33 universities.

To determine respondents' perceptions about future dimensions of urban Extension, this question was asked: "What do you consider the future of urban Extension programming at your university (check one)?" The 43 respondents made clear their expectation that urban-focused activity will increase (see Table 3).

Table 3. Future of urban Extension.

Choices	Number of respondents*
Will increase drastically	7
Will increase some	33
Will remain at present levels	3
Will decrease	0
	—
	43

*Represents 33 universities.

Model for Urban Extension

Until urban Extension has a development period comparable to agricultural Extension, with significant federal legislation and with a track record of universities extending their resources into the urban community, we can hardly expect urban Extension to match agricultural Extension's current level of effectiveness.

The demographic data presented in the table on page 12 of this *Journal* points out that the United States increasingly has become a nation of cities, with 69 percent of the country's population in 1970 defined as metropolitan. But few observers could argue, be they in government or universities, that there's a model for urban Extension comparable to the agricultural Extension model that evolved during the last 100 years.

The respondents to this questionnaire made this very clear. Most of them represent the dominant orientation of Extension in the universities. But many comments recorded

in the questionnaires indicate a growing interest in building an Extension capability and outreach that effectively deals with urban needs. This isn't to be done by sacrificing or substituting for ongoing services that continue to meet real needs, but by broadening Extension so universities can extend their resources into communities in an increasingly urban setting.

In the process, new alliances undoubtedly will be forged between urban and rural community interests. New administrative arrangements can be expected to evolve both in universities and government, which may intermix the resources of such federal departments as Housing and Urban Development and Agriculture. New models will be created that have as much appropriateness to urban as rural problems.

What "urban Extension models" will emerge on this new landscape? Can the agricultural Extension model be transplanted into the cities without major modifications? What are the limitations as well as strengths of the traditional model in

the context of the new challenges Extension faces? What follows are some questionnaire findings.

Nature of Ag Model

In trying to assess the applicability of agricultural Extension models to urban problems, it's essential that there be some agreement on the nature of the agricultural model itself. The question therefore was asked: "What are the essential points you think of when you describe the organization of agricultural Extension programs that have evolved over the years at your university?"

Some respondents made very brief comments, such as "identifying needs," "developing local leadership," "learning by doing," "developing a two-way working relationship," "involving local people," "helping people to help themselves," "beginning where the people are," "programs tailored to needs." A number of administrators didn't respond to this question.

Essential points to be used in describing the agricultural Extension model that were regularly repeated in different ways included:

- Problems of local people are identified by an elected or other group from throughout the county.
- Priorities are determined by similar groups that understand local needs.
- Extension educational programs deal with those needs under leadership of professional staff.

- A core of subject-matter specialists provide program leadership and technical support.
- One of the aims of programs is to develop local leadership.
- Programs are initiated that can be implemented with available staff and budget.
- Programs must have local input in their planning and development.
- Local people have a voice in hiring some Extension personnel and in financial commitments made.
- University knowledge is an essential backup for programs.
- Mass media are used to present information when appropriate.
- Leadership that's developed is expected in turn to teach others.
- Learning often is best done through practice demonstrations.
- The key to programs is that the staff know the clientele and are deeply committed to serve the people.
- Local autonomy is important.
- Educational methods have infinite variety—university resources must be adaptable and sensitive to the needs.
- Practical education carried out in informal settings is important.
- The university constantly has an obligation to extend the results of research through incorporating it into the programs.
- Developing the support of strong groups in planning pro-

grams is essential to anything that lasts.

- Use of volunteers both involves the people and multiplies resources.
- Local paraprofessionals can keep the program close to the needs.
- Problems of the local community are interrelated to the problems of wider geographic area (state and national) so resources can be brought to bear at different levels.
- Program results must be evaluated to determine their degree of success and needed changes.

Limitations of Ag Model

To the question, "What are the limitations, if any, of the 'agricultural Extension model' in facing urban needs?" there was a surprisingly candid outpouring of comment. Responses fit into six general categories.

1. *Personnel.* Frequently the need for a "different kind of faculty in terms of competence and orientation toward problems" was mentioned. "We are not oriented to the real problems of urban families." It was mentioned that "agricultural production and marketing oriented agents and specialists are not the answer." Rigidity in recruitment procedures that could cause difficulties in selecting needed personnel was brought up. Several times this type of comment was made:

"Our professional staff do not recognize the differences in people resulting from various environments, cultures, and social conditions." Suggestions included appointing qualified people who can function as coordinators of complex activities as well as serve as technical consultants and paraprofessionals who can relate educational programs to the needs.

2. *Organization and administration of delivery systems.* The point was made of a "possible unwillingness to adapt organizationally to meet urban needs." "Extension's history is in agriculture and even today a majority of staff and clientele are related to agriculture. There is inertia to suddenly turn to urban." "The delivery system needs major adjustments to reach the urban audience." Much comment was related to "inflexible administration." It was pointed out that "resources (personnel and budget) are in subject-matter departments which limits the scope of programs presently undertaken." "Needed are multidisciplinary programs where emphasis is on problem solving, not on department or profession." One of the difficulties in change is the "possessiveness of long-time co-operators who want to keep the Extension staff for help they've grown used to." A

need was expressed for "more intergovernmental coordination to relate to varied interests and problems."

3. *Research base.* Several administrators believed that "our research base for building urban models is very fragmented." A number mentioned that urban research is altogether lacking and priority must be given to this part of the equation. Comment was made for "more of an interdisciplinary approach" that brings together various types of knowledge needed to deal with the urban environment.
4. *The urban milieu.* There was much discussion of the different types of situations Extension must face in the urban setting. "Large numbers of people create problems;" "our geographic boundaries are not realistic in terms of looking at the urban area;" "leadership is less defined—how do we identify relevant key leaders for a large population;" "the clientele are more mobile;" "an individualized approach is not as possible with mass audiences—a higher degree of formality in educational programs may be desirable;" "sophistication of content and a wide range of methods is needed in this audience;" "urban people may expect more programs handed down, instead of self-help." The following comment was alluded to in dif-

ferent ways: "The Extension agricultural model was designed for a rather scattered population that has similar values and cultural backgrounds, and is highly production-oriented." Reference was made to "its output of things as against development of people and behavioral change."

5. *Public image.* A number of administrators took cognizance of an "Extension image"—that the public thinks is strictly "agricultural." Several statements were made that people assume that Extension has no relevance to urban problems because "it doesn't apply."
6. *Commitment.* A number of statements were made depicting the awesome proportions of urban problems: "the sheer volume of the audience, and the funding required to make a measurable impact." Several administrators pointed out that the main barrier to significant urban work was money: "our main deficiency is lack of finance." However, others identified that the fundamental limitation, while related to inadequate funding for massive needs, was "no clearly stated policy or commitment to move aggressively into urban problems."

Ag Model Valid and Relevant

Most respondents felt that the Extension model has validity and relevance to urban problems. "The

problem is that some different personnel are needed, some different administrative structures, not the model itself." "There are few limitations in the model, but urban programs are going to require a greater open-mindedness by staff." "We need funding and administrative changes and expertise to deal with subject areas other than agriculture and home economics."

This conclusion, that the agricultural Extension model was valuable (see Table 4), either intact or with significant modifications, was confirmed in responses to the question: "Do you think the 'agricultural Extension model' as you have described it can also be used effectively to deal with urban problems (check one)?"

Conclusion

We must emphasize the limitations of these questionnaire findings. Not every land-grant university responded. The thoroughness of the responses varied considerably among

the different people who answered the questionnaire. The administrators frequently pointed out that the incompleteness of their data was due to inaccessibility of hard information on urban-focused programs. Many of the questions were open-ended and precision based on such replies is impossible.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this information offers us a more or less systematic beginning look at urban-focused Extension activity at most of the land-grant universities.

Our country increasingly is becoming a nation of cities—especially of metropolitan areas. The stark demographic figures are pointed out in the preceding article. Universities are one of our country's greatest assets in generating the knowledge and organizing educational programs to confront the problems of our changing society. Government and Cooperative Extension Services contributed significantly to the dramatic improvements in agricultural tech-

Table 4. Urban Extension model.

Extension model effective for urban problems	Number of respondents*
YES, with only minor modifications	26
It can be used but only with very significant modifications	15
NO, urban problems require fundamentally different approach	1
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	42

*Represents 33 universities.

nology and rural life. Although there are unsolved problems in rural America, Extension will be challenged ever more urgently in the years ahead to respond creatively and effectively to urban needs.

Will Extension institutions be adapted to face up to important tasks of our urbanizing society? Will our complex metropolitan areas as well as our smaller urban communi-

ties accrue the benefits of significant university outreach programs in any proportion to the gains brought to the rural communities by Cooperative Extension? Were we to make another study on urban Extension activity a year from now, or in five years, would we find that our outreach institutions have kept pace with the underlying changes in our society?

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I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete.
 (Signed) Eldora E. Keske, October 13, 1972, *Editor*