

CONTINUITY, SUCCESS, AND SURVIVAL OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS: THE NATIONAL YOUTH AT RISK PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Programs for children, youth, adults, and families have been shown to have positive influences on the quality of community life (Comer & Fraser, 1998; Marek, Mancini, Lee & Miles, 1996; Schorr, 1997). Even though the human resource and economic resource investments in community-based programs are substantial, and despite what is known about the nature of successful programs, the matter of what sustains programs is less clear (Lerner, 1995; Mancini & Marek, 1998). The research and analyses reported here are designed to address some of the deficits in our understanding of program sustainability, specifically for at risk audiences, and reflects the second phase in a multi-year study of community-based programs that are targeted to at risk youth and families. The long-term goals of this research project are to document project longevity for at risk audiences and the processes that underlie it, to build a program sustainability conceptual framework, and to develop a community-level sustainability assessment inventory.

Because sustainability is multifaceted, the approach reflected in our study is ecological and takes into consideration individuals, families, programs, and communities. Consequently, across the various analyses, elements of each of them are addressed, and where possible the inter-relationships between them are discussed. It is our assumption that sustainability cannot be fully understood without knowing how individuals, families, programs, and communities influence one another, in both positive and negative ways; moreover, we assume that each of these elements has a unique contribution to sustainability. As examples, community support for a program emerges from individuals and families, structural aspects of the community (such as public transportation) can encourage or impede program access, and whether a program is consonant with community needs will affect its own success.

THE STUDY

The National Youth at Risk Program Sustainability Study is an analysis of 94 community-based projects funded from 1991 to 1998 by the Children, Youth and Families At Risk (CYFAR) Initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). This initiative provides services to at risk youth and their families. Research findings focusing on 67 of those projects whose funding ended during 1996 were reported in *Patterns of Project Survival and Organizational Support: The National Youth At Risk Program Sustainability Study* (Mancini & Marek, 1998).

The data presented in the present report were collected in 1998 and are based primarily upon follow-up interviews with those 67 projects 2 1/2 years after their USDA funding ended in 1996. In addition, data from the 25 projects whose USDA funding ended in 1997 were also collected and are reported with regard to their level of activity. Data from all 92 projects are used to inform our discussion, conclusions and implications section which addresses lessons learned from inactive projects, peak years of programs, mechanisms in sustainability, Extension's role in programs for at risk youth and families, and an emergent sustainability framework. Appendix A summarizes the status of all 92 projects in the study with regard to level of current (1998) activity, Extension support, and funding sources.

The central questions addressed in this report are:

- What is the current status of youth at risk projects originally funded by this USDA initiative 2 1/2 years after USDA funding ended?
- What are the dominant ways that projects have continued?
- What are the past and present roles of Cooperative Extension in supporting community-based projects for at risk youth and families?

Youth at Risk Projects Funded 1991-1996: 2 1/2 years post USDA Funding

We have previously reported the status of the original 67 Youth at risk projects (funded from 1991-1996), 11/2 years after USDA funding ended (Mancini & Marek, 1998). We continued our research by following up with all 67 projects to determine the current level of activity, sources of funding, the current role of Cooperative Extension in providing support and leadership, mechanisms in place to continue programs, as well as what has facilitated and hindered sustainability 2 1/2 years post USDA funding. Individuals from all 67 projects were contacted and we were able to collect complete data from most of them. For most of the following analyses the data base is 60 sustained projects (the actual number of projects on which the following tables are based are so indicated for each table). Seventy-six (76) interviews were conducted with 61 Extension personnel and 15 community collaborators. Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. Data were coded and crosschecked by at least two researchers. Individual reports were developed for each project and sent to interviewees for verification.

The following tables include data collected in 1997 (1 1/2 years after USDA funding ended) and 1998 (2 1/2 years after USDA funding ended). Asterisks note any significant changes in mean scores (via paired t-tests) that have occurred between the last data collection point (1997) and

their current project activities (1998). All significant changes are discussed. A single asterisk (*) indicates a significant increase between 1997 and 1998 while a double asterisk (**) indicates a significant decrease between those same points in time.

Level of Project Activity

Remarkably, 91% of projects (Table 1) are active 2 1/2 years post USDA funding. Six out of nine (6/9) projects remained inactive from 1997; these 6 projects are the only inactive projects 2 1/2 years post USDA funding. The remaining three projects that were Inactive in 1997 are now Active at some level. In addition, there was a significant increase in the number of active projects that expanded during 1998 compared to those that expanded during 1997.

Current Funding Sources

There is a significant increase in the current number of projects that receive funding from Cooperative Extension, Community Agencies, Schools, and Grants/Contracts/ Foundations (Table 2). Projects receiving in-kind donations and/or Fundraising significantly decreased since 1997. Furthermore, an analysis of the data from the sustained projects in 1998 revealed that Expanded programs receive significantly more grant/foundation/contract funding than do Reduced programs.

Current Role of Cooperative Extension

Over the course of the past year, CES has significantly increased its support to sustained projects in providing: Personnel, Training/ Workshops, Curricula/Materials, Coalition

Table 1: Level of Activity for Projects funded 1991-1996

	1997 (n=67)		1998 (n=67)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Active	58	87%	61	91%
• Expanded*	7	10%	37	55%
• Maintained	19	28%	4	6%
• Reduced	32	48%	20	30%
Inactive	9	14%	6	9%

Table 2: Funding Sources for Sustained Projects Funded between 1991-1996

	1997 (n=58)		1998 (n=60)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cooperative Extension*	36	62%	48	80%
Community agency(ies)*	28	48%	47	78%
Schools*	31	53%	47	78%
Grants/Contracts/ Foundation Funding*	19	33%	43	72%
In-kind donations and/or Fundraising**	43	74%	25	42%
User Fees	22	38%	25	42%

Table 3: Current CES Support for Projects Funded between 1991-1996

	1997 (n=58)		1998 (n=61)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Personnel*	34	59%	45	74%
Training/Workshops*	34	59%	44	72%
Curricula/Materials*	29	50%	41	67%
Grant Writing and/or Evaluation	27	47%	35	57%
Coalition Participation*	17	29%	32	53%
Programming for Youth/ Families	24	41%	30	49%
Electronic Connectivity and Support ¹	19	33%	25	41%
Program Direction/Site Coordination	24	41%	24	39%
Advisory/Liaison Role	16	28%	23	38%
Fiscal Management*	14	24%	22	36%
Personnel/Volunteer Supervision*	12	21%	20	33%
Funding	11	19%	18	30%

¹ Since 1996 CSREES has provided funding for hardware, software, technical assistance and training to community-based YAR projects which are supported by new State Strengthening Projects. The purpose is to insure the success and sustainability of local programs by linking them to the information, programs, research and other services of the university, the Cooperative Extension System, the Children, Youth, and Family Network, as well as to other community-based projects. The emphasis is on connecting program staff and citizens in low-income communities – those least likely to have access to information and/or the resources to obtain computers and Internet linkages.

Participation, Fiscal Management, and Personnel/Volunteer Supervision (Table 3).

CES is providing leadership either alone or in partnership with community collaborators to 50% of sustained projects (Table 4); this is not a significant change since last year. They continue to provide support either in a leadership or a resource/advisory capacity to the vast majority of sustained projects.

Mechanisms for Project Continuity

Data on what has facilitated programs to continue their activities were collected through two means during telephone interviews. Projects were given a list of sustainability mechanisms and were asked which were used over the past year. These data are provided in Table 5 and compared to the previous year's data. In addition, project personnel were asked what they believed facilitated their project's continuation. This informa-

tion supports the data provided in Table 5 and also provides more detail about Community Support, Collaboration, and CES/University Support.

The types of mechanisms used to sustain projects remained consistent over the past year. However, the prevalence of certain types of mechanisms significantly increased (Table 5). These include: Community Collaboration and Support, Grants/Contract/Foundation Funding, and Leadership Changes. The number of projects which expanded their programs over the past year significantly increased while the number of projects which reduced their programs over the past year significantly decreased.

With the exception of Grant/Foundation/Contract funding, there were no significant differences between the use of various mechanisms and the level of program activity for the sustained projects in 1998. Data indicate that Expanded programs are more likely to receive

Table 4: Current CES Role for Sustained Projects Funded between 1991-1996

	1997 (n=58)		1998 (n=60)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Advisory/Resource	23	40%	22	36%
Share Leadership with Community Collaborator(s)	15	26%	21	34%
Leader	13	22%	10	16%
Minimal/No Involvement	7	12%	8	13%

Table 5: Mechanisms Used by Projects to Sustain

	1997 (n=58)		1998 (n=60)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Community Collaboration*	45	78%	60	100%
Grants/Contracts/Foundation *	20	35%	38	63%
Program Expansion*	3	5%	37	62%
CES Support	29	50%	33	55%
Advisory Boards	29	50%	28	47%
User Fees	24	41%	26	43%
Program Reduction**	32	55%	14	24%
Leadership Changes*	1	2%	13	22%
Connectivity	13	22%	10	17%

Grant/Foundation/Contract funding for sustaining their program than are Reduced programs. Further analysis also revealed that for this data set, Expanded programs utilize a greater number of mechanisms than do Reduced programs.

Facilitated Continuity of Programs

When project personnel were asked what has helped continue their projects the following three major areas emerged:

Community Support: This support was discussed in a number of ways. They spoke of how their communities had a deep commitment to their projects, trusted their projects, and in general supported their projects. Specifically, schools, community agencies, and local colleges/ universities were mentioned as providing necessary support to their projects.

Collaboration: Collaboration with community agencies, programs, and individuals was mentioned as being a key to their projects' continued success. Although there was a wide variety in how these collaborations were established and functioned, a commonality was that they worked together to support programming for youth and their families.

CES and University Support: A strong commitment to continue supporting projects

facilitated the continuity of projects, especially in the face of funding crises in their communities. Provision of computers and internet connectivity by USDA was viewed as providing the ability to maintain and develop linkages with other professionals. In addition, computers made technology based programming for youth and families possible. Support from the university was also noted, especially in the provision of evaluation assistance. Many interviewees noted increased project credibility due to their affiliation with the university.

Obstacles to Project Success and Longevity

Difficulties remain fairly stable across years except that Staffing was experienced significantly more as a critical issue over the past year (Table 6). On a hopeful note, fewer projects are experiencing difficulty in shifting Project Ownership (either involving institutionalizing into Extension or transitioning to a community agency), are experiencing less conflict involving personnel and collaborators, and are having more success in grantwriting over the past year. Grants/ Contracts/ Foundation funding has significantly increased, so many projects may have resolved the tensions they previously experienced with grant writing.

Table 6: Obstacles to Project Success and Longevity

	1997 (n=67)		1998 (n=59)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Funding	23	40%	33	56%
Staffing*	16	28%	30	51%
Turnover	21	36%	16	27%
Politics	7	12%	11	19%
CES Support	10	17%	9	15%
Receptivity	5	9%	7	12%
Economy	7	12%	6	10%
Conflict**	15	26%	6	10%
Grant Writing**	12	21%	6	10%
User Fees	8	14%	6	10%
Project Ownership**	13	22%	5	9%

When project personnel were asked what has hindered the continuing sustainability of their projects, the following two main areas emerged:

Funding: Personnel spoke of the need for more funding to continue their projects at their current level, to expand programming, or to increase the number of participants that could be served. In addition, many spoke of the need for long-term and stable funding so that less of their personnel time would have to be allocated to searching for funding.

Staffing: Several areas emerged in this category. Personnel spoke of not having enough staff to adequately deliver their programs due to either a lack of funding or an inability to recruit appropriate personnel. A second area included the concern that a lack of committed staff was an impediment to their projects' sustainability. Lastly, staff turnover was another issue that was believed to affect sustainability. Personnel spoke of the difficulty in retaining highly qualified staff due to a lack of full-time positions or because salaries were low.

Summary

Our analysis of the current status of those projects first examined in 1997 indicates continued program sustainability (91% of programs). While the critical point of sustainability is several years away, the results at this stage are quite promising. Our follow-up data show that there are increases in the number of projects that are expanding their programs.

There are other positive project changes of note:

- More projects are receiving support in the form of grants/contracts/foundation funding;
- More projects are receiving support from Extension;
- Over time, there is a greater use of a number of important sustainability mechanisms employed, in particular, those that involve community support, expanded funding sources, and program expansion.

- Fewer projects are identifying difficulties involving project ownership, conflict, and grantwriting.

Interviewees have indicated that they face ongoing challenges involving funding and staffing, but that their projects, which serve at risk youth and families, also benefit from community support and collaboration with other organizations. So those projects originally assessed in 1997 are thriving at the point of having been off USDA funding for 2 1/2 years, and continue their attempts to build toward long-term sustainability.

Youth at Risk Projects Funded 1992-1997: 1 1/2 years post USDA funding

Though our main focus in this report is on the continued sustainability of projects first reported on in 1998 (Mancini & Marek, 1998), we include some information on our first examination of projects which were funded between 1992 and 1997 because they parallel those other projects in important ways. Overall, the findings for these two data sets are very similar and so in our conclusions section we draw upon both of them.

Twenty-five (25) youth at risk (YAR) projects were funded from 1992-1997. Personnel (Cooperative Extension and community collaborators) representing all 25 projects were reached for interviews. Of the 25 projects, 21 (84%) are Active (and of the Active projects 28% (7) have expanded their programs, 24% (6) have maintained their programs, and 32% (8) have reduced their programs) and 16% (n=4) are Inactive. The percent of Active projects for those funded between 1991 and 1996 and those funded between 1992 and 1997 are similar (84% in the former case and 86% in the latter case).

There are also parallels between these two data sets with regard to Cooperative Extension support. For all of these projects at a point 1 1/2 years beyond USDA funding, Extension provides support at every tier of program implementation.

This includes the provision of curricula, personnel time, training and workshops for professionals, programs for families, fiscal management, program direction/coordination, coalition participation, connectivity support, grant writing, evaluation assistance, funding itself, and staff supervision. While not every project receives all of this assistance, as a group they receive substantial support. Extension support is an important project continuity mechanism and one of several critical factors in project success and longevity.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Our analysis of these 92 youth at risk projects has focused on the multiple dimensions of program development, implementation, and support. In particular, we have examined project status and important factors in longevity, the roles of Cooperative Extension as they affect projects, project efforts to sustain programs, the types of institutional support that project personnel desired, and the most critical issues in project survival. The analysis has been conducted at several levels, with a focus on the most recent cluster of projects at a time 1 1/2 years beyond USDA funding, and a focus on projects first studied in 1997 and now 2 1/2 years beyond this funding stream.

We conclude our report by highlighting a set of important considerations, both for understanding these data in an immediate sense and for understanding program sustainability as it may apply to other settings and to future investigation. The first involves the lessons learned from Inactive projects. Even though in this initiative relatively few projects (n=10) are currently Inactive, we are able to glean from them several important factors that differentiate them from sustained projects. A second consideration pertains to the peak years of these projects. While a peak year of a project may have varied, there is a set of factors describing projects' peak years that

are shared and that also provide a perspective on project survival. Our third point of discussion has to do with the mechanisms that sustain projects. The fourth discussion point is an overall focus on Cooperative Extension and sustaining programs for at risk youth and families, since across our data the role that this organization has had in sustainability appears in a multitude of forms. Our report is concluded by a reflection on a framework of program sustainability. This framework is emergent and continually informed by our ongoing investigation of these projects, as well as by our theoretical investigation.

Lessons Learned from Inactive Projects

Although there are only 10 projects that are currently Inactive, there are lessons that can be drawn from them for sustaining community based programs. Projects that became Inactive over time have several factors in common that distinguish them from Active projects.

- Active projects had two or more mechanisms in place. Inactive projects typically had either no mechanisms in place (did not strategize for sustaining their project beyond the USDA funding period), or attempted only one strategy which then was not successful. For example, a sole grant application was not funded; projects assumed that a particular source of revenue (community/county institutionalization and/or CES integration) would be available but monies were diverted elsewhere. Furthermore, quantitative follow up data from the 67 projects funded between 1991 and 1996 revealed that Expanded programs had significantly more mechanisms in place than did Reduced programs.
- Inactive projects planned for sustainability much later in their lifecycle than did Active projects. However, as our emerging framework of sustainability suggests, early/ strategic planning alone is not sufficient to ensure program sustainability. For instance, the majority of the 25 projects funded from 1992 through 1997 (84%) are sustained, but only 38% of those projects began planning for sustainability within the first two years.

- Inactive projects did not generate the same kind or intensity of community support that Active projects did. Communities did not institutionalize these projects either because they did not see their importance or did not have the additional resources necessary to support these projects. Inactive project personnel cited the economy (community and/or state economic difficulties) significantly more as a critical issue than did Active project personnel.
- Leadership changes were more likely to occur in Inactive than in Active projects. These shifts in project leadership created discontinuity in terms of visioning for the future as well as shifting priorities away from program delivery.

The Peak Years of Community-Based Programs

Of particular relevance to program sustainability is an understanding of the trajectory that a project may take. By knowing the reasons associated with that period of time when a project is defined as doing well, insight into building sustainable programs is gained. Interviewees for all projects were asked to reflect on the history of their projects with regard to their estimates of "a peak year or years." They were also asked to describe what factors made a year "peak." Seventy (70%) percent of respondents reported that peak years occurred during the latter part of USDA funding (between years 3 and 5 or more of the project). Nineteen (19%) percent reported that their project's peak occurred prior to the midway point in the five years of funding. The remaining 11% said that the project had not yet peaked or that they were unable to identify a peak year. Of greater interest, of course, are the reasons that led respondents to define certain years or periods as "peak." After identifying a peak year, interviewees gave reasons for their judgment. It is notable that regardless of the year(s) identified as "peak," the factors associated with that point in time are similar across projects. Their comments clustered around 10 areas which are listed below. While these categorizations are not mutually exclusive they do help highlight the various levels that comprise an understanding of these peak years.

- **Program Maturity.** Early mistakes concerning program implementation were finally resolved, and the program moved from planning to full implementation. Because the projects typically "started from scratch" the path to full implementation was arduous, and various difficulties were encountered along the way. Consequently, the resolution of key issues marked a significant point in the project's development. Program maturity and program integration are closely intertwined.
- **Program Integration.** Program components became integrated within the project and also with respect to other community programs. It took some amount of time for particular program elements to "gel" within a project. There were also cases where the relationship between the project and compatible programs throughout the community gradually occurred. As this occurred the program became more clearly defined and demonstrated a clearer purpose.
- **Project Staff.** Professionals associated with projects were qualified and well trained, worked well with one another, and had been in their positions for awhile thus providing continuity to the project. Therefore a "peak" was associated with the right kind of staff being in place, rather than the all-too-often case of ongoing staff turnover and ill-prepared staff.
- **Program Results and Success.** There was evidence that the project was positively influencing the lives of youth, families, and the community. For example, youth school performance had improved, parents were more involved in the project, and the community was requesting that the project expand. The project was impacting positively on other community programs, on Extension, and/or was integrated with other community programs.
- **Clients Served:** The number of project sites and the number of youth being served met expectations of project personnel. Often a project gauged its success in terms of clients served, in addition to assessing the quality of its programs.

- **Funding.** Monetary resources were firmly in place, were adequate for program needs, or additional funding was received to supplement the USDA grant. Because these projects were born from grant money, the necessity for always being mindful of future funding became quite a burden and, consequently, when this burden became manageable it marked a high point in the life of a project.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration.** Relationships with other organizations were strong and stable, frictions and turf issues were resolved or resolving, partners were contributing in diverse and observable ways, collaborators were taking more responsibility for the project, and partnerships were expanded.
- **Volunteers.** Unpaid staff were well trained, supportive of the project, and were participating in sufficient numbers. For many of these projects volunteer staff were pivotal to meeting organizational goals and for achieving full implementation.
- **Community.** The community recognized, embraced, and enthusiastically supported and recognized the project. The project was more effective in identifying and understanding community needs. It is clear that smooth running projects required a mutual understanding, respect, and reciprocity with regard to the community and its members.
- **Program Transition.** The program was transitioned to the community in regard to shared ownership, leadership, and accountability. It should be noted that across projects, the degree of transitioning varied because of differing expectations of how involved Extension should be over time, and of how prepared the surrounding community was to receive the project.

Project Continuity Mechanisms

Those mechanisms which appear to be the most important for sustaining programming for at risk youth and families are presented here with a discussion of how they function for these projects.

Mechanisms of sustainability were assessed for "Expanded," "Maintained," and "Reduced" projects; all of these levels pertain to Active projects. The following three mechanisms (Community Support, Grants/ Contract/Foundation funding, and Cooperative Extension support) are most important for continuing programming for at risk youth and families:

Community Support: For all 92 projects at a point 1 1/2 years post USDA funding, it was found that Community Support was frequently reported at all three Active project levels (70% of the time or more). However, it was more frequently reported for those projects that expanded (100%) or maintained (88%) their program activity. Moreover, an analysis of the 67 projects first studied in 1997 revealed that at 2 1/2 years post USDA funding, all projects that were Active at any level were relying on some type of community support.

Further support for the notion that Community Support is an important mechanism for continued sustainability was found through analyses of Expanded, Maintained, Reduced, and Inactive programs. For example, a comparison of the types of community support that Expanded, Maintained, and Reduced programs were receiving revealed that Expanded and Maintained projects have a greater diversity of sources (i.e. various combinations of community volunteers, private donations, support from schools, community agencies, and local businesses) than do Reduced programs.

Grant/Contract/Foundation Funding: A second important mechanism for continuing projects is adequate funding, typically obtained through grants and/or contract and/or foundation funding. Analyses of all 92 projects (1 1/2 years post USDA funding) indicate that both Expanded (79%) and Maintained (60%) projects have secured funding either through grants, contracts, or foundation funds significantly more often than have Reduced (23%) projects. Similarly, data from follow-up interviews with the original 67 YAR projects revealed that Expanded (76%) projects obtained significantly more fund-

ing through grants, contracts, and foundations than did Reduced (42%) projects. Furthermore, there is a significant increase in Grants/Contract/Foundation funding received by Reduced projects between 1 1/2 years post funding and 2 1/2 years post funding.

A further analysis of the projects continued to support the notion of Grant/Contract/Foundation funding as a pivotal mechanism. It appears that Maintained and Expanded projects were more likely to have larger and/or a greater diversity of grants/contract/foundation funding than were Reduced programs. Thus, not only do Maintained and Expanded projects successfully obtain this funding more often than do Reduced programs but they also obtain funding from a greater number of sources. This enabled them to either maintain the project as it was during the five years of USDA funding or to expand the project sites and/or programming from where they were a year and a half ago.

CES Support: Because Cooperative Extension support to all projects is so substantial, differences between projects according to their activity level were generally not found. The one exception is that CES was found to be more involved in the coalitions or advisory boards in Expanded or Maintained projects as compared to Reduced projects. CES was additionally involved in the provision of Connectivity to all projects. Projects used Connectivity either as a means to expand programming to youth, to assist staff in networking with other professionals, and/or to gain information about grant opportunities. Finally, an examination of the qualitative data concerning CES involvement indicated that CES provided services and in-kind resources that many projects otherwise could not afford without reducing their projects. Thus, CES involvement is also an important support mechanism for continuing programs at a Maintained or Expanded level.

Cooperative Extension and Program Sustainability

A principal goal of this research is to track the past and present role that Extension has in sustaining programs for at risk youth and families, that is, how the nuances of organizational

support relate to project survival for at risk youth and families. Our initial analysis (Mancini & Marek, 1998) showed that across many dimensions Extension's involvement in these projects was not only substantial but also important for their success. All things considered, organizational support was positive and necessary for these projects.

In this current report we have continued that tracking of the interface between Extension and these community-based programs for at risk youth and families. Our follow-up data of the 67 projects, that is, those that are now 2 1/2 years beyond USDA funding, confirm Extension's ongoing role in project continuity and success. There are increases in Extension support as it involves curricula, training and workshops for professionals, involvement in project coalitions, fiscal management, and supervision and provision of staff. All of these support areas make a difference in the likelihood of a project being sustained.

At this juncture in our research it is clear that the ongoing involvement of Extension has made a difference in project longevity and that these differences are attributable to a range of organizational support (see our earlier discussions). Commitment on the part of Extension professionals in collaboration with the commitment of partners in the community has formed a basis for program longevity. Moreover, the resources brought to projects by Extension, as well as the fact that Extension is a multidimensional organization with units at the local, state and national levels, have provided a relatively stable foundation for these projects serving at risk youth and families. These factors are important in explaining the high percentage of projects that are currently sustained targeting at risk youth and families, especially as they are compared with what is known about the number of community-based programs that have difficulty surviving (Little, 1993; Schorr, 1989).

An Emergent Program Sustainability Framework

Qualities of effective programs for at risk youth and families have been reported by a number of researchers. Those qualities overlap as well

as are independent of the qualities that appear to create sustainable programs for at risk youth and their families. The sustainability framework that was reported in an earlier publication refers to six major factors for sustaining community based programs: Vision and Leadership; Collaboration and Partnerships; Community Awareness, Involvement, and Needs; Demonstrated Program Impact; Funding; and Staffing (Mancini & Marek, 1998). Our goal is to continue to refine this framework and to develop an inventory to assist communities to assess program sustainability. The data that we report here are consonant with and support our earlier framework while also providing additional insight into the dimensions of sustainability. For example, it is becoming

clearer that the processes and products of program modification require inclusion in the framework. In addition, these data provide greater detail on the nuances of the original categories of sustainability factors. For example, the focus on Inactive projects suggests important factors relating to the lifecycle of a project, and the focus on peak years introduces the ecological contexts that are important for program success. As this analysis of community based projects continues, a framework that provides important insights into program development, implementation, and sustainability will continue to emerge and will enhance our understanding of successful community-based programs.

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Appendix A:

1998 Status Of 92 Youth At Risk Programs Funded Between 1991-1997

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Alabama (Assess and Address)	Active-Reduced	Shared Leadership	Schools, CES, Fundraising
Alaska (Kuskokwim 4H Fisheries Education)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES
Alaska (Yukon 4H Fisheries)	Active-Reduced	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES
Arizona (Phoenix Coalition)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES, Community agency(ies)
Arkansas (4-H SAILS)	Remains Inactive		
California (Excel)	Active-Reduced	Shares Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES
California(4-H AM/ PM Club)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, User fees
California (School Age Child Care and Education Project)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Connecticut (Hartford SACC)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Connecticut (New Haven Spaces)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Connecticut (Bridgeport RISE)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES
Connecticut (STRIVE)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/ No involvement	Grants/contracts, Community Agency(ies)
Delaware (WCASA)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Delaware (Seaford)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	CES, Schools, User fees, Fundraising

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Florida (Focus on the Future)	Remains Inactive		
Georgia (K.I.T.E) (now Kids Advocacy Coalition)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Georgia (Calhoun/Gordon County)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community agency(ies)
Guam (Youth Empowerment Project)	Active-Reduced	Provides Leadership	Schools, CES, Community agency(ies)
Hawaii (A.C.T. & KAMP)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership to one program and Shared Leadership with one program	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Idaho (After School Adventures)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Schools, User fees
Idaho (Just for Kicks - now Just for Kids)	Active-Similar	Minimal/No involvement	Schools, User fees
Illinois (Lincoln LearningTrails)	Active- Similar	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees
Illinois (Comp Assisted Learning)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Illinois (Area Board for Child Development)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/No involvement	Grants/contracts, User fees, Fundraising
Indiana (Space Stations)	Active-Reduced	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES
Iowa (Comm COA)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	CES, Community agency(ies)
Iowa (Model City - now 4-H Special Projects)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Iowa (Postville Childcare)	Active-Similar	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Kansas (Caring & Collaborating)	Active-Reduced	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Fundraising
Kansas (READ)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Community agency(ies)
Kansas (Reno County)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community Agency(ies), Fundraising
Kentucky (HYEP)	Remains Inactive		
Kentucky (TEAM)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, User fees
Louisiana (4-H Horizon)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, Community donations, Community agency(ies)
Maine (Strategies for Developing School Age Child Care)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User Fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Maryland (4-H Adventures in Science)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Massachusetts (Worcester Co. 4-H)	Active-Reduced	Shared Leadership	Community Donations, CES, Community agency(ies)
Michigan (Exploring Spaces in the Edison Neighborhood)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Fundraising
Michigan (All for One)	Inactive		
Michigan (Say Y.E.S.)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES
Minnesota (FINE)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/Contracts, Community agency(ies)
Minnesota (YIE)	Remains Inactive		
Minnesota (On the Move)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES
Mississippi (After School Child Care and Education)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/Contracts, Schools

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Mississippi (SOARS)	Inactive		
Missouri (St. Joseph)	Active-Expanded	Minimal/ No involvement	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations
Missouri (Walbridge 4-H Adventure Club)	Active-Expanded	Minimal/ No Involvement	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, Community agency(ies)
Missouri (STAIRS)	Active-Similar	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations; CES, Community agency(ies)
Montana (NAFEP)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/ No involvement	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Nebraska (Kids Team)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Nevada (Choices and Challenges - now 4-H After School Club)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies)
Nevada (Just Do It)	Active-Similar	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community agency(ies)
New Hampshire (YOU)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
New Jersey (Bergen-LaFayette)	Remains Inactive		
New Jersey (Camden City Gardening)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/No Involvement	Unknown
New Jersey (Soweto Academy)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	CES, Community Agency(ies)
New Mexico (Quay Co. Youth Partners - now Quay Co. Prenatal Partnership)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
New York (Make a Difference- now Youth at Risk Initiative)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES, Community agency(ies)
New York (Rural Family Coop)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/ No Involvement	Schools, User fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
New York (School ¹ / ₄ s Out - now School Age Child Care program)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
North Carolina (Wayne Co. 4-H Programming in an After-School Setting)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
North Dakota (Partners in Parenting/ School Revitalization)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Ohio (Cleveland Peer Volunteer)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies)
Ohio (Knox Co. 4-H)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Ohio (Athens Co.)	Active-Similar	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, Community agency(ies)
Ohio (Clermont County)	Active-Reduced	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES
Oklahoma (COA for ASC - now Oklahoma After School Care Program)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/ No Involvement	Schools, Community agency(ies)
Oklahoma (Home Visitation Program for Adolescent Mothers)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Community agency(ies),
Oregon (Kid Konnect)	Remains Inactive		
Oregon (Mill City/ Gates - now Santiam Canyon Youth and Families Alliance)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/ Resource	Schools, CES, User fees, Fundraising

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Pennsylvania (Youth Education Program - Chester County)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies)
Puerto Rico (Vieques Kids)	Active-Similar	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES
Rhode Island (CE SACC Education)	Active-Similar	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Community donations, CES, User fees
South Carolina (CHOICES)	Inactive		
South Dakota (Sugar Bowl II)	Active-Reduced	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES, User fees
South Dakota (Pine Ridge)	Inactive		
Tennessee (4-H BEST)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/Resource	Schools, Community donations, Community agency(ies)
Texas (Ole - now Rutabaga)	Active, Reduced	Minimal/ No Involvement	Community agency(ies)
Texas (Making the Grade)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership to one program; Minimal/No Involvement in majority of programs	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Texas (4-H CAPITAL)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees
Utah (CARES)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Vermont (Enhancing Community Awareness)	Active-Reduced	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User fees
Virginia (Giles Sci/Tech - now Partnership for Excellence in Education)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, Community agency(ies)
Virginia (Strong Families)	Active-Reduced	Serves as Advisory/Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, Community agency(ies)
Virginia (Bailey's Comm.)	Active-Similar	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, Community Agency(ies)

STATE	PROGRAM ACTIVITY	CES	FUNDING
Washington (ONTU)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES, User fees, Community agency(ies)
Washington (Spokane Family Focus)	Active-Expanded	Serves as Advisory/Resource	Grants/contracts, Schools, CES, Community agency(ies)
Washington (STAR Youth)	Active-Expanded	Provides Leadership	Grants/contracts, CES, User fees, Community Agency(ies)
West Virginia (Developing Youth Potential /Charleston After School Program)	Active-Expanded	Shared Leadership	Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Wisconsin (Youth Futures)	Active-Similar	Shared Leadership to four programs; Advisory/Resource to 18 programs	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, User Fees, Community Agency(ies), Fundraising
Wyoming (HICAP)	Active-Reduced	Minimal/ No Involvement	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, User fees, Community agency(ies), Fundraising
Wyoming (Wind River)	Active-Reduced	Shared Leadership	Grants/contracts, Schools, Community donations, CES, Community agency(ies)

THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES AT RISK NATIONAL INITIATIVE

Through an annual Congressional Appropriation to the Cooperative State Research, Education, Extension Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture allocates funding for community-based programs for at risk children and their families. Working with Cooperative Extension Services in Land Grant Universities, this Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Initiative currently supports programs in more than 500 communities through 44 State Strengthening Projects. In addition to developing community-based programs, State Strengthening Projects are charged with increasing statewide Extension capacity to serve at risk youth and limited resource families in rural, urban, and suburban areas.

The CYFAR Initiative funds 5 National Children, Youth and Family Networks and CYFERNet-collaborations of universities which provide access to research articles, curriculum sources, program materials and training in child care, family resiliency, science and technology, health and collaboration. By funding computers and Internet Connectivity in community-based programs, the CYFAR Initiative promotes the use of technology to improve programs, provide efficient access to educational resources, and provide essential technological skills for youth and adults in at risk environments.

The long-term goals of the CYFAR Initiative are to sustain programming for at risk children and families, and to institutionalize collaboration and application of technology across the Cooperative

Extension System.

This report is one product of the CYFAR Evaluation Collaboration, a team of University evaluation researchers assessing impact of CYFAR Initiative programs and providing evaluation assistance to Extension professionals. For information about the CYFAR Initiative, contact Sharon K.B.

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or visit the CYFAR Initiative page at:

<http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm>

collaborations, prevention program evaluation, and the development of a model of community resiliency.

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