

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

EXTENSION SERVICE
HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

P. O. Box 5097

STATE COLLEGE STATION, RALEIGH, N. C.

July 6, 1950

Dear District Agents:

As you and your agents make plans for getting factual information from farm people upon which to build your 1951 plan of work just prior to our joint program planning conferences that have been scheduled for early Fall, we hope that these few suggestions will be of help.

If programs of work are to meet the felt needs of the people with whom we work, we must let them share in county program building. Our farm men and women leaders have had training in almost every kind of farm and home program. They have functioned effectively and efficiently. Our job is to work together constructively and productively in the interest of better programs based on the problems of farm people. Extension work has come of age. We are no longer working for identity. We have grown; we've achieved. "Growth is the only evidence of life." As we plan programs of work, we should look back and see what growth has taken place; where are our strengths; our weaknesses; and from this point, we should make plans for future growth based on problems and on resources. We should attack this task with courage, accepting facts, and working by educational principles with the people. We cannot fail following a procedure like this.

Suggested Procedure for Developing County Program

Situation

In examining planning activities we find wide variations between counties in methods, devices, and procedures. We are listing some observations that we have made:

1. That we fail sometimes to develop over-all and long-time Extension programs to give continuity and direction to all plans and efforts.
2. Programs not always based on recognized needs and interests of people.
3. Variations in people's educational backgrounds and experiences and economic status not always considered.
4. The objectives developed through the planning procedure not clearly understood by the people.
5. Insufficient amount of factual information for planning.
6. All people concerned with, or who might be benefitted by, the program not given an opportunity to take part in the planning.

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7. Program planning methods not adequate for:
 - a. Obtaining information about interests, needs, and problems of people.
 - b. Evaluating results in program planning.
8. Programs that set up more objectives than can be reached in the time allotted.
9. Annual plans not focused on long-time objectives.

Objective in Developing the Program

With each county situation varying greatly as to climate, soil, type of agriculture, population, and economic conditions, as well as size of staff and methods of carrying out our Extension program we cannot hope to work out a program development procedure which can be followed in all counties. We must, therefore, begin where we are in each county and work toward improving our own procedures. Our common goal is an over-all Extension program based upon needs and interests of families to which all phases of the program make a vital contribution.

To unify our thinking as we work toward principles of program development, we have agreed upon the following common objectives:

1. To make program development a continuing educational process for helping people to think, to reason, to question, to make decisions, and to act.
2. To help those responsible for program planning to discover, to develop, and to use increasingly effective methods and devices.
3. To discover interests and values important to families and help them develop an awareness of their own needs and problems, and to create in them a desire to do something about them.
4. To get maximum participation of people in
 - a. Suggesting problems which they think are important.
 - b. Setting up objectives which are attainable and seem vital to them.
 - c. Planning ways and means of solving them.
5. To help people discover and use all available resources and factual information needed for developing and carrying out their program and achieving their objectives.

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6. To translate into a long-time extension program the interests, needs, problems, solutions, and objectives which have developed from the program planning process.
7. To develop an annual plan of work which will contribute to the solution of those farm, home, and community problems which are most important and upon which the people want to work.

Suggested Procedure

1. The District Agents should forward to County information from Specialists regarding situation and trends in their fields on State and National levels.
2. The Agriculture Executive Board or a representative group of farmers and farm women should be called in to discuss community, county, and state problems and make recommendations as to ways of solving these problems. At this meeting the agents should review with the people
 - a. Objectives of Extension work
 - b. Programs that have been carried with results. Completed and uncompleted projects. Strengths. Changes in practices. Weaknesses in programs.
 - c. Reaching more people. How are we to motivate people? How can we use all county and community resources to help people help themselves, where they are with what they have. We should let the people know that Extension Work is adult education work, not a service agency. People grow only as they help themselves.
3. The time has come for us to bring more and more of science and research into all of our programs. How much are we using now? How are we using result demonstrations?
4. We need and must have more leaders to share program development with us. They must have adequate training. How best can this be done?

Now is the time to give more thought to community building programs. There is no finer way to reach all the people and to correlate programs of all county agencies and groups working with people than through a program of this kind. Several counties have already developed programs of this type.

If we are an educational agency - and we are - we should work by educational principles. We are enclosing fourteen principles that we recommend for study; also, we are enclosing a skeleton outline for the two-day planning meetings. We are looking forward to working with you in your district meetings.

Cordially,

Ruth Current, State Home Demonstration Agent