America's Changing Urban Landscape: Positioning Extension for Success

Marie A. Ruemenapp
Michigan State University, ruemenap@msu.edu

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Michigan State University

For the Cooperative Extension Service (Extension) to have a substantive urban presence and impact, it will be vital for local Extension staff, state Extension systems, and the national Extension system to understand how to position Extension for success in large metropolitan regions. To do this, Extension should examine its history of working in cities, work to overcome a number of internal barriers or challenges that are defined in Extension literature, and develop a deeper understanding of the unique and complex set of characteristics and features of urban environments. As Extension does this, it will be important for it to move forward in a manner that ensures it is relevant to local metropolitan residents while being responsive to the needs of communities statewide. It will also be imperative that Extension be recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for its work; however, Extension is not starting from scratch as it has more than a 60-year history of working in cities. Extension should learn from best practices within the numerous strong urban and suburban operational and educational models present in a number of states.

Keywords: metropolitan, history, demographics, barriers, marketing, best practices

Introduction

For the Cooperative Extension Service (Extension) to have a substantive urban presence and impact, it will be vital for local, state, and national Extension leaders to understand how to position Extension for success in America's changing urban landscape. Successful "positioning" will require Extension to define and delineate its unique niche in metropolitan areas. This niche will need to differentiate Extension from other organizations in urban centers that are doing similar work by bringing the full range of Land-Grant University resources to the community.

To begin to define the right niche for Extension that will allow it to successfully position itself in urban and metropolitan settings, Extension should examine its history of working in cities to understand successes and failures so it might respond to the current call to serve urban residents and communities in an informed manner. Extension will most likely need to overcome a number of internal barriers or challenges that are defined in Extension literature. Extension will need to

develop a deeper understanding of the unique and complex set of characteristics and features of urban environments, including the economic, demographic, geographic, and political shifts or changes that have occurred and continue to occur in urban settings. As Extension moves forward, it will be important to do so in a manner that ensures Extension is relevant to local metropolitan residents while being responsive to the needs of urban communities statewide. It will also be imperative that Extension be recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for its work; however, Extension is not starting from scratch as it has more than a 60-year history of working in cities. It should learn from best practices within the numerous strong urban and suburban operational and educational programming models present in a number of states.

To assist Extension in thinking about how it needs to position itself in American's changing 21st century landscape, this article provides a brief overview of Extension's history and mission to work in cities, presents a set of barriers or challenges that have been defined in Extension literature, and outlines a number of changes that have occurred and continue to occur within today's urban environments. It will conclude by presenting a set of urban Extension examples along with issues or questions that still need to be explored around effective positioning of Extension.

Extension's History in Cities

Since its creation in 1914, the mission of Extension has been to provide access to the research and resources of the Land-Grant Universities through educational programming that translates science for practical application to empower people to change aspects of their practices, attitudes, behaviors, and lives (Bailey et al., 1909; National Institute of Food and Agriculture [NIFA], 2017). The vision for Extension outlined in the Smith-Lever Act was to do more than attend to the needs of agriculture and rural America; it advocated for an Extension system that would improve the vitality of all communities to create a better America (Peters, 2002; Rasmussen, 1989). Despite some internal and external debates that have been occurring for more than 50 years about where Extension resources should be invested, there is no policy or legislation that prohibits Extension, or Land-Grant universities, from working in metropolitan areas (Fehlis, 1992; Panshin, 1992). Although the traditional basis of Extension was founded on delivering programs to rural communities and families, population shifts have required Extension to broaden its reach (Henning, Buchholz, Steele, & Ramaswamy, 2014; Webster & Ingram, 2007). In the 21st century, for Extension to effectively carry out its authorized mission of improving the vitality of communities to create a better America, there is a growing call for Extension to recognize and support the fact that its mission must include serving urban, as well as rural, audiences (Argabright, McGuire, & King, 2012; Bloir & King, 2010; Borich, 2001; Fehlis, 1992; Harriman & Daugherty, 1992; Henning et al., 2014; Krofta & Panshin, 1989; National Urban Extension Leaders [NUEL], 2015; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; Panshin, 1992; Webster & Ingram, 2007).

The call for Extension to expand and enhance its efforts in metropolitan areas is not new. The discussion about the need for Extension to focus some of its resources on cities started 60 to 70 years ago (Borich, 2001; Ford Foundation, 1966). In a literature review on urban Extension, one of the first references found was to a multiyear, eight-city "experimental" urban Extension effort funded by the Ford Foundation in the mid-1950s. The Ford Foundation funded the project in response to the substantial migration out of cities, the resulting urban sprawl, and the growing racial tensions in cities (Borich, 2001; Ford Foundation, 1966).

Today, the number of urban and suburban users of Extension resources and participants in Extension programs in many states outnumber rural clientele (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; NIFA, 2017). For example, a 1985 national survey of 4-H clientele showed that by that time about two thirds of Extension users resided in urban or suburban areas (Christenson & Warner, 1985). Nevertheless, Extension's historically perceived rural, agrarian focus has left many urbanites unaware of Extension's existence (Christenson & Warner, 1985; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996). In several studies, metropolitan residents typically indicated a lower level awareness of Extension, much less use of Extension resources, and lower participation in Extension programs than their rural counterparts (Jacob, Willits, & Crider, 1991; NUEL, 2015; Warner, Christenson, Dillman, & Salant, 1996). Urban and suburban populations that do have some knowledge of Extension are often skeptical that Extension has the expertise or commitment to apply its resources to perform in cities (National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; Albertson et al., 2007). Even so, urban communities have ever increasing and urgent needs for educational opportunities and research-based information (Henning et al., 2014; Raison, 2014).

Extension has more than a 100-year history of demonstrated expertise to meet the needs of people (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Gould, Steele, & Woodrum, 2014; Henning et al., 2014). Historically, this success been more rurally located than in urban and suburban environments (Borich, 2001; Webster & Ingram, 2007), but Extension is generally respected for its objectivity, neutrality, and ability to connect people to research-based resources (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Henning et al., 2014; NIFA, 2016; Western Extension Directors Association [WEDA] Urban Task Force, 2010). This is one of the major reasons Extension scholars contend that urban challenges and problems could be addressed, and potentially successfully impacted as similar rural issues have, by Extension's educational programming and services (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Fehlis, 1992; Franz & Townson, 2008; Peters, 2002; WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010; Young & Vavrina, 2014).

Challenges for Successfully Positioning Extension in Urban Environments

Extension faces a number of obstacles in expanding beyond its historically rural roots into cities (Borich, 2001; Panshin, 1992; Webster & Ingram, 2007). To position Extension to achieve successful impacts in metropolitan environments, Extension will need to address a number of

internal organizational or system challenges. Although most of the barriers identified in a review of Extension literature are primarily Extension practitioner supposition, the literature suggests a fairly consistent set of barriers that include limited or declining resources, Extension history and politics, access to broad university technical expertise, programming designed for metropolitan audiences, and staffing (Fehlis, 1992; Henning et al., 2014; Panshin, 1992; Warner et al., 1996).

Limited or Declining Resources

Over the past several decades, stable or declining budgets have inhibited the ability of Extension to expand staffing in urban areas or develop new programs without it being at the expense of traditional constituencies and programs (Fehlis, 1992; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; Warner et al., 1996). The federal Extension budget has remained relatively stable for more than two decades (NIFA, 2016), and many state and county Extension budgets have been reduced as local governments lost revenue during the economic recession of the last decade.

Extension Politics

For decades, a philosophical debate has occurred across the national Extension system about how many Extension resources should be focused on urban areas. In some places, an adversarial situation has arisen of rural versus urban (Panshin, 1992). There are strong voices on both sides of the debate both internally within Extension and externally amongst past, current, and potentially new clientele groups. Those in favor of a rural agricultural emphasis passionately and tenaciously argue that increased attention to urban areas will mean fewer resources for rural and agricultural areas (Panshin, 1992). These arguments are not without cause, given Extension's declining financial resource streams described above; however, urban and rural communities and residents are interdependent because many complex socioeconomic issues are not contained by arbitrary county lines or city boundaries (Henning et al., 2014; NUEL, 2015).

It must be remembered that Extension has been present in cities for more than 60 years (Ford Foundation, 1966). Granted, in many locations, Extension might only have a token existence (Panshin, 1992), but there is a considerable amount of successful Extension work being conducted in cities as reported through the *Journal of Extension*, national urban Extension conferences, and special reports. As noted previously, the number of urban and suburban users of Extension resources and participants in Extension programs in many states outnumber rural clientele (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; NIFA, 2017), while more than 30 years ago, a national study of 4-H clientele indicated two-thirds of the clientele lived in metropolitan areas (Warner et al., 1996).

Societal problems and challenges are not contained within arbitrary municipal boundaries. With the interdependence of rural and urban communities, and the large number of people living in

metropolitan areas, it is necessary for Extension to have a meaningful presence in cities. Additionally, it would be naïve of Extension not to acknowledge the political imperative for it to work in cities. Not only does more of the U.S. population live in metropolitan and urban areas, but more of the federal and state legislatures that approve funding for Extension are composed of representatives from metropolitan areas than representatives from rural areas (Krofta & Panshin, 1989).

Access to Broad University Technical Expertise

Effective urban Extension programs need to be informed by research and based on best practices because urban issues are very complex (Henning et al., 2014; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996). Solutions do not always conform to traditional university disciplines or department structures. Progress toward sustainable, high quality urban environments requires an interdisciplinary approach formed by scholars from a broad spectrum of academic disciplines (Bull, Cote, Warner, & McKinnie, 2004; WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010). Contributions and insights from single disciplines, while important, are not sufficient to help transform urban society. Any university response must be interdisciplinary in nature which accentuates the need for Extension to engage with more units of the Land-Grant University in addition to the colleges of agriculture (Blewett, Keim, Leser, & Jones, 2008; Henning et al., 2014; Vines, Watts, & Parks, 1963).

Programming Designed for Metropolitan Audiences

As communities began to change due to expansion and shifts in populations so did Extension programming (Borich, 2001; Schaefer, Huegel, & Mazzotti, 1992; Webster & Ingram, 2007). In the last half century, to effectively position Extension in urban settings, Extension has diversified its educational programming portfolio to respond to the needs of people living in urban and metropolitan areas (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Fehlis, 1992; Gould et al., 2014); however, much of the curricula, delivery methods, and programming currently offered for urban residents is adapted from rural experiences and not specifically developed for an urban audience (Krofta & Panshin, 1989; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010). Although some of the materials and delivery methods adapt well, others do not (Borich, 2001). Urban audiences may have difficulty relating in meaningful ways to examples in teaching material that were not designed from an urban perspective (Webster & Ingram, 2007). Program delivery methods and techniques must also vary widely to take into account the rich urban tapestry of diversity and commonalities found in urban centers (Fehlis, 1992; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010). According to Rasmussen (1989), the ability to effectively make adjustments to ensure programmatic relevancy and effective delivery will determine the future of Extension. Programs need to be targeted to key issues and audiences and planned for visible impact (Krofta & Panshin, 1989).

Additionally, Extension needs to continue to expand its use of technology to reach urban audiences (Dromgoole & Boleman, 2006; Guenthner & Swan, 2011; Robideau & Santl, 2011). Advances in technology and its expansive use in Americans' everyday lives have transformed and will continue to transform our society (Guenthner & Swan, 2011; Robideau & Santl, 2011). Today, people are constantly using electronic technology for entertainment, communication, learning, and business. Two studies found that Extension clientele demonstrate typical technology use patterns (Guenthner & Swan, 2011; Robideau & Santl, 2011). Extension clientele have identified some advantages to using technology, which include saving travel time and expenses, reaching new audiences, and having opportunities for multiple delivery systems as major advantages of distance education (Dromgoole & Boleman, 2006); however, they also indicated they experienced a number of barriers to using technology. The most common barriers identified were connectivity, lack of access to technology, and lack of competencies associated with technologies (Dromgoole & Boleman, 2006).

Staffing

Cities and metropolitan areas are a mixture of values, attitudes, norms, and beliefs that have become woven together to create a distinctive culture. Nonetheless, Extension staff must realize that all ethnic minorities are not the same, nor do they share the same experiences or values just because they live in the same community (Krofta & Panshin, 1989; Webster & Ingram, 2007). To successfully respond to the needs of urban residents, Webster and Ingram (2007) explained that it is important for Extension educators to understand the perspectives of urban communities and the many economic, demographic, geographic, and political nuances that have historically and continually helped shape them. If Extension staff are seeking to offer programs and work effectively with urban residents, a basic understanding of the urban context is important to the success of the program and the acceptance of Extension.

Many Extension educators have little or no experience working with such diverse audiences or communities as those found in metropolitan areas (Webster & Ingram, 2007). Additional training on how to work with urban audiences and educational delivery methods is needed (Fehlis, 1992; National Urban Extension Task Force, 1996; Western Region Program Leaders Committee [WRPLC], 2008; Young & Vavrina, 2014). To position Extension staff to conduct high-quality work in urban settings will require individuals with sound training in the field of community development, applied social sciences, or other closely related fields (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014); therefore, Extension needs to also consider what degrees, background, and experiences are necessary to adequately prepare an individual to serve as an urban Extension educator (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Fehlis, 1992). Extension must be positioned as an organization staffed to meet the needs of a broader, more diverse urban and metropolitan population (Harriman & Daugherty, 1992; Krofta & Panshin, 1989).

The Urban Context

Understanding the current, as well as the historical, urban context will be important for Extension to successfully position itself for impact and recognition in urban environments. The "urban context" is the complex mix of characteristics and features that comprise urban environments (LeGates, 2011). Most simplistically, it is the combination of social, demographic, political, and environmental factors that make urban environments different, and in some cases unique or distinct, from rural environments. Local, state, and national Extension personnel need to have a knowledge and appreciation of the unique urban environment in which they work as well as some understanding of the history of the area (Boyer, 1996; Peters, 2002; Rasmussen, 1989).

In the last 100 to 150 years since Extension was created and the national network of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities were established, there have been many economic, demographic, geographic, and political changes in the United States. These changes include a continuous shift of the country's economic base from rural areas into urban areas causing increased urban employment opportunities (Ferleger & Lazonick, 1994). In conjunction, the sustained improvements in agricultural productivity reduced the need for the number of on-farm laborers while actually increasing crop and livestock outputs (Ferleger & Lazonick, 1994).

These changes have led to the ongoing geographic shift of the population toward urbanization. As urban and suburban centers have sprung up across the country and continued to expand in most parts of the country, so have the number of governmental units (Hogue, 2013). There are also increased numbers of civic or religious organizations and for profit and nonprofit organizations in urban centers that are doing similar work to some Extension efforts (NUEL, 2015). These entities can be potential partners or competitors.

Improvements in nutrition, health, medicine, and occupational and public safety now allow many Americans to live longer than their great grandparents, grandparents, and parents lived. Longer life spans and immigration are some reasons the U.S. population continues to grow. While the population has grown, it has also become more racially and ethnically diverse (U.S. Census Bureau Public Information Office, 2012).

Although these economic, demographic, geographic, and political changes are often discussed, what is not often discussed are the causational effects that Land-Grant Universities have had on some of these changes, and in turn, how these changes have or should be impacting the work of Extension, especially in urban centers where the majority of the U.S. population now live. For Extension to have a substantive metropolitan presence, it will be imperative for leaders at all levels to continually consider societal and environmental changes.

Economic Changes

The passage of the 1862 Morrill Act has been described by some scholars as a teleological shift in the history of higher education in the United States (Kerr, 1963; McDowell, 2003; Ward & Moore, 2010). The legislation caused an unprecedented opening of higher education to a wider portion of the nation's population than ever before and certified that the applied sciences were indeed appropriate material for university study (Ward & Moore, 2010). This had a democratizing effect on the curriculum that was just as transformative as the opening of college enrollment beyond the socially and economically privileged classes (Veysey, 1965; Ward & Moore, 2010). The linkages of the Land-Grant Universities to the daily lives of citizens earned them the designation of "democracy's colleges" and cemented the connection between American colleges and universities to communities (Campbell, 1995; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010).

As Land-Grant Colleges and Universities established state-level Extension systems, trained agronomists were placed in almost every agricultural county across the United States to work directly with farmers to increase the production, food safety, and security of America's food system (Mayberry, 1991; National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges [NASULGC], 1987; Ross, 1969). Subsequently, as agricultural productivity increased and farm labor demands decreased, excess workforce located in rural areas sought employment elsewhere, primarily in urban centers (Ferleger & Lazonick, 1994).

Furthermore, Land-Grant engineering alumni played a large and direct role in the rapid technological development seen in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Marcus, 2004). According to Ferleger and Lazonick (1994), there is evidence that America's Land-Grant Universities provided the foundation for the higher education infrastructure that produced the bulk of agricultural scientists and industrial engineers in the United States. These scientists and engineers became the critical human resources in the managerial workforce for government and business that allowed for the development of the world's foremost technology-based economy in the United States in the 20th century.

Demographic and Geographic Changes

In the last century, the geographic distribution of the American population has dramatically changed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). By 1992, the United States' population had shifted from rural to urban and minority populations were growing rapidly (Harriman & Daugherty, 1992). The United States Census Bureau showed that by 2010, more than 80% of the population lived in metropolitan areas, and the Census Bureau's population forecasts indicate this trend is likely to continue. Projections show that during the next few decades, America will continue to become an older and more diverse population (U.S. Census Bureau Public Information Office, 2012).

Consequently, America's cities and metropolitan areas have become a diverse mixture of cultures, attitudes, norms, and beliefs. Some urban areas, like many cities in the South and West, are growing and economically thriving, while many older cities in the Northeast and Midwest, often referred to as "Rust Belt" cities, are losing population, struggling economically, and endeavoring in redevelopment efforts (WRPLC, 2008). Because of the unique mix of demographic and economic factors, each urban area has a distinct culture (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; NUEL, 2015).

As the population of the country has moved from farms and small towns to cities and metropolitan areas, so have many economic, social, and environmental challenges and problems. Rural and urban residents share common issues such as poverty, affordable housing, food security, family financial security, affordable and accessible health care, public safety, water quality, and waste management (Fehlis, 1992; Henning et al., 2014). Although the challenges and problems are often the same, the underlying causes are frequently different (Fehlis, 1992). Nonetheless, metropolitan and rural communities and residents are interconnected and interdependent. It has become clear that the complexities of issues found in cities do not stop at the city boundary or the rural county line (Henning et al., 2014; NUEL, 2015). Shared urban and rural prosperity is only possible with flourishing urban centers and sustainable rural communities (Schwartz, 2015).

Political Changes

Most metropolitan areas are comprised of multiple governmental jurisdictions, governed by numerous local, city, and county elected officials. The complexities of today's economic, social, and environmental issues usually affect multiple governmental jurisdictions. While some services are coordinated across multiple jurisdictional boundaries (like economic development, transportation, recreation and planning), many social, public safety, and educational services are provided only within a single jurisdiction. These single jurisdictions are often cities, other local units of government, or counties. When issues cross jurisdictional boundaries, as they most often do in metropolitan areas, providing services and finding solutions to them are often politically influenced (NUEL, 2015).

Urban areas have not only multijurisdictional governmental units and service providers but also large numbers of civic, religious, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations. Frequently, significant numbers of these organizations do work similar to some Extension efforts (NUEL, 2015). These entities can be potential partners or competitors, collaborating or competing for clientele, funding, and public recognition of their work and impacts. Navigating these relationships takes skill and political savvy; Extension has been in the power sharing, collaborative, partnership building business for more than 100 years (Peters, 2002; Rasmussen, 1989). Nonetheless, the unique culture of each individual urban area, the multifaceted sociopolitical landscape of

working in urban settings, the complex nature of many urban issues, and the collaboration with or competition from other service providers will require a new Extension engagement model in metropolitan areas (Boyer, 1996; NUEL, 2015).

Examples of Successful Positioning in Cities

There are a number of states that have strong urban and suburban operational and educational programming models that could be the foundation for state-level recommendations or models to successfully position Extension within metropolitan environments (WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010; WRPLC, 2008). Countless examples of these can be found in the *Journal of Extension* (www.joe.org) and as evidenced by presentations and exhibits at the National Urban Extension Conference (University of Georgia Agricultural Extension, 2015; University of Minnesota Extension, 2017).

The Michigan State University (MSU) Urban Collaborators and the Urban Planning Partnerships (UPP) are strong examples of effective metropolitan community development programs. These programs are joint outreach initiatives between the MSU Urban and Regional Planning Program and MSU Extension (Kotval, 2003; Albertson, Holmes, & USU Metro Urban Task Force, 2007). Another good example is the classes offered by the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) as part of a public or private partnership. UC Davis sees this program as the key to successful urban land development (Albertson et al., 2007). The University of Wisconsin Extension established an urban partnership that was important in helping them start a Small Business Development Center. The Center was established to help potential entrepreneurs in urban areas struggling with restoration and renewal (Albertson et al., 2007).

In the West, the University of Washington in Seattle and Portland State University offer urban "outreach" programs that are decidedly different from most Extension programs in western cities (WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010). These programs are much more focused on student service learning capstone projects. In Portland, Extension is engaged in complex collaborations around such important research problems as sustainable food systems, urban rural interdependence, storm water research, and conversion of public transportation and county fleet vehicles to biodiesel (WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010).

Multifaceted urban Extension centers or multiple neighborhood-based Extension offices located in densely populated urban areas are ways some states are working to facilitate access for urban residents to Extension programs, resources, and technical assistance of Land-Grant Universities. Implementing the urban center concept has allowed several states to effectively use existing resources, develop new resources, and establish themselves as vital catalysts for political, social, and economic change for families, individuals, and communities in urban environments (MSU Extension, 2016; Albertson et al., 2007).

The centers can serve as a primary source of support to field-based staff in cities in implementing comprehensive, research-based, interdisciplinary Extension outreach and educational programs targeted to specific identified clientele (Albertson et al., 2007). The urban Extension center model has been implemented in nine of Alabama's most metropolitan areas, as well as Pittsburgh, Detroit, New York, and Minneapolis to name a few (Alabama CES, 2015; Cornell University, 2017; MSU Extension, 2016; Penn State Extension, 2015).

An important element of these examples is the value of featuring the Extension name, presence, and mission-focus when partnering, innovating new programs, and communicating with multiple stakeholders. Examples also illustrate how Extension leaders establish relationships and provide relevant Extension imaging, messaging, and programming.

Conclusions

For more than 100 years, Extension has a history of positioning itself for success within America's changing economic, demographic, and political landscape. Extension has demonstrated technical expertise in the national system of Land-Grant Universities and success in adapting and delivering educational programs to meet the needs of people (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Gould et al., 2014; Henning et al., 2014). A review of Extension history shows that for more than 60 years, this expertise has been applied with success in scattered cities and metropolitan settings across the United States (Borich, 2001; Ford Foundation, 1966). To expand its footprint and impacts in cities, suburbs, and large metropolitan regions, Extension should strive to document best practices and learn from the numerous operational and educational programming models present throughout its national network. Extension should explore the potential to use these successful examples to build a foundation of state-level recommendations or models for successfully positioning Extension within metropolitan environments (WEDA Urban Task Force, 2010; WRPLC, 2008). Extension can also learn best practices from other civic, religious, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations that are located in urban settings and have a documented history of successful impacts.

A review of Extension literature provides insight into some of the obstacles or barriers Extension will need to overcome as it works to position itself for expanded success in urban areas. They include limited or declining resources, Extension history and politics, access to broad university technical expertise, programming designed for metropolitan audiences, technology, and staffing (Fehlis, 1992; Henning et al., 2014; Panshin, 1992; Warner et al., 1996). At this point, these barriers have primarily been identified and reported in the literature by Extension practitioners who are documenting their experiences working in urban settings. Extension might benefit from a more thorough examination of the barriers identified by practitioners to validate and potentially expand the list, along with looking for city, suburban, regional, and/or national patterns across the national Extension network. A more thorough documentation and understanding of potential

internal and external barriers could assist Extension in more accurately identifying the challenges it faces in successful positioning and crafting successful solutions.

Extension has an expansive expertise in understanding and working in rural communities but understands the 21st century urban context to a lesser degree (Boyer, 1996; Peters, 2002; Rasmussen, 1989). Extension could benefit by drawing on the knowledge of numerous Land-Grant Universities to assist local Extension staff, state Extension systems, and the national Extension system to have a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the unique urban environment. Locally, Extension staff and state Extension systems might also benefit by understanding the local history of the residents and the area to increase the effectiveness of working in those settings.

Extension has a lot of expertise from which it can pull to successfully position itself in urban settings, but it also does not have all the answers. The national- and state-level Extension systems continue to search for solutions to some of the obstacles they experience. To take advantage of the opportunities in urban settings, it will be important that Extension approaches this challenge with a "both/and" mentality toward its work in rural settings. The expansion of Extension's work in cities, suburbs, and large metropolitan areas should not come at the expense of its work in rural communities and with agricultural producers (Rasmussen, 1989). Rural and urban residents and communities are connected and interdependent (Henning et al., 2014; NUEL, 2015). The complexities of issues found in cities do not stop at the city boundary or the rural county line. Shared urban and rural prosperity is only possible with flourishing urban centers and sustainable rural communities (Schwartz, 2015) and should be the goal for which Extension strives as it positions itself to achieve programmatic relevancy and effective delivery of Extension and Land-Grant University resources in urban settings. As Rasmussen (1989) indicated, the ability to effectively make these adjustments will determine the future of Extension.

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Marie A. Ruemenapp is currently part of Michigan Extension's Greening of Michigan Institute working on urban Extension initiatives.