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Final Project Report

***Public Issues Education and Collaborative Problem-Solving
In the Northeast: Building Cooperative Extension's
Capacity Through Partnerships***

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Funding for this extension project was provided by
the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(Cooperative Agreement #97-ERRD-1-0072)

August 1999

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DATE OF FINAL REPORT SUBMISSION: August 6, 1999

PROJECT TITLE: Public Issues Education and Collaborative Problem-Solving in the Northeast: Building Cooperative Extension's Capacity Through Partnerships - Final Report

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Advisory Group

An advisory group of a half dozen additional extension administrators, faculty, and dispute resolution practitioners from New York state was established to provide advice and direction throughout the project. The group met or otherwise reviewed material about a half-dozen times over the course of the project.

Abstract

This project addressed three primary questions. First, to what extent and in what manner is the Cooperative Extension System (CES) in the Northeast already engaged in Public Issues Education (PIE)? Second, what is the potential to build the capacity of the CES in the Northeast to constructively engage in PIE? Third, how does or might the CES work with the dispute resolution profession in PIE work? The project pursued both data gathering and network and capacity building agendas through a series of phone and mail surveys, small group meetings, and sub-state and multi-state regional training, planning, and capacity building workshops.

Our research confirmed that there is substantial existing CES educator involvement in PIE across a wide range of issue areas on the part of both county based faculty and state specialists. Though the nature and extent of this involvement is context specific - varying especially by location, state and issue - overall it incorporates process roles such as facilitator, convenor and even less commonly conflict mediator as well as the more widespread CES information delivery roles.

The project uncovered and helped stimulate strong new interest in (re)building PIE capacity throughout the region, especially with a new emphasis on PIE in situations involving high levels of public controversy. However, this interest was only tentative in several northeastern states, and was in general linked to the *ad hoc* interests of individual PIE practitioners rather than derived from a clear organizational mandate. It is probably fair to characterize systemic interest in PIE and capacity building as more broad than it is deep. This conclusion is based in part on the contrast between abundant indicators of generic interest and the limited number of individuals we identified in each state who were highly motivated and able to participate in our project's more intensive training and planning activities.

An important outcome of this project was new networking between PIE practitioners that was fostered regionally. Links to an emerging national network were also enabled. The need for more context based skills training, better evaluation of PIE approaches and outcomes, and system-wide validation/legitimization of PIE activities were highlighted.

Finally, the project identified limited current interaction between CES and the professional dispute resolution communities, but also noted significant and active mutual interest in building this relationship more systematically, especially but not only in Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Additional tangible steps to this end have been taken.

As an indirect benefit, the project helped build momentum for and participation in at least four major related follow-on activities. These activities included a New York focused PIE teleconference, an action research project in New York focused on the county based boards that establish policy for local Cooperative Extension offices, a SARE funded New York state project designed to foster stronger relationships between Extension and Community Dispute Resolution Centers in communities with agriculture/environment conflicts, and a major national CES training and planning workshop on Public Issue Dispute Resolution.

Key Words

Public Issues Education, Dispute Resolution, Capacity Building, Cooperative Extension, Collaborative Problem Solving

Problem Statement

The dynamics of public decision making at the community level have become increasingly complex. Sweeping economic, political and demographic changes are combining with rapid technological advances to increase the diversity of actors with an active stake in complicated

community issues. Devolution and budget pressures increasingly establish a zero-sum actual or perceived context for community decision making. Fractionated, issue oriented political structures have increasingly weakened older political structures. Controversy is common, and public and participant dissatisfaction with existing public decision making is high.

Current community problem solving mechanisms often fail to deal constructively with the range of interacting interests. As a result, competing agendas and interests frequently undermine effective decision making. Many individuals and groups are frustrated with what "the system" delivers (Hahn, Greene and Waterman, 1994). The economist and policy maker Robert Reich has characterized the costs of standard approaches to public decisions in terms of their failure to permit "civic discovery" (Reich 1987). The failure usually involves tangible short term costs to the directly involved parties, with additional long term costs to the entire community's stock of "social capital". Putnam (1993) suggests that the costs may hinder other forms of capital accumulation as well.

This problematic provides the Cooperative Extension system with simultaneous challenges and opportunities. Across the U.S. and in New York State, the Cooperative Extension system is continually in the process of evaluating and redefining its role. In Extension's own words, "The Cooperative Extension System is constantly changing to meet the shifting needs and priorities of the people it serves. As their needs and priorities change, program priorities, organizational structures and external relationships must also change."
(<http://www.esusda.gov/mission/commit/ces.htm>).

The dynamic of public decision making at the local level affects Cooperative Extension on many levels. Public issues programming brings Extension educators into the immediate orbit of policy makers, with attendant risks and benefits. The need to be demand responsive, to develop and adapt programming is also clear. In the contemporary political and social landscape, there are many current and potential Extension audiences who lack the skills and resources to successfully manage or move forwards through contentious community issues. These individuals and groups would benefit from assistance in developing the capacity to manage and resolve conflicts more productively, as they will need to if they are to help their communities thrive in a complex and competitive environment (Flora 1995).

Is Cooperative Extension in a competitive position to provide this service? Cooperative Extension is an organization that has engaged in community education about public issues for most of its history, though with varying emphases and prominence. Scott Peters, for example, has worked in recent years to recuperate and recentralize Liberty Hyde Bailey's notion of "public work" as an essential core of Extension's mission (Peters 1998). In the early 1990's Cooperative Extension adopted a national policy statement and action agenda in support of increased education about public issues. (Extension Committee on Organization Policy and Extension Service, USDA 1992; Cooperative Extension System Task Force on Public Issues Education 1993).

Public Issues Education (PIE) has been Cooperative Extension's 1990's version of its older traditions of public policy education, public affairs programming, and leadership, community and organizational development (Dale and Hahn 1994). PIE draws on a variety of processes- collaborative problem solving, conflict management, etc.-and roles for extension educators to

effectively facilitate the resolution of public issues. Increasingly, extension educators are getting involved in public issues, particularly in areas like agriculture and the environment, youth, watershed management, nutrition, community development etc., that are closely related to both the land grant university system's contemporary mission and historical roots (Bailey 1996, Peters 1998). Some of this work is documented (e.g. Knack and Hahn 1994), with a contemporary archive of case studies now available through the North Carolina State University web site (see <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/agecon/PIE/PIDR/PIEIntro.htm>). It is clear that Extension's practical engagement with PIE has been variable across time and place.

Prior to this project, the degree and character of contemporary involvement of the northeastern CES with PIE had not been systematically researched. Moreover, while previously existing information confirmed that some Cooperative Extension educators were already deeply involved in PIE, it also suggested that Extension had much greater potential to be effective in this arena. At the same time, it was clear that throughout the Northeast (not to mention elsewhere) retirements, other programming priorities and tight Extension budgets had significantly and recently reduced the depth of Cooperative Extension's institutional experience and capacities for PIE programming.

In New York, for example, the extent to which PIE activities were occurring in each county had only been partially researched. Two previous surveys provided much insight prior to the start of this project. Although they were limited efforts, they provide a good foundation for identifying the programmatic context through which extension educators engage in PIE, and for understanding the strengths, needs and challenges educators perceive in relation to this work. Most of the key insights were in fact more systematically reinforced by the current project.

More specifically, before his retirement Alan Hahn in 1995 held eight regional meetings with a selection of county Executive Directors and Extension board members around New York state. About two years later Merrill Ewert, who has since been appointed Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, interviewed 35 people within Extension (campus and off-campus staff and Executive Directors with a known interest in or involvement with PIE) regarding the use of and potential for facilitation and other group processes. The Hahn meetings identified several areas of perceived common need, highlighting training in process skills, opportunities for practice, and evaluation of impact. Strengths identified included strong funding potential, successful facilitation experiences and the value of maintaining a perceived neutral role. Primary challenges were considered to be related to the changing roles of extension educators (from expert information provider or simple meeting convenor to more active facilitator or even mediator) and the perceived risks and fears of conflict.

The Ewert research identified that, amongst the selected interviewees, there was substantial involvement in skills-oriented facilitator training (predominately focused on “group process skills”), often embedded in content specific programming rather than on a stand-alone basis. However, only a handful were doing trainings oriented primarily towards community issues or community problem solving. While there was some awareness of other people and agencies doing facilitation work, this awareness was uneven. Only four respondents identified local Community Dispute Resolution Centers in this capacity. Finally, the top three areas of interest in developing more skills/knowledge were general group process skills, adult education and conflict management.

On another front, over the past 20 years the mediation field has developed extensive experience in facilitating conflicts ranging from two-party interpersonal disputes to complex, multi-party, public policy conflicts (Gray 1989, Carpenter 1991). Mediators are currently practicing collaborative problem-solving/conflict management (CM) in both the private and public sectors. Professional mediation firms are hired to intervene in disputes of all types--from two-party marital to corporate to multi-stakeholder environmental controversies. At the national level, the U.S. Congress has established the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to assist in the resolution of environmental, natural resource and public lands conflicts throughout the country which involve a Federal agency or interest (see <http://udallfoundation.org/iecr.html>). More locally, community dispute resolution centers, with a trained pool of volunteer mediators, offer free mediation services for small claims court referrals as well as community cases. In New York State, this system is well established with one center operating in each county (see <http://www.nysdra.org/links.html>)

As the benefits of collaborative processes have become more widely known and appreciated, anecdotal evidence suggests that communities are increasingly calling on their local dispute resolution centers for assistance in resolving community-level issues. In response to this greater demand, it has appeared that community mediators are increasingly interested in moving beyond interpersonal disputes. Yet, for a variety of reasons--the need for more advanced skills, greater content knowledge and sufficient resources to compensate for the longer intervention period--many community dispute resolution centers are still hesitant to assume the greater challenges of multi-party conflicts (pers. comm., Lisa Hicks).

Effective intervention in public issues requires process skills as well as content expertise for bringing diverse groups together to mutually resolve contentious issues (Carpenter 1991). The project investigators hypothesized prior to this project that there can be a very complementary partnership formed between extension staff, who are often "content" experts with at least an appreciation of, if not personal expertise in, process skills, and the mediation/facilitation community, who are "process" specialists. Both professions/institutions have some experience and greater potential for being involved in public issues and conflicts, and both also have a stake in maintaining their credibility with distinctive brands of "neutrality" as intervenors in the policy cycle. Moreover, the tendency of CES as a system to establish long term relationships with certain stakeholder groups (e.g. agricultural producers) appears to complement the opposite tendency of dispute resolution professionals.

In New York State these two systems have a similar institutional structure--the decentralized county offices are fairly autonomous in terms of policy formulation and their dependence upon local funding sources, but both are also coordinated through a central administration. Each county has both a community dispute resolution center (CDRC) and an extension office. Both are also generally recognized locally as key institutions that play a critical role in maintaining and improving the overall quality of life and socio-economic well-being of communities.

Yet, while PIE is largely the teaching and practice of collaborative problem-solving and conflict management, there is surprisingly little evidence of collaboration between Extension educators and dispute resolution practitioners. For example, only four of the 35 CE staff interviewed by Ewert were aware of the CDRC facilitation work in their counties (Ewert, 1996). Fostering this link presents a significant opportunity given the current scarcity of resources at a time when public

issues are getting more complex and conventional decision-making processes can be frustratingly ineffective. While most other northeastern states have a more centralized organizational structure of Extension and/or dispute resolution centers, initial informal contacts suggested that there was great interest in exploring the potential for collaboration between these institutions, and that a look at the strengths and weaknesses of contrasting state models would be instructive. Throughout the course of the project, it was established that at the state level within the Northeast, the strongest systemic linkages seem to be forming in Delaware followed by New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Collaboration among these two, and other, institutions would greatly enhance local capacity for effectively addressing public problems. By linking content and process expertise it should be possible to further reduce litigation costs, accelerate the problem-solving process, improve the quality of and commitment to agreements, and consequently improve the overall sustainability of communities.

In sum, the project was motivated by the sense that more in-depth research was needed to better understand where PIE is happening and how, the barriers and opportunities for greater utilization, and to evaluate the effectiveness of public issues education in order to draw lessons to be shared. Exploring these questions with both Cooperative Extension and dispute resolution centers, in addition to other key agencies and institutions, was intended to be instructive for proponents and skeptics alike, as well as foster dialogue among these organizations at the local and regional levels.

Project Description

Purpose

Several integrated goals and anticipated outcomes were identified for the project:

- Document and analyze current state of public issues education/facilitation by Cooperative Extension, dispute resolution centers and other local actors, and engage these key institutional players in dialogue on PIE work.
- Develop improved self-awareness within state cooperative extension systems and community mediation organizations regarding their own existing and potential capacities for productive involvement in public issues. Establish greater mutual understanding between these two kinds of organizations.
- Develop collaborative relationships among and between extension staff and other identified community mediators in the public issues arena involving appropriate organizations at regional, state, and local levels.
- Enhance process skills among participants for situation assessment, process/intervention/education design and process management in support of both field application and program design.

- Assist in the formulation and implementation of regional, state and local agendas for organizations to help increase competence in resolving public issues. Apply lessons learned into future programming--case study analysis, training workshops, network, and coalition support, etc.

Approach and Expected Outcomes

These goals were to be achieved through joint analysis of CE and CDRC's current and potential roles, drawing on lessons learned by: extension educators who have intervened in public issues, mediation volunteers and professionals who have facilitated public policy collaborative processes, and any past and potential experiences in collaboration between these, in addition to other key institutions. Documentation of the experiences, needs and interests of these key institutions was intended to serve multiple purposes--to build support for PIE among extension's association directors and administration and to inform program development at local, state, regional and national levels in this area among the collaborating organizations.

The proposal established three phases to the work. The first phase (I) was designed to provide a regional state-level overview or thumbnail sketch of Cooperative Extension's involvement in Public Issues Education (PIE) throughout the Northeast. It was also intended to identify organizations with dispute resolution capacities and the activities they are conducting. State level key informant telephone interviews were to be employed. The second phase (II) was designed to involve more intensive work in two states (New York and Pennsylvania), with lesser attention paid to an additional third state for the purposes of more intensive data collection, skills building and network development. The third phase (III) was to be a workshop bringing together project participants, state-level collaborators and other key contacts to evaluate project results and lessons learned and to plan for follow-up work.

This project was conducted in the following three phases:

Phase I. Survey/planning (all northeastern states): The project concentrated initially on a Northeast region-wide telephone screening survey of key state contacts to better understand the nature and extent of public issues education/facilitation in Cooperative Extension, dispute resolution centers and other relevant organizations within each state, and to make informed selection of key states for in-depth work. Goals of this broad-level survey were to summarize degree of involvement of the main institutions, particularly natural resource management and community development PIE and dispute resolution; to collect relevant documents--state-level Cooperative Extension and conflict management programs/systems, as well as local and case specific materials; finalize choices of which states and potential collaborators meet criteria for the in-depth portion of the program; and with partners, jointly design the research and action process with collaborating institutions.

The survey portion of this phase consisted of phone and some in-person interviews. Further contacts were identified through a "snowball" referencing system whereby interviewees recommended additional resource persons to contact. Planning meetings with key partners were

convened to review and validate this initial survey work, finalize state/partner selections and the design of the subsequent in-depth phase.

With the resources at hand we worked in greater depth in New York and Pennsylvania. For our third state, we also established a key partnership (not involving any expenditure of NERCRD funds, however) with Maryland. Based on mutual interests established during the Phase I contacts, we also maintained a high level of communication with Delaware. The additional states were selected according to the following criteria:

- level of CCE involvement in PIE
- level of CDRC involvement and/or interest in multi-party collaborative problem-solving
- relationship (or lack thereof) between CDRC-CCE
- interest in partnering with us on the project
- variety in the structural support role played by state and national as opposed to local organization
- project budget implications
- involvement of content in the natural resource and community development area.

In Maryland, Dr. Phil Favero played a key role, especially after attending a project planning meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with two of his Maryland colleagues. A joint agenda was developed at that meeting which eventually evolved into a broader effort to build extension's capacity to engage in "public issue dispute resolution" at the national level.

In Delaware, we contacted key members of a group of about a half-dozen faculty working collaboratively in and out of extension. With key leadership located in the university's Conflict Resolution Program, this interdisciplinary group was aggressively working to build institutional capacity for the University to more effectively engage its faculty and extension resources on topics involving public controversy. Ultimately, we were able to coordinate our final (Phase III) project workshop with a statewide conference on conflict resolution organized by the University of Delaware.

Phase II. In-depth Research, Network Development and Capacity Building (New York & Pennsylvania)

The in-depth phase of the project had the goal of comprehensively documenting the richness and variety of existing and most promising PIE activities in the selected states. Data collection focused on:

- Level of PIE involvement of Extension educators and dispute resolution practitioners
- The types of multi-party issues and conflicts Extension educators and dispute resolution practitioners have encountered.
- Skills and other resources they have and/or need
- Extent of actual or potential roles of Extension, and/or other institutions
- Awareness of and/or partnerships with other institutions (between CE and CDRC's; between CE and other organizations)
- Perceived opportunities and risks of PIE involvement

Data was to be collected through both telephone and in-person individual interviews with key players from both institutions.

- b) Interviews: In New York, phone, personal, and internet interviews were to be conducted with all county based Extension and dispute resolution offices. This task was successfully completed, with results as described below.
- b) Workshops: These workshops were intended to combine training, joint data gathering and analysis and initial strategic planning and visioning. The data gathering and analysis elements were to center on group reflection on public issues and conflicts and how they had been dealt with (or not) in the past, and how they could be addressed in the future. The training elements were to include presentation of approaches for analysis and intervention for participants to analyze their cases and structuring discussion and reflection. Skills training was also to be incorporated into the workshop and tailored to expressed needs/interests. Using this integrated approach—elicitive and prescriptive—the workshops were intended to bring diverse groups together, build process understanding and skills, and generate new information and insights into the research questions. Several successful workshops were in fact held in New York and Pennsylvania.

Phase III. Final Evaluation and Strategic Planning workshop: This workshop was intended to bring together participants, state-level collaborators, and key institutions from interested northeastern states to evaluate project results, analyze lessons learned and plan next steps. A group of Extension educators met for this purpose at the University of Delaware in March of 1999.

The anticipated outcomes from this project--greater understanding about PIE-CM, new and/or strengthened relationships, commitment to continue by collaborating institutions, etc.—were intended to be used to guide development of subsequent phases of PIE programming at Cornell. These were expected to include such things as further training, cross-visits between sites, case study analysis and documentation, assistance in interventions, etc.

Project Outcomes and Results

Phase I Key Informant Interviews

“Key informant” telephone interviews were made with as many as four people in the state Extension and in the state dispute resolution systems in all states. Calls were made in 1997.

Extension

For the Extension calls, contact was initially made with state representatives of the Northeast Public Policy Education Committee.¹ At the time, Maine was the only state with no active Committee representative, a circumstance which remained through the course of the project.

¹ Luane Lange, CT; Tom Ilvento, DE; Phil Favero, MD; Cathy Roth, MA; Bruce Marriott, NH; Ed Tavernier, NJ; Nelson Bills, NY; Tim Kelsey, PA; Howard Foster, RI; Barry Stryker, VT; Mike Dougherty WV.

During the initial interviews additional or more appropriate key contacts in several states were identified.² One project accomplishment was the number of these key contacts who participated in project-related events later on.³ All contacts were asked about the extent and character of PIE work within their states (see Appendix, Phase I Extension Interview Guide).

Several preliminary conclusions or key observations were derived from Phase I interviews. First, budget pressures, downsizing and retirements had led to a loss of PIE capacity in many states, particularly of staff with PIE process skills. This was particularly but not exclusively true in the increasingly centralized New England Extension systems, and tended to be associated with the demise of regional CRD specialists. Second, many of the individuals contacted were themselves involved in PIE related activities. However, there appeared to be few in-state networks of such people. Several respondents felt they did their PIE work in relative isolation both within their own states and beyond. Third and consistent with the previous observation, few identified systematic attempts to build, organize or draw upon existing PIE capacity within the state. Fourth, perhaps reflecting in some measure our starting point with the Policy Education Committee, the PIE work we learned about seemed more heavily oriented to environment, land use, agriculture and economic development than to family, youth, leadership development or related areas. Fifth, most of the respondents were indeed involved to some extent in work on issues involving public controversy. Sixth, respondents were themselves involved in PIE in many capacities ranging from conflict resolution research to providing expertise on land use law to public issues and large group process facilitation to training public officials in conflict resolution topics. Seventh, faculty with research or strong discipline-based orientations faced incentives that tended to make serious commitment to PIE work problematic. Eighth, in most states the contact between Extension and any dispute resolution organization or professionals tended to be minimal or *ad hoc*, though interest in exploring mutual benefit appeared to be significant.

In addition to the evolving situations within New York and Pennsylvania (the states of the project team members) the states which appeared to us to have the most complementary PIE activity underway were in Maryland and Delaware. Though many interesting activities were being undertaken elsewhere, in each of these states we identified strong potential partners, young and vital initiatives to build PIE capacity within the state, and an approach to PIE that fully embraced collaborative problem solving and conflict management approaches, including especially in Delaware partnerships with the dispute resolution community. Mostly because of the stronger interest in partnering with our effort, we identified Maryland as the third state with which we would actively work. However, we were also able to coordinate the Phase III workshop with faculty at the University of Delaware who were planning a related state-wide event on conflict resolution.

² Jim Gibbons, Steve Broderick (CT); Marina Piscalish, Bill McGowan, Kathy Denhardt, Joe Farrell, Maria Pippidis (DE); Ron Beard (ME); Gisela Walker, Scott Jackson (MA); Paula Gregory (NH); Lorraine Joubert (RI); Lois Frey (VT).

³ At one point or another, at least one contact from every state expressed significant interest in our NERCRD sponsored project or related events. As one indicator of interest, at least one person from every state except for Maine and Connecticut participated in at least one of several project related events that involved travel outside of their home state.

Dispute Resolution Organizations

In contrast to Extension, there was no organized “system” of equivalent dispute resolution organizations to facilitate our contacts in every state. However, through a process of networking with known organizations we did identify and make contact with selected dispute resolution organizations or specific contacts in each state. Based on these contacts we found particularly promising interest in our project and/or experience in multi-party dispute resolution in Delaware, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire (aside from our own states of New York and Pennsylvania).

New York is apparently unique in the Northeast in having a county based network of trained volunteers working out of community dispute resolution centers. These organizations are affiliated with the state court system. In each state, few or no contacts we made were dealing with complex multi-party disputes. Those relative few who did handle multi-party disputes employed professional mediators or were mediation consulting firms as opposed to community based volunteer run nonprofit organizations. While there was some mutual awareness, overall there was little interaction with the Extension system in these states.

Phase II Surveys and Workshops

*Pennsylvania*⁴

In preparation for conducting surveys and workshops, Penn State investigators contacted dispute resolution organizations at the state and local level. A comprehensive state-wide inventory of existing mediation training programs and resource centers was completed. These resources were found to be geographically concentrated in southeastern Pennsylvania and generally less accessible to people in the rural part of the state.

Surveys

The Pennsylvania participants obtained information and input from Extension agents about the types of conflicts occurring in rural Pennsylvania, existing links to conflict management resources, and interest in training and interaction with local dispute resolution practitioners. The information was obtained at an Extension in-service training workshop held in January 1998.

A survey was designed for known dispute resolution organizations and administered in late 1997. The goal was to find out what these organizations currently do, whether they are involved in multiparty disputes and whether they would like to be more involved in such conflicts. Approximately 18 local dispute resolution providers were contacted and interviews conducted about: the organization and its background, training offered, multi-party mediation activities, work on agricultural/environmental issues, contact with Extension and interest in attending a joint

⁴ Prepared by Charles Abdalla, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics and Barbara Gray, Professor of Organizational Behavior and Director, Center for Research in Conflict and Negotiation, The Pennsylvania State University.

workshop. Very few of these groups were found to be involved with multi-party training, and they expressed interest in the proposed training in multiparty mediation.

Workshops

Barbara Gray and Charles Abdalla conducted a workshop for 12 extension agents entitled "Exploring Partnerships For Enhancing Extension's Work on Community Issues in Pennsylvania" at University Park in January 1998. Intermediate-level conflict resolution skills were taught. A pre-workshop questionnaire elicited information and perspectives from agents on local conflicts, how these conflicts are currently resolved, and the potential for partnerships with other organizations to assist in these efforts. Most agents expressed interest in a joint workshop with dispute resolution providers.

In April/May 1998 two workshops were conducted at the Penn State Capital College in Middletown. The workshops were designed with the goals of providing extension and local dispute providers conflict management training appropriate to their skill level and provide a forum for dialogue about potential partnerships or links. The workshops were designed and taught cooperatively with Eileen Stief and Wendy Emrich, from PENNACCORD Associates based in Swarthmore. The workshop was held just prior to the state-wide conference of the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators that was held in Middletown. The workshops were: "Basic Mediation Skills for Dealing with Two-Party Conflicts/A Dialogue with Local Providers of Dispute Resolution Providers" (for extension staff only, 6 attended) and "Intervention Techniques for MultiParty Disputes Dealing with Agricultural and Rural Conflicts" (for members of both extension and dispute resolution providers, 8 attended; only two were from the dispute resolution field and one person represented the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture). The multi-party training utilized actual rural conflict scenarios and small group work to teach conflict management principles and skills. Both workshops were coordinated by the Center for Research in Conflict and Negotiation, at Penn State University, and the tuition subsidized with Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.

There were several lessons learned from the two workshops. These included:

- 1) Participation by Extension. Extension agents had trouble with the going price of such training. Even though the tuition was subsidized it appears the fees charged presented an obstacle to some agents. Other obstacles (e.g., "fit" of mediator role vs. information/technology provider) probably also reduced participation.
- 2) Learning by Extension. Many of the agents in attendance learned a significant amount about what mediation was and could be used for during the training. In particular, they seemed to have internalized the meaning of mediation and capable of conveying it to others, perhaps preparing them for the role of promoter and/or convener of conflict resolution.
- 3) Basic Skills. It is critical that Extension agents have basic mediation training skills before they can be expected to think about the more complex multiparty ones. Also, since few agents actually envision themselves in a mediator role, we found it was useful to stress the other roles they could play (e.g. convener, promoter, facilitator etc.).

- 4) Participation by Local Dispute Providers. Even though we made it easy and lower cost to attend, very few mediators attended the training. Their actual participation contradicted the interest that they had expressed earlier in the year when they were surveyed.
- 5) Length of Training/Certification. Because of the multiple goals of the three days, neither the basic or the multiparty training were long enough to have people leave with the minimum length requirements for these courses as they are normally taught. Therefore, we did not feel that we could say they had "completed" such training. Barbara Gray and Charles Abdalla conducted a workshop for 12 extension agents entitled "Exploring Partnerships For Enhancing Extension's Work on Community Issues in Pennsylvania" (January, 1998). Intermediate-level conflict resolution skills were taught. A pre-workshop questionnaire elicited information and perspectives from agents on local conflicts, how these conflicts are currently resolved, and the potential for partnerships with other organizations to assist in these efforts. Most agents expressed interest in a joint workshop with dispute resolution providers.

Approximately 18 local dispute resolution providers were contacted and interviews conducted about: the organization and its background, training offered, multi-party mediation activities, work on agricultural/environmental issues, contact with Extension and interest in attending a joint workshop. Very few of these groups were found to be involved with multi-party training, and they expressed interest in the proposed training in multi-party mediation.

Initial planning for a joint workshop involving extension agents and community dispute resolution providers was completed. The workshop will provide training opportunities in mediation appropriate for these two audiences and also allow for dialog between these them.

New York

Cooperative Extension Surveys

Extensive, in-depth telephone or in-person interviews were conducted with 52 of New York's county Cooperative Extension Associations, including 35 Association directors. The rest were mostly Agriculture or Environment Program leaders. The interviews covered all but five of the state's 62 counties (including all of New York City). The remaining five county contacts either did not respond to requests for interviews or indicated that they had no relevant information or interest in the topic. Interviews averaged approximately one hour per person, with some continuing significantly longer. Initial contact and most of the actual interviews were with the county association director. Interviews took place in late 1997 and early 1998. Particular attention was given the following topics.

- Issue and program areas in which CCE is engaged in PIE
- The range of roles played by CCE educators
- CCE's stake in neutrality versus advocacy in PIE work
- Challenges and opportunities to CCE represented by PIE
- Interest in developing PIE capacity further
- Specific needs for capacity building
- CCE relationships with CDRCs

- Barriers to and opportunities for collaboration with CDRCs
- CCE involvement in major public issues and controversies within the county
- Interest in working with us on next phases of NERC RD project

The data was entered into an Access database. Some selected highlights of the results and impressions are summarized next⁵. * **

There is great variation from county to county in the extent and nature of involvement in PIE. In some counties, PIE is central to the identity of CCE and is perceived as “the future of Extension”. In other counties, involvement in PIE is limited or tenuous at best.

Most respondents claimed some familiarity with PIE terminology and concepts, though many had in mind very inclusive and/or traditional definitions of the term. Nearly all (50) said their staff is involved in PIE, though to varying degrees - as one respondent put it, "there's no way you wouldn't be, though we're not involved to a high degree."

PIE, at least as associated with that name, seems more deeply rooted in some program areas than others. Due to methodological limitations, it was unclear to what extent the variation in PIE involvement across program areas reflects the awareness of the respondent, the visibility/priority attached to certain program areas by the respondent or the actual distribution of PIE across these areas. However, the overall results do suggest cumulatively a high degree of involvement in PIE across the state.

As shown in Table 1, PIE was most commonly involved in natural resource or environmental issues (cited by 40 of the 50 county offices), followed by agriculture (27 offices) and community and economic development (29 offices). PIE was also mentioned frequently in relation to programs for Youth and Family (22 offices), but much less frequently for Nutrition and Food (12 offices) or Health (9 offices). Table 2 lists common issues mentioned under major program areas.

Table 1: Program Areas and Forms of PIE in New York State

Program Area	No. Issues *	Role of CCE	No. Issues (97 possible)
Natural Resource/ Environment	44 (40)	Provide information or tech. assistance	87
Agriculture	27 (27)	Speaker	56
Community & Econ. Development	25 (29)	Convener	74
Youth & Family	7 (22)	Facilitator	80
Nutrition & Food	6 (12)	Process Designer	66
Health	4 (9)	Coalition Builder	66
Totals	113 (50)	Process Trainer	38
		Technical Training	52
		Conflict Mediator	32

⁵ See Appendix * for the interview protocol and a list of database variables.

* Respondents were asked to identify up to three issues for which their county association used some type of PIE. 113 issues were identified in total (out of 150 possible), a total constrained both by time in the interview and/or the desire to focus on the most relevant cases. Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of offices citing at least some PIE work in each program area (50 were contacted, covering 53 of 62 counties in the state).

Table 2: Program Area Issues

<p>Natural Resources/Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solid waste, including facility siting and composting/recycling • water quality • watershed and lake management -- including NYC watershed • wildlife management <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • farmland protection • farm stabilization/diversification/profitability • land use & rural/urban conflicts including odors <p>Community & Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local government education/training including for newly elected officials. • welfare reform • workforce preparation • county comprehensive or economic planning and development • economic development including business retention, expansion and location <p>Youth & Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general children and youth issues • child/dependent care <p>Nutrition and Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food security and food systems • nutrition education <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general health • breast cancer

In terms of the roles played by Cooperative Extension staff, Table 1 reveals that the most commonly cited role is information provider (involving 87 of the 97 issues discussed) and, in a related “expert based information delivery” category, as a speaker (56 issues). These are roles that Extension faculty typically take on whether or not it is involved in PIE per se. In many cases this reflects the fact that extension staff play dual roles (as information provider as well as process facilitator). The most common process roles mentioned for these 97 issues are convener (74), facilitator (80), process designer or coalition builder (66 each), process trainer (52) and conflict mediator (32). Most but not all of 32 cases of conflict mediation cited by respondents involved extension staff in minor or informal roles rather than in high profile mediator roles.

These results reveal a diverse set of roles, with a tendency to engage in more pro-active collaborative activities than overtly conflictual situations. Indeed, the potential for controversy is widely recognized as a risk for Cooperative Extension, with roughly 75% of the 50 respondents saying they may avoid controversial issues for fear of becoming embroiled in it themselves (34 respondents), because of sensitive turf issues involved (31 respondents) and/or because of the time commitment that may be required (36 respondents). Other barriers to greater involvement in PIE were less commonly cited but are still part of the decision dynamic in a significant number of counties. Thus, 28 respondents identified lack of skills or expertise and 22 cited lack of support from their Board of Directors as additional reasons for avoiding the controversial situations. 19 counties stated that lack of interest among extension staff is another reason for not engaging in more PIE.

On the question of neutrality versus advocacy, respondents tended to maintain a shifting balance between the two. Most associations struggle to avoid stepping across the line into advocacy, while at the same time admit that pure neutrality is impossible. Many attempt to provide "unbiased" information that considers all perspectives, but do not hesitate to advocate for certain goals and research based conclusions. Others essentially define anything based on research and "the facts" as "neutral". Extension associations often are perceived or expected to be advocates on certain issues or for certain constituencies, especially on controversial issues involving agriculture. Many are nonetheless wary of appearing to take sides on specific policy issues.

Nearly all (46) indicated either strong interest in or had specific plans to develop further PIE programming. Most also had a laundry list of specific kinds of assistance they thought would be useful in doing this. These included skills training, peer exchanges, help evaluating success of PIE programming, help getting funding in this area, case studies, and more campus backup. A somewhat smaller but still strong majority of respondents were interested in written materials and help coordinating with other agencies, especially state agencies.

Respondents overwhelmingly rated their involvement in PIE as having positive impact on their organization. A not atypical comment: "In all cases our reputation has been enhanced. We have shown that we can provide resource materials, technical information and be a mediator and facilitator." Examples of specific positive outcomes include raised community awareness of CCE, increased community and/or legislative acceptance/support, financial contracts, and problem resolution.

The surveys confirmed that there is some interaction between CCE and CDRC's around the state but that it is low level, and not routine or systematic.

Overall, these findings reinforce impressions from more in-depth discussions over the years which suggest that despite wide involvement and a widely perceived benefit, several inter-related factors continue constrain the use of PIE in Cooperative Extension. Among these remain: the perceived risks to the local office associated with getting involved in certain issues; a preference for taking a more "neutral" information provider role that utilizes the expert-based knowledge of staff; and variation in levels of interest and "comfort levels" among staff related to process roles, especially in controversial or conflictual situations.

Community Dispute Resolution Center Surveys

Two surveys of CDRC directors and program coordinators were administered, including a short written survey conducted at a statewide New York State Dispute Resolution Association meeting (21 respondents) and more extensive telephone interviews (26 respondents). In total, there were 40 respondents representing 59 of New York's 62 counties responded to either the written and/or the telephone surveys (note: several CDRC's represent two or more counties). Particular attention was given to the following topics:

- CDRC's level of engagement in multi-party work
- Issues in which CDRC is engaged in multi-party work
- The range of roles played by CDRC practitioners
- Reason for getting involved in multi-party issues
- How multi-party work is funded
- Who at CDRCs are involved in multi-party mediations (e.g., staff, volunteers, etc.)
- Challenges and opportunities to CDRCs represented by multi-party work
- Interest in developing multi-party capacity further
- Specific needs for capacity building.
- CDRC relationships with CCE

The majority of the CDRC respondents (27/40) are or have been involved in multi-party mediation or facilitation. Of those responding positively, centers have been working most commonly on neighborhood issues (23), followed by environmental issues (12), school-related issues (9), and community and economic development issues (5). Other multi-party work has included mediation or facilitation between the following types of groups: employer/employees, focus groups for funding, small community groups, nonprofit agencies, churches, businesses, and municipalities. Table 3 lists specific issues mentioned by general issue category.

The role most commonly cited by phone respondents is mediator (15 of 26 phone interviews), followed by facilitator (14), training (7), and process design (5).

Of the 26 phone interview respondents, over half (14) became involved through direct requests from community members or other organizations. Other reasons for getting involved include:

- through membership of a board or committee,
- organizational mission,
- inquiries from public interest groups on how to do MP,
- mediators become involved on an individual basis,
- word of mouth,
- referrals from the courts,
- when the center sees a situation developing in the community.

Three centers have (and market) specific multi-party programs, while the others do not necessarily market or promote multi-party services. Most centers do not receive special funding outside of

their regular grants from the Unified Court System or parent NGO's. A few centers, however, receive fees-for-service or special grants.

Table 3: Multi-party issues mediated by CDRC's

Neighborhood/Housing

- mobile home parks (e.g., water septic system complaints),
- landlord/tenants
- evacuation
- children
- property boundaries
- access roads
- members and non-members of a park association
- street vendors
- noise
- siting of a drug/alcohol rehab. program
- ethnic/racial Issues - police discrimination, discrimination by neighbors

Natural Resources/Environment

- agriculture
- land use and zoning
- wildlife management (deer)
- farmer/neighbor conflicts
- waste management (e.g., septic systems, incinerators)
- flood waters

Schools

- parent/boards
- safety
- conflicts between groups of students
- youth violence task force

Community/Economic Development

- land use
- mall development
- community planning

Businesses

- inter-organizational turf-related issues
- workplace relations (employer/ee)
- harassment

Other issues

- churches/religious issues
- ADA
- family
- special education

Volunteer mediators generally do the mediations; however, staff are also involved. In several cases the respondent identified one or more volunteers and staff who have the skills and experience to handle multi-party cases. The number of volunteer mediators at the centers range from 17 - 175. All mediators get their basic mediation skills through the Basic Training offered by their centers. More experienced staff and volunteers have learned multi-party skills from their professional training (e.g., law, ILR, public policy/government, etc.), mediation experience, training through other associations/consultants/universities, apprenticeship programs, case consultations. Respondents identified the following trainers: themselves, trainers at other centers (Ann Petrus, Andrew Thomas, Judy Saul, Claudia Johanson, Duke Fisher), NYSDRA, the Unified Court System, Cornell trainings (including CPECM and the local CDRC)

Twenty-eight of the 40 written survey and phone interview respondents indicated an interest in becoming more involved in multi-party mediation/facilitation and in increasing their capacity to do so. Those who were interested made several suggestions for ways in which they could develop their multi-party mediation/facilitation capacities. These included more trainings and workshops, greater demand for multi-party services and promotion of the use of mediation, more funding and more time, more substantive information on specific issue areas. Respondents mentioned the following needs, although with less frequency: materials, apprenticeship/mentoring opportunities, and peer exchanges and sharing.

Almost all respondents said they were actively involved in NYSDRA. Both of the respondents who said their center had not been active had not been able to because of other time commitments, but would like to be more involved. The following were suggestions to NYSDRA on what it could do to help build capacity: training and mentoring, legal consultation, promotion of mediation, outreach, marketing, sharing info. on resources and cases, getting contracts at the state level (e.g., Lemon Law, special education), grant-writing, finding cases "as a fielder of disputes," coordinating different groups, lobbying for legislation, how to overcome financial limitations, fostering a sense of community among the centers, production of brochures on specific topics, bringing in top-notch trainers from around the countries,

Phone interview respondents were asked to list some of the challenges to multi-party work. Roughly 62% (16 of 26) indicated that lack of funding do such work was the most limiting factor; 54% cited lack of multi-party mediation/facilitation skills among the staff; 54% said lack of time is a major constraint; 27% said lack of substantive knowledge of the issue was a challenge; 19% said lack of community awareness of the CDRC services was a limitation; and 19% said lack of board support for involvement was an issue. Other challenges mentioned were lack of staff interest, sustainability of neutrality in a small community, finding cases, lack of interagency cooperation, increasing community confidence in CDRC skills, the difficulty of multi-party cases, and fear of the unknown.

CCE-CDRC Linkages

More than half of the CCE respondents were aware of the local CDRC, and many of them have had some direct interaction or collaboration, though frequently minimal. Overall there were mixed

feelings that varied greatly from county to county about the desirability of a closer working relationship. There was some interest in developing or expanding upon the relationship.

The results of the CDRC interviews support these findings. According to the CDRC respondents, their levels of interaction with CCE Associations varied. About half of the respondents said their centers had some level of interaction or collaboration with CCE. The nature of CDRC-CCE interactions, where present, ranged from some program contact, to mutual referrals, to trainings and workshops on conflict resolution/mediation skills, to collaborative county community projects. Those who had collaborated with Extension were positive about the experience and generally found that the two agencies have complemented each other. The majority of the phone interview respondents (18) felt that there was potential for future collaboration with CCE. On the other hand, several respondents (7) either expressed concerns about collaboration related to turf issues, or could not respond because they were unaware of the functions of CCE.

Phase II New York Workshops.

In order to maximize impact and work with very limited project resources, our approach to workshops was less to create stand alone events than to look for interested partners we could work with and scheduled events we could build on. Partly as a consequence, it took significantly longer than initially anticipated to pull together these events.

1) David Kay and Tahnee Robertson represented the project in a September 1997 PIE workshop at Cornell for more than a dozen Cooperative Extension educators from around the state. The workshop was organized by the Department of Natural Resources and built around a case study of conflict over management of nuisance geese in Rockland County. As a follow-up to this workshop, the Program on Environmental Conflict Management brought the experience to a larger audience by sponsoring a campus-based seminar on Extension's role in controversial issues, presented by the lead Rockland County extension agent (December 2, 1998).

2) Project staff organized and participated in the presentation of a workshop at the October 1998 Cornell Cooperative Extension Statewide Conference, "CCE: A Partner in Community Building". The conference was organized by the Association of Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators. Our workshop was co-sponsored by Epsilon Sigma Phi, Lambda Chapter. The 1.5 hour introductory workshop was entitled, "Conflict Management", and promised an introduction to a skill/tool that "can help you in many community situations". The workshop was not intended to be a skills training per se. Instead, it featured a brief summary of the results of our survey of county offices, short case study presentations by two county educators on their involvement with controversial public issues, and a longer presentation on the basics of public issue dispute resolution that was given by the Tompkins County based director of the Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) who was an advisor to the NERCRD project and a frequent partner in our work.

The workshop had a preregistration of well over 50, one of the highest of the Conference's many sessions. Overall evaluations (31 respondents) of the workshop's "knowledge content" were high. Rankings in terms of relevance were more mixed. From verbal and written comments, it became clear that while many were pleased with the workshop orientation, a significant portion of the

audience was not much interested in the “public” dimension of our presentations, and had wanted a more hands on workshop with greater focus on interpersonal conflict management. Upon reflection, it became clear that the workshop description had been somewhat misleading. However, a more general issue raised was the need to appropriately “package” this kind of programming. We need to figure out how to tap into the high level of interest in conflict resolution, but in a manner that differentiates between educator interests based on the contexts in which they must manage conflicts. The workshop experience also reinforced our sense, not unlike that of our collaborators in Pennsylvania, that it is smart to think about building capacity for working on public issues by starting with two-party conflict management skills.

3) On March 10 and 11, 1999, the New York State Association of County Agricultural Agents sponsored a hands-on training workshop on “Ag and Non-Ag Community Conflict Management”. A committee of agricultural agents approached campus initially. We then helped collaboratively plan and lead the workshop. The first half day was devoted to “Two Party Conflict Management”, and was led by a trainer from the CDRC in Saratoga Springs. Her presentations, case studies and exercises covered the nature of conflict, risks of involvement or noninvolvement, roles of the extension educator, skills building, and the identification of useful resources.⁶ Our four hour morning session was devoted to “community conflict management”. The session’s goals were to

- broaden understanding of multi-party conflict situations
- explore a range of strategies and roles for extension educators
- broaden awareness of available resources (partners and learning opportunities)
- introduce the kinds of skills that can be learned in a more intensive training

The session included the introduction of two case studies. One was based on a community dispute over hog farming and another on a clash involving environmentalists challenging agricultural uses of pesticides. These case studies were used to frame discussion and exercises on the nature of conflict (differences between multi-and two party conflict; basics of collaborative problem solving); skills building (situation and stakeholder assessment); the many possible roles of extension educators (benefits and risks of each); partners and resources; and possible next steps.

This workshop was well received by the approximately 25 participants, with interest expressed about follow-up events. The workshop highlighted a number of issues including the interest in this topic on the part of even the more “traditional” and technically oriented agents, the difficulty some of them had in assuming a nonjudgmental/neutral role on controversial issues involving agriculture, the opportunities for complementary partnership with trained mediators, and the need for additional (including more intensive) training opportunities. Working notes from the sessions are included in the Appendix.

4) On March 25, 1999, project staff participated in another workshop entitled, “Going Out On A Limb: Extension, Public Issues and Community Programming” This session was part of CCE’s “Connecting and Learning” conference. Highlights of the NERCRD project were presented.

⁶ Listening, reflecting/interpreting (reframing/transforming), defusing anger, distinguishing interests from opinions, separating the person from the problem.

5) On March 1, 1999, project staff convened a meeting between several representatives of the statewide CDRC system and several representatives of the CCE administration. The goal was to explore the statewide potential for mutual training and capacity building around community management of controversial public issues. This wide ranging first meeting was successful in building some initial relationships, and led to an agreement to attempt to design a collaborative regional workshop on a pilot basis. Planning for such a workshop in several southeastern counties was ongoing as of summer of 1999.

It was recognized that none of these workshops were sufficient in and of themselves to really build capacity or “train” participants in high level skills required for skilled interventions in controversial public issues. However, in part because of the activities enabled by this project, we successfully engaged the interest of staff within Extension Administration at Cornell. This led to a series of follow-on events in which project staff participated and helped plan while others took the lead. This also led to the formulation and submission of a proposal to Extension for increased staffing in support of PIE that would involve both on campus and regionally based off-campus personnel. This proposal is still under consideration at the present time.

Phase III Final Regional Workshop

On March 3, 1999 project staff convened and led an all day regional workshop involving twelve extension PIE practitioners from six states.⁷ Supplemental funding from USDA was obtained to help subsidize travel to the meeting. The workshop was organized to take place the day after a statewide conference in Delaware entitled, “Is Collaboration First in the First State”. This statewide policy forum, co-sponsored by the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension System, was intended to “provide an opportunity to examine the collaborative processes and alternative dispute resolution techniques being utilized (or not being utilized) across several different sectors in Delaware, including education, health care, courts, government, nonprofit, environmental and community organizations.” Several PIE practitioners who attended our March 3 event were also able to observe and participate in the statewide Delaware conference on March 2.

The primary goals of the final regional workshop were to share perspectives, experiences and PIE approaches, build relationships across state lines, and identify a preliminary regional agenda in anticipation of the national Public Issue Dispute Resolution Conference being planned for June. The facilitated discussion focused on three major topics:

- identifying the characteristics of high quality or “blue ribbon” PIE?
- use case studies to explore educator roles, obstacles, needs, opportunities for PIE
- identify next steps and any elements of a regional agenda

Summary notes on these topics are included in the Appendix.

⁷ DE, MD, NJ, NY, RI, and WV. Four of these individuals were among the ten northeasterners who attended the national PIDR workshop in Tucson in June.

Related Outcomes and Events

- 1) The New York participants published an article based on NERCRD sponsored and related work in the Spring 1999 issue of *Adult Learning*. The citation is: David Pelletier, David Kay, Mary Schlarb and Tahnee Robertson, "Public Issues Education: Avoidance, Neutrality and the Expert Model", *Adult Learning*, Vol. 10, Number 3, pp.14-16
- 2) A proposal to produce a case studies training handbook concerning rural community conflicts was developed in follow-up to an interim project meeting in Pennsylvania, which involved three participants from the University of Maryland as well as the project teams from New York and Pennsylvania. Phil Favero from Maryland took the lead in organizing a national group of possible contributors, and funding for a project meeting was arranged through NERCRD and its southern counterpart. However, through a series of in-person meetings, and many telephone conferences, this agenda evolved away from the initial concept and towards a major national event. Project team members were major organizers and participants of this national event. This event was realized as the June 1999 Public Issue Dispute Resolution conference and training for Extension educators in Tucson Arizona. Ten people from six Northeastern states (NY, MA, VT, NH, DE, MD) participated. Harking back to the original concept, case studies were prepared by participants at the conference and are now available online at the nation PIE web site located at North Carolina State University, along with other conference materials. (See www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/agecon/PIE/)
- 3) The NERCRD effort established the basis for at least three follow-on projects in New York. First, funding support from the Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute enabled us to focus intensively on the roles of two bodies that have a direct influence on Cooperative Extension's local PIE work: county legislators and county association boards of directors. A series of focus groups in six counties involving these stakeholder groups is now partially completed. Second, additional competitive funding from within Extension itself enabled a series of planning meetings and focus groups that culminated in the production of a New York oriented teleconference on PIE in June of 1999. Results of the NERCRD sponsored project were featured during the teleconference and in accompanying materials. Third, in collaboration with several Cornell programs, project staff received SARE funding to organize several county based capacity building events focused on agricultural/environmental conflicts.

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APPENDIX

Phase I Extension Interview Questions Guide

1. Start with summary of NERCRD project, each phase, attempt to document existing status of PIE in each state.
2. Are they personally involved in anything resembling Public Issues Ed/Multiparty Conflict Management (PIE/MPCM) If not them, who else in extension would I better contact?
3. Can they give specific examples of programs or projects that have a PIE/MPCM dimension to them? Who is involved (staffing, communities, kinds of interest/stakeholder groups...) Regions of state? Programmatic, long term or specific project? Goals? Anything written up that they could send?
4. What about content - natural resource/forestry/watershed, community development, leadership development, agriculture in particular? How about other areas, eg. youth/family?
5. How do these programs address conflict/controversy per se? (Possibly reference stages of policy cycle.) Is there nervousness about getting CE involved in conflict? Are there boundaries here which can't be crossed? Have there been unsuccessful experiences?
6. What of the possible CE roles have been tried- convenor, information provider, forum for exchange of opinion, meeting facilitator, mediator, trainer of own staff, trainer of others, coalition builder, advocate for specific point of view, etc.
7. If not clear from discussion so far - especially regarding previous question, what is it they are thinking IS PIE/MPCM programming in their state (i.e. what comes to their mind).
8. What other organizations in the state are involved in this kind of work? Any that CE partners with? Are they aware of *any* organizations with MPCM capacity; in particular any community based dispute resolution organizations? Has CE any kind of relationship with them? Names and phones.
9. Background on structure of extension - are there county offices? Are staff supported by fed & state, local funds? Are there regional specialists?
10. How well is PIE institutionalized in the system? Is there any kind of formal or informal state PIE committee? Are PIE programs or projects funded out of core funds/grants/other? Anything in formal plans of work? Other forms of acknowledgment (awards, high public profile, etc)
11. What is the administration's relation to PIE activities?

12. What are the main barriers, if any, to increasing the quality and quantity of PIE programming? Are there any specific training needs?
13. Are there any models or relations that have been helpful in other states? Is there contact with other states? Would it be useful, if so what mechanisms?
14. Are they interested in staying in touch about our project? Any possible role for our project in their state?
15. Names and phones of other extension people we should contact.

PIE Extension Interview Guide - Phase II (Revised 11/5/97)

Hi. My name is Mary Schlarb. I'm working for Cornell's Program on Environmental Conflict Management and the Local Government Program. We're working on a northeast regional study of Cooperative Extension's involvement with education on public issues. We recently sent you an e-mail summary of our study and a brief questionnaire. Did you receive that message?

YES

(IF YES) Just to remind you of the purposes of the study, we're looking at Extension's experiences in handling issue areas that involve some form of public or community decision making. We're particularly interested in issues that are associated with public controversy.

NO

(IF NO) Then let me give you a brief explanation of the study. We're looking at Extension's experiences in handling issue areas that involve some form of public or community decision making. We're particularly but not exclusively interested in issues that have been associated with public controversy.

I have some questions for you which should take about a half an hour of your time. Are you the best person to talk to about this, or should I talk to someone else?

NO *(IF NO)*

Who? _____ Phone: _____
Other identifying info: _____

YES

(IF YES) Is now a good time to talk, or would you prefer to arrange another time?

(IF NO, arrange time)

(IF YES, continue)

Good. As further background, our study is a multi-state project funded by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. In New York, we are systematically contacting each county extension office and each county based community dispute resolution center.

Is it OK to get started on the questions now, or do you have some questions of your own?

I. First I would like to ask about your association's involvement in the area of "public issues education."

I.A. Do you have a good sense of what "public issues" or "public policy education" are all about, or would you like me to read you a brief definition?

[] YES - FAMILIAR, DON'T READ

[] YES - FAMILIAR, BUT READ ANYWAY

[] NOT FAMILIAR, READ

I.A.i (IF NEED TO READ) Let me just read a quick definition. Public Issues Education is intended to enhance society's capacity to understand and address issues. Usually, such education is not conducted formally in the classroom. Rather, it is a learn as you go approach to public issues. It uses a collaborative problem solving format and emphasizes sharing information, skills and insights. "Public policy education," is closely related but is often more focused on formal government policy making.

I.B. Is your Extension Association engaged in any kind of public issues or public policy education?

NO

YES

I.B.i. If NO:

I'd like to read a list of reasons you might not been involved in public issues. Please tell me if any of them seem to fit your circumstances?

- Lack of opportunities for extension involvement in public issues
- Our board or legislature is not supportive of doing this kind of work.
- We are concerned about the risks of involvement in controversy.
- We are concerned about the time commitment public issues can require.
- We are concerned about turf issues.
- We need to concentrate on higher priority areas.
- With scarce staff resources,
we simply have no ability to work in this area.
- We don't have the right skills or expertise to be involved.
- Existing staff are simply not interested in this kind of work.
- ANY Other? _____

I.B.ii. IF YES - Please *briefly* summarize the nature of Extension's involvement in Public Issues Education. It would be helpful if you started by identifying two or three of the issue areas Extension has been most extensively involved in:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

(others - follow up only if time permits at end of interview)

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

I.B.ii. IF YES - Is any of this PIE work obviously identified in your current work plan?

YES

NO

FOR EACH ISSUE:

Let's talk about the first issue: _____

I'm interested in how this relates to the five Cooperative Extension Program Areas.

It appears that this particular issue area relates directly to: _____
(*read most appropriate one*). Does this fit there? How about any of the other areas (*read and check off below*)?

OR

Was this issue clearly related to a Extension program area, including:
(*read and check all that apply and clarify, if necessary, the nature of the issue in relation to the program area*).

- Agricultural and Food Systems Sustainability _____
- Community and Economic Vitality _____
- Environmental and Natural Resource Enhancement _____
- Children, Youth, and Family Well-being _____
- Nutrition, Health, and Safety _____
- OTHER - (only if they bring it up)* _____

1st issue: Did you or your staff play any of the following roles? Let me read the first three (*read*). And now the next three (*read*). And finally, the last three (*read*). Are there any roles I haven't mentioned? (*fill in other*)

2nd etc. issue: Again for this issue, I'm interested in what roles you or your staff played? Would you like me to read the list again? (*Check any they mention without prompt, then, "So the following roles do not apply in this case?"*, then *read any not mentioned*)

- meeting convenor _____
- information or data gatherer or provider _____
- major speaker or presenter _____

- meeting, process or group facilitator _____
- process designer or program developer _____
- coalition builder _____

FOR EACH ISSUE (continued)

- conflict mediator
- training others in process skills
- training others in technical or other skills
- Other _____

Which Extension staff have been involved?

Have they/you looked to campus for support of any kind?

- NO
- YES

If YES, what people or resources did you find useful?

With this issue, would you say Extension staff have acted mostly as an advocate for a particular point of view, or have staff tried instead to maintain a clearly neutral position?

- point of view
- neutral
- other

Please explain:

Has the effect of involvement on your association been largely positive, negative or mixed?

- positive,
- negative
- mixed
- unclear/don't know?

Please explain:

II. Let's move on to the next question now. Do you have either specific plans or a general interest in developing further public issues education skills or programming in your organization?

NO → *(If not obvious, Why not? _____)*

YES

(IF YES)

II.A. In what issue or program areas would you be most interested in developing this capacity?

(e.g. agriculture, watershed, community development, etc.)

II.B Do you have any particular needs or ideas on what might be done to help you? *(Break up list when reading, if it seems long)*

skills training (e.g. _____)

case studies

other written training materials (e.g. _____)

peer exchanges and sharing

campus based backup and trouble shooting

(e.g. _____)

help coordinating with other agencies (e.g. _____)

help evaluating success with this kind of programming

help getting funding

other _____

III. Next, we are interested in the kinds of interactions that county Extension offices have or might have with local organizations with dispute resolution or collaborative problem solving capacities.

III.A. As far as you know, is there a Community Dispute Resolution Center active in your county?

YES NO DON'T KNOW

III.A.1 →IF YES: As far as you know, has the Community Dispute Resolution Center been involved in any kinds of public issues in your county?

YES NO DON'T KNOW

III.B. Are you aware of any other kinds of organizations or individuals that are involved, or could be involved, in helping resolve local public issues? I'm thinking of nonprofits, businesses, agencies of government, or anywhere else that might be a source of people with educational, facilitation or other "process skills" that might be available to work on public issues? (If there are many, just name one or two of the key players.)

YES --→ Who? _____
NO

III.C. Has Extension ever worked with, used, or collaborated with the CDRC or a similar organization in any way?

NO
YES ->

III.C.1(IF YES) Please describe how (e.g. training, mediation, facilitation, other; providing a service or actual collaboration).

III.C.2 Who initiated the collaboration?

III.C.3 Was this collaboration beneficial to Extension?

NO (explain) _____

YES (explain) _____

III.C.4. Were there any major opportunities or challenges you associate with this collaboration?

III.D. Do you think that a closer relationship between Extension and a local dispute resolution organization would be desirable?

YES

NO

Possible?

YES

NO

(IF NO ON EITHER) Please explain.

(IF YES ON EITHER) Please explain. What are some of the opportunities for this relationship in the future?

REMINDER ABOUT HOW MUCH TIME IS LEFT TO FINISH...

IV. As background about your county, we would like to know if there have been any (*other*) major public issues or controversies that captured the public's attention locally during the past several years? Can you think of any major public issues or controversies that have arisen in your county - whether or not Extension was directly involved?

[] YES, THERE HAVE BEEN CONTROVERSIES

[] YES, BUT I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO SAY MUCH

[] NO, NO CONTROVERSIES I CAN THINK OF

(Optional: IF NO, probe/give examples) Can you think of anything at all? OR In other counties, issues such as (development controversies, farmer/neighbor conflicts, solid waste facilities, taxes, welfare reform, race relations, etc.) have been mentioned. Have these kinds of issues affected your county? (IF NO still, continue to V.)

IV. A. (IF YES) Please give a VERY BRIEF summary that will help us understand what up to three of these public issues were about?

1.

2.

3.

IV. B. Did Extension get involved in any of these major public issues in any way?

YES

IV.B.1. IF YES - Please identify which issues Extension got involved in, and how Extension was involved :

a.

b.

c.

NO

IV.B.2. In retrospect, has the effect on your association of NON-involvement largely

positive,

negative

mixed

unclear/don't know?

IV.C. You listed (several) major controversial issues a moment ago. As far as you know, was there an attempt to deal with any of these issues by getting stakeholders directly involved with each other in a collaborative search for solutions?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

IV.B.1. If YES - Which issues, and who would be a good person to call to find out more about what happened?

IV.B.2. If NO, how would you describe any attempts taken to manage or resolve the issues?

V. Has there been any recent major issues in which Extension did NOT get involved even though the issue seemed to relate to an Extension program area?

- NO** (*skip to question VI*)
- YES**

V.A.1. If YES, which issue and program areas:

- Agricultural and Food Systems Sustainability:** issue - _____
- Community and Economic Vitality:** issue - _____
- Environmental and Natural Resource Enhancement:** issue - _____
- Children, Youth, and Family Well-being:** issue - _____
- Nutrition, Health, and Safety:** issue - _____
- OTHER -** _____

VI. I just have a few more questions now. I'd like to read eight statements, and have you identify any you think are MAJOR reasons your association might avoid greater involvement in potentially controversial public issues (*after reading each say something like, Is this a major reason ...*)?

- Our board or legislature is not supportive of doing this kind of work.**
- We are concerned about the risks of involvement in controversy.**
- We are concerned about the time commitment public issues can require.**
- We are concerned about turf issues.**
- We need to concentrate on higher priority areas.**
- With scarce staff resources,
we simply have no ability to work in this area.**

- We don't have the right skills or expertise to be involved.
- Existing staff are simply not interested in this kind of work.
- ANY Other MAJOR reasons? _____

VII. We are looking for counties that might be interested in exploring the opportunities and threats posed by greater Extension involvement in potentially controversial public issues. Might you be interested in discussing further with us the possibility of some kind of local workshop or other activity on this theme?

NO → comment? _____
YES → comment? _____

VIII. Do you have any kind of written summary of your county's programming that highlights or documents your involvement in public issues education? (If yes, can we have a copy please?)

IX. Thank you for giving me your time today. We appreciate your willingness to answer these questions, and contribute to our study. Good-bye.

X. (Without directly asking the respondent, assess level of interest in project/PIE/MPCPS on scale of 1-5.)

**NYSACAA
Conflict Management
March 10-11, 1999**

Day I Flip Chart Notes

Spectrum of conflict resolution

- Litigation (law sets precedent)
- Arbitration (fairness)
- Negotiation
- Mediation (negotiation with a neutral intervenor)
- Conciliation

Line between arbitration and negotiation separates two kinds of process. Above line, external parties like a judge are responsible for decision reached. Below line, disputants themselves are responsible for any agreements reached.

Adversarial conflict resolution

- Winner/loser but winner is also loser
- Leads to aggression (attack, head on, escalate, confront)
- Verbal, physical
- Leads to avoidance (shut down, withdraw, avoid)

Case analysis – roles for educators

Odor case:

- check with both parties
- get stories on table
- listen
- sounding board
- restating problems
- offer alternatives
- clarify problem
- fact finding
- create list of questions
- guide to education process (variables, alternatives)
- lead collective/collaborative problem solving

Labor case:

- bring (maybe) parties together...to clarify business relationship/roles
- meet with individuals
- outline roles/goals/structure
- provide resources for decisionmaking
- listen/question
- refer to experts
- individual role clarification
- provide education/seize teachable moment

Day II Flip Chart Notes

Objectives for the morning:

- Broaden understanding of multiparty conflicts
- Understand strategies and roles for Extension educators and others
- Know your resources (partners and learning opportunities)

Nature of conflict

Two-party:

less complex geographically
fewer jurisdictions
less variability of resources
less opportunity (often) for 'upstream' work
less complexity in bringing scientific information to bear on problem
more well-defined conflict
shorter term
fewer changes in people
more consistency in issue definition
may evolve to multi-party as individuals seek allies, or similar cases accumulate
no media role
no government role

Multi-party:

complications (people, agendas, last minute bombs)
personnel change (longer duration)
story changes (bigger rumor mills)
framing of issues changes
involves more resources
media as major player
gov't involvement
perceptions may overwhelm reality
larger geographic scale
differences among municipalities
emerge from two-party (unresolved)
weakness in community planning
scientific evidence conflicts (harder to get consensus)
involvement of residents

Multi-party issues

- spray drift
- animal rights
- ground water
- zoning laws
- land rights
- business rights
- water quality
- Indian land claims
- rabies
- open spaces

- noise
- privacy
- traffic
- right to farm
- rural-urban
- NIMBY re: waster, prisons, etc.
- over-regulation
- trapping, hunter safety
- CCE education

Case Studies: Group work

- Identify stakeholders (who are they?), interests, positions
- Identify missing information
- Process steps for Extension: what to do??

Pesticide Case

Stakeholders: *AFPB, *Producers, *Local & County Govt., *Activists, *CCE/Cornell, Public, Farm Bureau, Planners, Media, Pesticide Manufacturers/Agriservice, Politicians (* indicates most important stakeholders)

- Situation analysis for AFPB:
Position is to preserve their plan: time, energy, philosophy, interest – ultimate interest is to keep agriculture viable
Interest: to have plan passed, but more fundamentally to keep agriculture viable
- Situation analysis for ROAP (activists)
Position – No pesticides!!
Interest – preserving own or public health (good health), perhaps also self-promotion to gain influence
- Missing information:
info needed to help move beyond fear of pesticides
information on who critics represent in terms of a larger constituency (who really cares in the community?)
clarify what “no pesticides” means on the part of different stakeholders
what is the most credible information (were statistics taken out of context by media/public?)
- Steps for Extension
set up small meeting with ROAP, key stakeholders who have not been involved in AFPB process
invite “objective” expert to talk about issue (but the problem is, who is objective, or perceived as such???)

Hog Case

- Stakeholders: Keystone Mills, hog farmers (Keystone, independents), dairy farmers, farm organizations, residents, other businesses (wineries), crop farmers, gov’t leaders, Ag&Mkts, DEC/health dept/NACS, CCE, lenders/insurers/realtors, tourists, next generation, stakeholders’ various interests
- Information needs: property values and tax base, mitigation potentials, other potential issues (water quality & quantity), prior planning/zoning, prior consensus processes, Pork Quality Assurance

Program, laws, culture of groups/stakeholders, who has power, people who have resources/info to help

- Extension response:
 - does someone else have responsibility?
 - do we want to spend political capital?
 - who has resources to help?
 - gather information
 - ID problems/various stakeholders
 - ID potential actions
 - political demands
 - community forum
 - coalition between CCE & NRCS
 - public forums
 - producers' meeting/community building
 - tour hog farm
 - press releases
 - ag leaders' forum (ag unity)community within community/among farmers
 - subcommittee of farmers for planning board
 - meet with planners
 - Ag&Mkts
 - (CCE educates and facilitates)

Roles for Extension Educators

- Contact/meet separately with stakeholders
- Capitalize on existing AFB process
- Public forum – but does this turn into a wildcard, which is “beyond management” (e.g.. experts with good science given equal time with those without it)
- Survey of residents
- Roles (positive)
 - Facilitation (expected for CCE), linkage, convener of partnerships
 - Why do these things?? visibility, responsive, impression of neutrality, contacts/networks, place at table for CCE, comparative advantage, credibility when asked
 - Research, training, technical assistance
 - Why do these things?? expertise
- Roles (negative)
 - reluctance towards partnering? (maybe not)
 - when to spin off/pull out
 - getting spread so thin
 - lack of training (process)
 - prioritizing among needs (fitting into plan of work/job description)
 - can't do it all alone
 - perceived duplication of services (by legislature)
 - so quick to take ownership of these
 - reinventing the wheel
 - need for university support to get involved
 - pressure from county to get involved/not involved
 - getting credit for these roles as useful/worthwhile

- Roles for Educators (voting results)
 - Red dot: CCE
 - Green dot: other organization
 - Both: partner
 - (NOTE: voting instructions not clear; “both” may have been intended but not apparent)
 - Coalition builder (12 red, 16 green, 3 both)
 - Convenor (17 red, 12 green)
 - Mediator (8 red, 12 green, 1 both)
 - Facilitator (20 red, 6 green, 1 both)
 - Process/program design (6 red, 5 green, 8 both)
 - Process catalyzer (low profile) (16 red, 8 green)
 - Process training (8 red, 8 green, 2 both)
 - Shuttle diplomacy (9 red, 4 green, 3 both)
 - Speaker (11 red, 5 green, 6 both)
 - Linkage to resources/referral (15 red, 2 green, 2 both)
 - Technical training (15 red, 5 green, 2 both)
 - Info/technical assist. provider/resource person (16 red, 4 green, 2 both)
 - Situation analysis (inc. stakeholder) (10 red, 5 green, 1 both)
 - Info gathering/fact finding (8 red, 4 green, 7 both)
 - Research (19 red, 3 green, 4 both)
 - Partnership development (10 red, 3 green, 7 both)
 - Dialogue building (12 red, 3 green, 2 both)
 - Problem clarification (7 red, 2 green, 6 both)
 - Funding/grant writing (7 red, 2 green, 7 both)
 - Documentation/report writing (8 red, 6 green, 3 both)
 - Media/publicity (8 red, 6 green, 5 both)

Challenges facing CCE educators

- How to be an advocate? should I be an advocate?
- Mistrust/perceived and actual bias
- Avoid vilification, maintain objectivity
- Closed-mindedness
- Dealing with emotions
- Fundamental/value/religious differences (non-negotiable rights)
- Distribution of power
- Post-consensus outliers
- Consequences of doing nothing: on CCE, on community

Who else??/Resources & opportunities

- Other Ag agencies (e.g., soil & water, NRCS)
- County departments (e.g., planning, tourism)
- CDRCs
- Agri-business, private business
- Colleagues
- Producers
- Farm Bureau
- PEC other stakeholders
- Cornell/community colleges/BOCES

Future needs

- Better information on who/where resources are (college contacting county)
- Regional based capacity (building for more specialized/time intensive skills)
- Basic process skills for everyone (facilitation, case studies, practice by doing)
- Training with partners
- General topic naming for training/subject matter specific training
- Involve executive directors in future training (planning departments, soil & water?)
- Regional mixed partner trainings (around issues??) – learn together with others
- Interpersonal conflict resolution skills training
- Support available when needed, i.e. at point of teachable moment
- Mixed format trainings (i.e., some of some kind (all ag); some with mixed stakeholders)
- Need for better information sharing about who's doing what (point person who knows who's who/what's what)
- Case documentation (what worked/what didn't – institutional learning over time)

Resources

- Internal staff capacity in leadership training/conflict resolution

**Notes from Regional PIE meeting
University of Delaware
March 3, 1999
8:30am - 4:00pm**

Agenda

Welcome, overview, introductions
What is good PIE?
Case studies - roles, obstacles, needs, opportunities for PIE
Next steps/regional agenda

Participants

Delaware Joe Farrell, jfarrell@udel.edu
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Blue ribbon PIE Ingredients (i.e. What makes good PIE?)

- Policy forums
- Deliberative democracy /issues forums
- Ecosystem-based (e.g. multi-stakeholder tributary teams)
- Ecosystem wide leadership initiative (e.g. Chesapeake basin)
- Education/group learning
- Fellows program
- Facilitation/collaborative problem-solving skills building
- Policy analysis skills building
- Helping gov agencies increase public involvement capacity
- Fun
- PIE should be what all county agents do - should just be their job
- Partnering with non-extension campus programs
- Objectivity
- Equity
- Research on dispute resolution

- Research-based
- Non-partisan
- System approach
- Community visioning
- Linking issues (e.g. Y2K - poverty issues)
- Foster learning across sites
- Linking resources (e.g. senior housing -watershed)
- Coalition/consortium building
- Multi-state collaboration
- EQ Program with kids (environmental quotient)
- International Development
- Citizen monitoring
- Use of tools such as GIS
- Collaborative course as way to increase learning and address need

Themes/Issues

- Local government/leadership development /local governance/ decision making (****)
- Watershed (***)
- Policy level
- Poultry manure (*)
- Rising sea level
- Wetlands
- Larger scale sustainable agriculture issues
- Environment/environmental education/natural resource management
- Participatory action research
- Deliberative democracy
- Land use (***)
- Early childhood development/community ID needs
- Holistic approaches
- Community development/building
- Sustainability/sustainable development (*)
- Family literacy
- Poverty issues
- Youth
- Small business development
- Business development in rural communities
- Economic development/education for policy development
- Growth management/sprawl
- Telecommunications
- Solid waste
- Computers
- Public finance (local government)/tax-base enhancement (schools) (**)
- Planning (**)
- Personnel studies
- Food and nutrition safety

- Coastal management/marine resources/fisheries
- International development
- Storm water mgmt.
- Citizen monitoring
- Toxic waste siting
- Main street revitalization
- Traffic/public safety
- Public (rural) transportation
- Volunteer fire and emergency services
- Youth activities
- Volunteer issues

Multiple Roles for CE (many hats)

- Process design (*)
- Program development
- Teaching
- Convenor/catalyst (***)
- Intervenor
- Trainer (*****)
- Capacity building
- Evaluator (*)
- Advisor (process/content (**))
- Facilitator (*****)
- Development facilitation/visioning
- Cheerleader/Encourager (*)
- Advocate for mediator
- "Educator" (**)
- Researcher/surveys/information gathering (*****)
- Generate information/evaluate
- Upfront assessment/stakeholder analysis
- Awareness raising
- Institutionalizing capacity
- Agitator/organizer (*)
- Agent of change within system
- Advocate
- Get local people involved
- Organizational developer
- NI Forum-Kettering
- Partnering with other agencies (*)
- Change traditional extension roles (*)
- Assisting citizen advisory committees
- Redefine issue
- Linker
- Coalition/consortium builder
- Organizer

- Mediator
- Policy analysis
- Generating options/solutions
- Empower people to make decision that will effect their lives

Obstacles/Challenges

- Response (depends upon personal interest of educator, or a response to need)
- Funding
- CE policy maker (director, boards, etc.) vs. individual educator interests
- Is there a sense of urgency around issue? Context
- "One black person works there" – appropriate staff for community work?
- County Plan of Work
 - If "Sincere about it", then must be in plan of work
 - Advisory board with teeth (??)
- Who has responsibility, mandate, turf (interagency relations)
 - E.g. county-campus relations
 - Need for critical mass for programming
- Myth that it's always necessary to let grass roots lead; can result in crisis management vs. proactive
- Internal political constraints
 - Dean of one college said "We're not a recreation department" (??)
- Turf
 - E.g. Competition with private sector
- Risk of losing (traditional) constituents
- Existing loss of institutional memory on part of staff is barrier to doing PIE (e.g. due to retirements in '80's and '90's)
- Need for appropriate reward structure for staff
- How does institution "experiment", engage in new approaches? Expand/adapt roles of existing staff or bring on new staff? Entrepreneurs essential but how to keep them in system?
- Pros/cons to hiring people on soft money (such as program flexibility, difficulty of institutionalization, lower cost, etc.)
- Is it acceptable for us to do nothing? How do we decide?
- Staff time for grant writing
- Information
 - Legitimacy, accuracy
 - Uncertainty
 - Risk perception
 - Who gathers it, and when
- ID what issue is defining the problems/domain; issue evolve
- Extension perceived as bias/unbias
- Pressure to share results; investment in outcome
- PIE not well defined, nor widely valued or recognized
- Agents tend to be firefighters; difficult to get support for upstream work (funding, public interest)

- Campus-based little "e" (i.e. non Extension staff) encouraged to do outreach, yet on soft money
- University pressures/expectations for grants, products, publications, etc. (process not rewarded)

Needs

- Stakeholder/situation assessment upfront
- Assess problem - how close is it to CE's home terrain (CE programming out turf)
- Define issues carefully
- Open, inclusive process from beginning
- Good documentation
- Transparent decision making and process; information available
- Have infrastructure in place to respond more quickly
- Improve university reward/incentives structure
- Buy Hawaiian shirts, that is RELAX!
- PIE as x-cutting, integrated approach vs. as its own subject
- More inservice training
- Building teaching skills
 - Staff development
 - Invest in people
- Justify funding with county

Opportunities/Ideas

- CE could be on leading edge of changing community for better
 - Enables CE to be relevant to current issues
 - May lead to greater public funding
- IPM program as example – CE should fire up, empower, teach, move on
- National issues forum (one opportunity is to do one on youth violence)
- Toolbox; when to use which tool
- Communication mechanisms (e.g. NE Leadership Development Program)
- Work on core competencies and job descriptions
- Share training regionally
- PIE surveys in other states
- Concepts/approach (need to define "education", "knowledge", etc.)
- Develop partnerships; content-process partnership opportunity
- Which process skills are essential for all staff and which can be specialty areas for certain people?
- Farm bill; opportunities for regional work
- Network around topics/content and process
- Creating products from process, quantify value of PIE (e.g. cost of litigation)
- Develop PIE intervention approach when issues already contentious as well as upstream; increase capacity and augment process
- Build PIE into other issues/agendas/subjects,
 - Problem (context-based) solving approach, backstopping
 - Convene/capacity building around thematic areas

- Ongoing learning vs. one shot training
- Who leads (increase ownership of other groups/leaders to institutionalize)
- Deal with real/other issues

Next Steps

- Bring up following issues at national PIDR symposium in Arizona (June)
- Send these meeting notes back to group
- Set up regional or national listserv – adapt the AZ planning group listserv to this purpose?
- In general, share reports, literature, events, etc. (via listserv, etc)
- Conduct PIE surveys in other states similar to that done in NY (seek funding for this?)
 - Send everyone the survey instruments, etc.
 - Use E-mail or listserv for dialogue and planning
 - Attempt to employ a common survey instrument based on NYS survey
 - NE public issues/needs for NERC RD (need to respond to request)
 - Find best format to share articles, case studies, database and other outputs
- Work on shared regional training, establish at annual meeting, perhaps piggyback on other meetings we're involved in (e.g. national policy ed. meeting; discuss at national PIDR meeting in June)
- Increase diversity of participants involved in PIE organizing (for AZ and beyond)

[National Public Issues Education \(PIE\) web site at North Carolina State University](#)