Programming for the Public Good: Ensuring Public Value Through the Cooperative Extension Program Development Model

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Effective Cooperative Extension programs produce important private and public value for individuals, families, businesses, and communities. However, the public value of Extension programming often goes unmeasured and unarticulated. Extension needs to reclaim its role as a key provider of public value for Land-Grant Universities through strong educational programs driven by infusing public value into all elements of the Extension Program Development Model. This article describes Extension's public value movement including organizational, professional, program, and scholarship development efforts to enhance public good effectiveness articulation. Lessons learned, implications, and next steps for Extension's public value success through a strong program development model are also shared.

Keywords: public value, Cooperative Extension, Extension, professional development, program development model, evaluation, scholarship

In contemporary Unites States culture, society demands proof of Cooperative Extension (Extension) and Land-Grant Universities as valuable public goods (Kalambokidis, 2014; McDowell, 2001). Extension has been increasingly engaged with the public value movement first embraced by government administrators (Moore, 2014) to change thinking and programming from a private value perspective to one based on contributing to value for the broader public. Kalambokidis and Bipes (2007) define public value as "the value of a program to those who do not directly benefit from the program" (p. 12). Extension can no longer rely solely on private customer satisfaction to provide the support needed to exist as a viable organization. Kalambokidis (2014) observes:

> Historically, the Extension Service relied on evidence of their programs' private value, or direct benefits to program participants, but this has proved inadequate in a political environment in which most of a state's legislators are elected by people outside of the Extension Service's traditional audience. (p. 521)

Focusing on the public value of Extension work began with Dr. Laura Kalambokidis's (2004) efforts to identify the condition changes towards which Extension programs contribute from her perspective as an Extension economist. She states, "Over the last 10 years, the Cooperative

Extension Service has been using public sector economics principles to make a case for its programs' public funding" (Kalambokidis, 2014, p. 521). Extension's adoption of a public value lens of articulating economic, environmental, and social change has been driven by a variety of factors, including decreasing public financial and program support across the country at local, state, and national levels. This trend has motivated Extension to help stakeholders develop a wider understanding of and support for the organization within and outside of Land-Grant Universities. The return on investment interests of funders, as well as the evidence-based and standards-based educational movements, fuel Extension's need to measure and articulate its public value.

Extension systems have begun to work intentionally to measure and articulate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their projects and programs to demonstrate their public good effectiveness independently and as part of Land-Grant University missions. For example, Extension systems in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, and Virginia have institutionalized the use of public value statements and stories for describing program impacts. Extension's public value movement has begun to change the way some Extension professionals approach the Extension Program Development Model (Seevers & Graham, 2012) as they plan, implement, measure, and report educational efforts to more fully become positioned as a valuable source of public good for their Land-Grant Universities.

As an organization in decline, Extension needs to further establish its public value (Franz, 2011a). Public value stories developed through the program development process and shared with stakeholders are one way to do this. These statements and stories help stakeholders better understand Extension's invaluable contribution to the public good and how it helps Land-Grant Universities deliver on their mission. Stakeholders for these stories include external funders such as taxpayers, potential program participants, government officials, and other Land-Grant University partners, internally and externally.

Extension's Public Value Movement

Kalambokidis (2004) suggests four public values toward which Extension contributes: (a) narrowing information gaps, (b) fairness or justice of resource distributions, (c) reducing costs or increasing benefits for stakeholders, and (d) public good. These efforts differ from private value or gain derived from Extension education. For example, when Extension programs help youth and adults develop leadership skills, this is private value, but when those youth and adults increase their civic participation, they provide public value in their communities (Franz, 2011a).

Although some Extension professionals are effectively measuring and articulating the private value of their educational work (i.e., learning and behavior change in clients), many find it difficult to articulate the public value of their work (i.e., economic, environmental, or social

condition change). For example, Extension agricultural professionals often articulate fiscal savings from producers changing behaviors learned from Extension education efforts, but the professionals do not tie this impact to economic results for the producer's community. The complexity of Extension as an organization, the changing expectations for Extension, measurement expectations, and the value articulation landscape all provide a variety of public value evaluation challenges (Franz, 2014; Franz & Townson, 2008). To help Extension professionals fully adopt public value articulation of projects and programs, Extension systems have been focusing on organizational, professional, program, and scholarship development that promotes determining, measuring, and sharing Extension's public value (Franz, 2011a, 2013; Kalambokidis, 2011).

Organizational Development

Cooperative Extension systems across the country have tried a variety of approaches to enhance public value measurement and articulation by faculty and staff (Franz, 2014). These efforts include following recommended steps to create public value thinking and action, adding or realigning evaluation and reporting positions, adding performance expectations and metrics, providing public value revenue generation expectations and incentives, developing public value impact reporting systems, and creating materials to respond to public value requests from stakeholders. Extension institutions have chosen to adopt efforts that best fit their situation.

Franz (2011a) suggested several steps for creating public value thinking and action in an Extension system including (1) understanding the differences between public and private value, (2) creating the case and urgency for public value, (3) moving from embracing private or personal value to embracing public value, (4) listing and prioritizing Extension public values, (5) developing public value storytelling templates, (6) developing public value stories, and (7) describing and sharing public value. Some Extension systems have instituted these steps through work teams, in program areas, or across the organization.

In recent years, Extension systems have added staff or faculty capacity in program evaluation, communication, and economics to more fully determine and share the public value of projects and programs. Extension systems have added program evaluation capacity focused on program quality and program impact (Lambur, 2008). Communications and public relations staff are helping Extension professionals articulate the public value of their work for news releases, social media posts, and reports. Extension economists have helped program teams measure the return on investment, conduct cost benefit analysis, or create other economic measures of program impact. Extension professional development staff have also begun to infuse public value thinking and practices into instruction about and support for using the Extension Program Development Model.

Universities such as Michigan State, Penn State, and North Carolina State University are using performance expectations and promotion and tenure processes that require Extension professionals to include evidence of measuring and articulating the public value of projects and programs. Faculty and staff are expected to document and share success stories that focus on behavior changes in clients from faculty and staff efforts that lead to social, environmental, or economic condition changes. One recent study found the primary reason Extension professionals conduct program evaluation is *persuasive use* to persuade others about the value of their programs (Baughman, Boyd, & Franz, 2011). This appears to reflect accountability pressures rather than an interest in using evaluation to improve programs. Salary increases have also been tied to the Extension professional's ability to measure and articulate public value, and in some Extension systems, incentives have been provided to enhance program team evaluation and reporting of public value from programming (Franz, 2014).

Funders have created revenue generation expectations for Extension aligned with the public value movement to measure and articulate the impact of funding on public conditions. For example, logic models and evaluation plans are now required for many grant and contract proposals including eXtension, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to clearly link the social, environmental, and environmental condition changes to the funded efforts. Some Extension directors provide internal mini-grants or strategic funding to support teams and projects that demonstrate increased public value for their organization. A few Extension systems integrate public value considerations into their professional development opportunities on the Program Development Model.

Extension program reporting systems have become increasingly focused on demonstrating the public value of Extension efforts. The Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP) Measuring Excellence in Extension Database (Archer et al., 2007) recently added program narratives describing public value derived from programs. Extension institutions have made similar adjustments to their program reporting systems. For example, North Carolina Extension embeds a formula in its reporting system that calculates the decrease in health care costs using data submitted from each professional conducting nutrition education programs. The public value focus for Extension has increased emphasis on the program evaluation and reporting element of the Program Development Model across the country.

As requests for describing the public value of Extension programs have increased from stakeholders, public value materials have been developed by communicators and administrators. Annual reports no longer solely focus on program inputs, outputs, and learning outcomes. The reports now also include demonstration of behavior and condition change resulting from program inputs, outputs, and learning. For example, the 2013 Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach Annual Report (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/our-story/content/quick-facts) documents Extension's assistance to 1,600 companies that helped add 5,600 jobs in Iowa that

generated $389 million of economic impact. Stakeholder requests for public value documentation tend to focus on proof that Extension has impact on a particular public issue, a specific program connection to impact (i.e., participation in 4-H decreases youth violence).

Professional Development

Several Extension systems provide professional development on measuring and articulating public value for faculty, staff, and in a few cases, Extension volunteers (Franz, 2009b). Kalambokidis (2011) initiated face-to-face and online workshops to help Extension professionals create public value statements about their educational programs to share with stakeholders. Over the last decade, public value professional development expanded through additional workshops and presentations at annual conferences, professional association meetings, work team meetings, new Extension professional orientations, and other venues to share and apply specific practices and tools to better measure and articulate public value. The workshops often included development of public value story templates and program evaluation designs to measure public value of programs (Franz, 2011a). In addition, workshops often included specific tips for infusing public value measurement and articulation into all elements of the Program Development Model, not just through program evaluation and reporting. For example, in 2013, ISU Extension and Outreach hosted a Public Value Summit of Extension professionals, administrators, and communicators. This event documented program and project public value efforts to date; invited reactions from an ISU sociologist, economist, and educational statistician; and established future goals for enhancing public value documentation for the organization through better integration of public value into the Program Development Model.

Extension professionals throughout the country have created resources to help staff and faculty develop and share program or project public value. Kalambokidis maintains a *Building Extension's Public Value* blog at http://blog.lib.umn.edu/kalam002/publicvalue/, and Franz hosts the *Extension Public Value Network* Facebook page. Extension program evaluators across the country also provide state and national workshops for staff on outcomes-based evaluation to support measuring program public value (i.e., social, environmental, and economic condition change outcomes) by infusing evaluative thinking into all elements of the Program Development Model. The American Evaluation Association Extension Education Evaluation Topical Interest Group; eXtension's Program Evaluation Community of Practice; the National Association of Extension Program and Staff Development Professionals (NAEPSDP); and the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences (ACE) have created additional public value presentations and tools for Extension professionals.

Program Development

Extension's efforts to enhance measuring and articulating program and project public value through organizational and professional development has resulted in an integration of public value thinking and action into all elements of the Program Development Model. This includes integrating public value considerations into needs assessment, program design, program implementation, and program evaluation and reporting. For example, some Extension program teams and individuals create public value stories to measure and report their efforts (Boyer et al., 2009).

The value of Extension as an information disseminator has waned due to the Internet and other factors. This context forces Extension to evolve due to changes in how the public consumes information, increased competition from other organizations and businesses, and urbanization of the United States. Society's changing values now require a focus on contributing to economic, environmental, and social condition change rather than simply disseminating information or conducting educational activities (Franz, 2014; King & Boehlje, 2000, 2013). Extension professionals who approach the Program Development Model from a transformative learning approach often find public value easier to measure and articulate than service, content, or facilitation approaches. Transformative learning requires educators to pay deep attention to educational processes and content, rather than just content, since transformative learning creates change in perspective, resulting in more holistic decision making (Franz & Townson, 2008; Mezirow, 2000).

Some Extension program areas are more engaged with determining and sharing public value than others. This focus is often determined by program funding sources, political contexts, and other factors. For example, community and economic development programs and nutrition education programs more often tend to articulate public value due to grant-funded projects. Public value articulation is also a high priority for programs and professional associations where funding or other public support is declining (Franz & Van Ginkel, 2011).

Scholarship Development

As the public value movement matures, universities and Extension systems are expecting proof of this value embedded in engaged scholarship (Franz, 2011b). Engaged scholarship defined by the Academy of Engagement Scholarship (ACES; 2014) is "scholarship that—in active collaboration with participating community partners—has a positive impact on complex societal needs and issues" (para. 2). This change in focus has been addressed in state and national workshops to help Extension faculty and staff prepare successful promotion and tenure dossiers (Franz, 2011b). Research has also been conducted with community-engaged faculty (some with Extension appointments) that revealed faculty want the following to produce public value

scholarship from their work: (1) a campus center that helps them engage with communities, (2) incentives to carry out projects with public value, (3) training to work effectively with communities, and (4) engaged scholarship counting as fully for tenure and promotion as the scholarship of teaching and research (Franz, Childers, & Sanderlin, 2012).

To create public value scholarship, faculty and staff want a holistic approach and practical ways to plan, implement, and reflect on public value for their productivity expectations (Franz et al., 2012). A holistic model of engaged scholarship that supports public value articulation has been developed that provides six public value storytelling points across higher education's mission. According to this model tested with a How Farmers Learn research and Extension project, public value can be articulated when (1) discovering new knowledge; (2) developing existing knowledge more fully; (3) disseminating knowledge; (4) demonstrating changes in student learning; (5) documenting changes in student behaviors; and (6) describing changes in social, environmental, and economic conditions (Franz, 2009a). The public value movement provides opportunities and motivation for Extension faculty and staff to reposition their engaged scholarship and their approach to the Extension Program Development Model to more fully share the public good of their work at Land-Grant Universities.

Lessons Learned

A review of the Extension public value movement literature suggests several lessons developed over the last decade to successfully build and sustain articulation of the public value of Extension's projects and programs through a strong program development model. Organizational development efforts to embrace public value tend to stall or diminish over time unless an ongoing and intentional effort is made to help the whole organization use a strong program development model to determine, measure, and articulate public value across all organization units and functions (Franz, 2011a). Waiting for a budget cut to catalyze public value is often too late to make culture changes. A top-down approach to public value, which often fails to change the culture, is less effective than a cross-organization and cross-program approach that involves staff, faculty, administrators, clients, and other stakeholders in the process. Moving from an organizational culture focused on private value to one that also expects public value articulation is difficult for many Extension professionals. To decrease this dissonance, multiple positive public value behavior change supports need to be provided to change Program Development Model thinking and actions. Venues for Extension professionals to have deep and meaningful discussion about organizational culture, expected behavior changes, and related Program Development Model supports are often needed to challenge assumptions and initiate and sustain change.

A decade of professional development opportunities on infusing public value thinking and action into the Extension Program Development Model has revealed lessons and practices to enhance

learning and behavior change for Extension professionals and stakeholders about the public value of Extension. First, public value and program development leaders must model effective adult education and instructional practices (e.g., including the use of small group work, activities that build on each other, an agenda that meets participant needs, and building on participant's experience) (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Second, professional development leaders also need to use effective group process techniques and tools that Extension professionals can, in turn, use with clientele to expand public value thinking and action in the program development process. Third, the most effective public value professional development opportunities often require determining specifically who should and should not participate in events and who gets assigned to small groups to work on measuring and articulating the public value of specific Extension programs. Fourth, the inclusion of a variety of perspectives (e.g., clients, communicators, evaluators, economists, sociologists, and statisticians) provides a better understanding of measuring and articulating public value throughout the Program Development Model. Fifth, those designing professional development opportunities need to provide sequential depth in understanding and skill development in the differences between public value and private value; creating public value statements and stories; and developing program evaluation plans, communication plans, and action plans as part of the program development process. Finally, professional development leaders need to create transformative learning environments to catalyze participants in seeing themselves and their work differently as facilitators of public good for their Land-Grant University (Franz, Garst, Baughman, Smith, & Peters, 2009).

Program development public value lessons point to the need to use more social media and other advances in technology to (1) determine the public values to be addressed by programs, (2) collect public value data and stories, and (3) share Extension's public value across a wide variety of audiences. Early adopters embracing public value in program development are leading the way for other Extension professionals who need a variety of examples and tools to help them take action. Public value articulation is most effective when Extension professionals engage economists, communicators, sociologists, statisticians, evaluators, and other perspectives in all elements of the Program Development Model, rather than waiting until the evaluation and program reporting phase. This allows integration of public value considerations for data collection, analysis, and reporting at appropriate points in all aspects of program development for improved data quality. Extension educational efforts focused on information dissemination rarely result in public value since the relationship with the client is often one-way, short-term, and remains in the private realm. Deep learning opportunities and relationships realized through comprehensive program development more often result in social, environmental, or economic public value.

Scholarship development lessons around public value include discovering that research is lacking to demonstrate the link between Extension's educational efforts and social, environmental, and economic public value for youth, families, and communities. Social return

on investment studies have been conducted by a few organizations in the United States and Europe but have not been conducted for most Extension programs. Scholarly productivity of Extension faculty and staff is more effective when it builds on the history and vision of the Land-Grant University and Extension's Program Development Model, rather than replicating scholarship or other productivity expectations for teaching or research. Scholarship articulation in Extension is deeply influenced by recognition and rewards, norms shaped by incentives, and by the promotion and tenure culture in each faculty and staff member's unit (Franz et al., 2012). This context is often void of any knowledge of the Extension Program Development Model in assessing program or professional success.

Next Steps

Extension should implement the following steps to help reorient Land-Grant Universities as a public good through a strong Extension Program Development Model.

Organizational Development
- Designate at least one person in the organization as the champion for public value to work with a steering committee to keep public value efforts viable, vibrant, and integrated into the Extension Program Development Model.
- Improve Extension state and national reporting systems that tie private value to public value with the Extension Program Development Model to create strong statistical and qualitative data for showing the relevance and value of the work.
- Improve relations with Land-Grant University communicators and government relations offices to more fully highlight Extension public value with university stakeholders.
- Institutionalize public value into the organization through job-hiring, performance reviews, budget processes, and other activities that change norms.
- Require Extension grants/RFPs to include a description of how the project will determine, measure, and articulate the public value of the effort. In some instances, specific public values could be the focus of funding proposals.

Professional Development
- Add Extension professional public value coaching as a follow-up to professional development model workshops to deepen and sustain learning and action.
- Expand public value professional development opportunities on the Extension Program Development Model to include university and community partners for a more holistic approach to measuring and articulating Extension's public value.

Program Development
- Connect those who embrace public value integration into the Program Development Model with multiple tools, resources, and other incentives to recognize their effort.

- Engage with partners to create, measure, and report common measures leading to large-scale public impacts.
- Hire and engage economists, sociologists, evaluators, statisticians, and communicators in the program development process to specifically measure and articulate the public value of Extension programs and projects.
- Involve internal and external stakeholders with a diverse set of perspectives in determining, measuring, and articulating the public value of Extension in all elements of the Program Development Model including clients, economists, communicators, statisticians, evaluators, and sociologists.
- Select specific programs and projects to demonstrate public value integration into the Program Development Model since some Extension professionals question inferences between the private and public value of Extension work.
- Use clientele to develop and share public value stories with other stakeholders since they experience the public impacts of Extension projects and programs resulting from successful program development.

Scholarship Development
- Commission rigorous research to determine the public value contributions of Extension programs to social, environmental, and economic condition change that matches public decision makers and funder agendas.
- Expand the portfolio of acceptable scholarly products that count for tenure and promotion to include public value measurement tools, processes, and products.

Conclusion

Focusing on integrating the public value of Extension into the Extension Program Development Model can reorient Extension as a valuable public good by articulating the social, environmental, and economic impact of the university locally, regionally, and at the state and national levels. Only Extension has the infrastructure, history, and Program Development Model to provide this public value pipeline of program and project impacts across multiple levels. Extension as a primary provider of public good information about the university also helps universities and community partners find common ground on what matters for elected officials, community members, administrators, academics, and other university public value stakeholders.

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