

## **A Logic Model Application: Community-University Collaboration**

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### **Abstract**

The logic model is being used for program planning and evaluation by Cooperative Extension in many states. In Arizona, an agent and a specialist worked together to develop the logic model for a joint community-university project. The process required the agent and specialist to discuss assumptions each held about conducting action research in the community; carefully assess the environment, their roles, and responsibilities; and come to consensus on the current situation. The use of the logic model facilitated collaborative work as it made explicit the required inputs, activities, participants, and short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.

### **Introduction**

The logic model has been used since the 1980s, but recently has become very popular. Bickman (1987) defined the logic model as a presentation of a plausible and sensible model of how the program will work under certain conditions to solve identified problems. The logic model is being used for program planning and evaluation by Cooperative Extension in many states and has been adopted by the Western Region as the program development and evaluation model of choice. In Arizona, an FCS county agent and a specialist in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences worked together to develop the logic model for a joint community-university project. The purposes of this article are to share the logic model that was constructed and used, to discuss the process that was used to create the logic model and the associated benefits, and to discuss the implications of the use of the model including applications to other areas and programs.

McLaughlin and Jordan (1999) present a brief review of how various authors have described the logic model over the last twenty years and then describe the elements of the logic model. Within the context of external influences and related programs, resources (inputs) are used for activities that result in outputs (products, goods, and services) for customers to achieve short-, medium-,

and long-term outcomes. The benefits of using the logic model include building a common understanding of the program and expectations, understanding of linkages among program elements and possible problems, and improved program evaluation (McLaughlin and Jordan 1999).

## Context

The logic model presented in this article describes the community-university collaboration project as it was developed by the authors. The community-university collaboration is an action research project in which a local community coalition works with the agent and specialist to adapt a survey of high school youth to the community interests and needs. The coalition may represent parents, youth, health care, Cooperative Extension, education, social services, criminal justice, law enforcement, business leaders, youth-serving organizations, religious leaders, government, and others interested in youth in the community. The purpose is not to just collect data, but to obtain community investment in youth assets, problems, programs, and action. Once the survey is agreed upon, it is administered in the schools and analyzed at the university. A report of local data within the language of adolescent risk and resilience is sent back to the coalition. Then the work of responding to the needs and celebrating the strengths begins. The data are used to plan programs and establish need for funding. The agent and the specialist play key roles in this process from start to finish.

## Logic model

### Community-University Partnership Logic Model

#### Situation

- (1) Community is looking for a systematic approach to identify critical needs and issues of youth (9th through 12th grades).
- (2) Community involvement is essential to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for young people.
- (3) Community is concerned about the overall quality of life for young people.
- (4) University faculty have research and community outreach responsibilities.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES -- IMPACT		
	Activities	Participation	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Time and commitment of	Inform, involve stakeholders	9th through 12th grade students	Identify student perceptions,	One high school survey versus several	Acquire resources to address

<p>community members 20 percent agent time Time from specialist and graduate research assistants Funding for printing, scanning, analysis, and report</p>	<p>throughout process Solicit support from school administrators Build trust through meetings, responding to local issues, give and take between agent, specialist, community committee Build consensus about local issues and revise survey to reflect these issues Present to school board Parent consent Provide resource list to students Train teachers to collect data Send data to university for analysis and report Respond to report through dissemination, program planning, proposal</p>	<p>Parents, school, community, university students, academic press, university peers</p>	<p>behaviors, and attitudes about self, community, peers, and family Celebrate and recognize the positive aspects of youth</p>	<p>surveys administered annually to determine student needs Support from school administration to conduct survey annually Educate community on student-identified issues Sustained commitment of community members</p>	<p>identified issues through grants Support from County Board of Supervisors to address youth issues Use data as needs assessments to acquire funding (i.e., Century 21 funding, etc.) Improved social, economic, and environmental outcomes for community youth</p>
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	writing, scholarly papers, etc.				
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### Assumptions

- (1) Community and university both have knowledge and expertise.
- (2) Confidentiality is critical to honest survey responses.
- (3) Community owns the information; university may use it anonymously.
- (4) Action research is not just data collection but will help to address local issues.

### Environment

- (1) Ecological approach to protective and risk factors.
- (2) Community perceives there is a need to identify perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes of young people about self, community, school, and friends.
- (3) There is a need to conduct one comprehensive survey versus several categorical surveys.
- (4) Extension faculty have established relationships with community.

### Process

At first glance, the important parts of the logic model appear to be the three main columns: Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes/Impacts. For any program, we are concerned with what we need to do the job, what we will do, who will participate, and to what ends. The Situation, Assumptions, and Environment sections all take up less space in our model, are positioned in areas of the page that do not call attention to the eye, and have labels that may seem unimportant. We found, however, that these are critical elements to the process and need to be addressed up front, directly, and until consensus is reached.

### Assumptions

Assumptions about where expertise lies and how we will work together set the tone for our working relationships. Mutual respect and value of the contributions of each party can determine the success or failure of the community-university partnership. If the agent and community group feel that their local issues and concerns are not heard because the specialist "knows the literature," and only wants to use them to collect data, or if the specialist does not trust that the survey administration will be done under acceptable conditions, the project is doomed. For example, activities that were keys to the success of this project are frank discussion about who owns the data and who can release results to the community, continuous communication and

community visits by the specialist, and the agent's work to build trust between the community group and the campus.

### **Environment and situation**

The community environment was characterized by a group of committed individuals who wanted to address multiple categories of risk and resilience with one comprehensive survey that would inform their programming efforts. In the past, seven different surveys were administered or requested by various agencies dealing with pregnancy prevention, drug and alcohol use, and various other categorical funding streams. In using the logic model, sample activities involved the agent accurately assessing the local environment and situation to determine the appropriateness and timing of this project, and the agent and the specialist combining research, literature review, survey construction, networking, and outreach skills for the purpose of action research that benefit both and fulfill their responsibilities.

### **Inputs**

Time, expertise and skill, and funding are the obvious inputs required for most projects, and they are required here. The agent had to free about 20 percent of her time to devote to this project. That meant she had to prioritize and move other responsibilities to concentrate on this project to assure its success. The specialist scheduled several community visits to meet with the community committee, work with them to revise the survey, and meet with the agent to facilitate the process. She also had to work with graduate research assistants who would clean and analyze the data and work on the report. Local investment of funds to pay for the printing, scanning, analysis, and reporting were secured and heightened the local sense of ownership.

### **Outputs**

This project, like most in Extension, is driven by a variety of activities. Principal activities included regular meetings of the community committee, informing and involving stakeholders throughout the process, revising the survey, getting school board approval and parent consent, providing students with contacts to be used if the survey brought up issues that they wanted to talk about, teacher training, data analyses, report writing, dissemination of results and responding to the survey results with media releases, funding proposals, program development and implementation, follow-up evaluation, and anonymous use of the data for scholarly papers. One of the keys to success was deciding who were the stakeholders. Youth, parents, school personnel, health and social service providers, law enforcement, the religious community and others in the community, plus graduate students and the academic community were all important players or influences in this process.

## **Outcomes and impacts**

The short-term outcomes include a very comprehensive picture of not only the behaviors and attitudes of the students surveyed, but also the assets, risk, and protective factors they face at several ecological levels. This information informs the community and positions various agencies to respond. The medium-term outcomes include the continued support of the project to look at change over time and in cohorts. One unexpected outcome has been the sustained membership on the community partnership committee over the last four years. Members became so invested in listening and responding to the student perspective that the expected normal turnover on the committee was not realized. Further, different issues were selected for action. A series of short newsletters on student alcohol use were produced based upon the local and national data for the purpose of community intervention. Long-term outcomes are beginning to be realized. The data have been used as needs assessments in grant applications which have been successful in securing resources for community and school programs. The local government has been supportive of programs to address youth issues. Normally, funding would not be considered an outcome, but a means to achieve impacts. However, in this example, community action to address youth issues was the goal. Therefore, sustained attention, time, commitment, and financial resources to ultimately achieve the desired long-term outcome of positive social, economic, educational, and health outcomes for youth in the community are important. This community is now at the point where it could do a second logic model where the data and funding that are outcomes of this process would become inputs for the next step in community action on youth issues.

## **Discussion**

This logic model provides a visual representation of the community-university partnership project and a way to understand the connections between and among the various components. It was useful for the agent and specialist to work together to develop the model as the project was implemented because it makes the linkages, roles, assumptions, situation, environment, required inputs, outputs, and expected outcomes explicit. Although this model focuses on a community-university partnership, it is applicable to any content area or project involving program development, implementation, and/or evaluation. Using the logic model is not a one-time or static process. The model can be used to take projects to the next level as indicated by the example that shows funding as an outcome and then as an input.

Sometimes in Extension, different perspectives exist on what we each bring to a project, what our roles are, who will get credit for what, and what the expected outcomes will be. We found that use of the model and discussions about the county/community perspective and the campus perspective facilitated our communication and allowed for an easier working relationship. It was also helpful in working through obstacles. For example, we had to go back to the assumptions

and talk about how we assumed that this project would be helpful to both agent and specialist in fulfilling our research and community outreach responsibilities, not just meeting community needs. Use of the logic model provides a structure and language for those conversations to take place.

### **References**

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