Reflective Appraisal of Programs (RAP):

An Approach to Studying Clientele-Perceived Results of Cooperative Extension Programs

## GUIDE

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## Preface

Reflective Appraisal of Programs (RAP) for studying results of extension programs is a simple and sufficiently valid method extension staff can use to document clientele-perceived results of a program. The method may be used without expending an undue amount of time in documenting such results.

This publication is intended to be an instructional guide for county extension staff who wish to use RAP to determine and appraise (evaluate) results of their programs. A companion publication in the "RAP package" presents the rationale for RAP and compares it with other approaches used to determine extension program results.

County extension staff often obtain clientele's immediate reactions to individual extension activities. These reactions help agents to gauge immediate results of events within a program and to plan subsequent events. This guide is based on the premise that county extension staff should also ascertain the longer-term results that occur over the months or years following a program. The audience for these findings will include extension agents and also local, county, district, and state persons who influence or make decisions on program direction and resources.

This *guide* provides both the background concepts and *step-by-step instructions* extension agents need in order to determine program results. A *workbook* accompanies this guide as the final publication of the three-piece "RAP package." The *planning aids* in the workbook can help in choosing and recording specific plans for each step of a RAP study.

Extension agents have already used the RAP approach to study the results of these and other programs:<sup>1</sup>

- Swine disease control program
- Community recreation development program
- 4-H environmental education program
- Summer telephone advisory program on fruit and vegetable preservation
- Homemaker club program
- Integrated pest management program
- Consumer education program
- Teenage sex-education program
- 4-H home fire-prevention program
- Handicraft marketing program

RAP is based on a levels-of-evidence model for classifying the results of extension programs. These levels of evidence are fully described in the following sources: "Up the Hierarchy," *Journal of Extension*, March/April 1975; *Analyzing Impacts of Community Development*, Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University, 1975; *Analyzing Impacts of Extension Program*, ESC 575 Extension Service, USDA, 1976 (reissued in 1979); *Teaching Materials on "Seven Levels of Evidence": A Guide for Extension Workers*, Supplement 1 to ESC 575 Science and Education Administration, USDA, August 1980.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The first county extension agent to complete a RAP study was Larry C. Ault of Richland County, Ohio. His study was entitled "Using Reflective Evidence of farmers to Evaluate the Richland County Integrated Pest Management Program" (1981)).

## Acknowledgments

RAP was inspired by Patrick Borich of the University of Minnesota, who has persistently challenged evaluation specialists in Cooperative Extension to enable county extension staff to evaluate their programs.

Development of RAP was encouraged and aided by students and participants in extension-staff development classes and workshops held at the following locations: University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri (1977); National 4-H Center, Chevy Chase, Maryland (1978); University of Minnesota, Duluth, Minnesota (1979); Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio (1979); North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina (1980); National Association of 4-H Extension Agents Conference at Detroit, Michigan (1980); and University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona (1981).

David Deshler, Peter Warnock, and Carolyn Boegly of Cornell University envisioned a potential use for RAP by Cooperative Extension in New York State. In December 1980, regional extension representatives and state extension program coordinators in New York received training in RAP so that they could conduct RAP studies jointly with selected county staff. Carol L. Anderson associate director of Cooperative Extension at Cornell University, coordinated efforts on these studies as a trial of RAP's suitability for statewide use by county extension staff in New York.

Much credit and appreciation is due to reviewers of draft copies of RAP, who raised the quality of this publication greatly through their incisive critiques and expert suggestions. Technical reviewers were Mary Andrews, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University; Sue Cunningham, Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, David Deshler, Cooperative Extension, Cornell University; Laverne Forest, University of Wisconsin Extension; Constance McKenna, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Michael Patton, Minnesota Center for Social Research, University of Minnesota; Kenneth Pigg, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky; Joan Wright, Agricultural Extension Service, North Carolina State University; and Bette Lee Yerka, Cooperative Extension, Cornell University.

Two books were especially stimulating and instructive in preparing RAP: *Evaluation in Extension*, edited by Darcie Byrn, and written by members of the Division of Extension Research and Training, Federal Extension Service, USDA, (1965); and *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, by Michael Quinn Patton, Sage Publications, Inc. (1978).

I appreciate the assistance of Erica Fox of Media Services at Cornell University for greatly improving the clarity and readability of the RAP package.

The author is grateful to Mrs. Gloria Robinson, who exhibited truly awesome perseverance and patience in typing the repeatedly revised drafts of this publication.

## **Step 1: Gauging Your Interest in the Results of Extension Programs**

#### Who Needs What Evidence on the Results of Programs?

If you are like most extension staff, you have done a lot of work in the past year or two. You have probably held hundreds of meetings, answered many people's questions, and sent mailings by the thousands. You may have conducted TV or radio shows, also. But can you satisfactorily answer this double-barreled question: Who needs what evidence on the results of your programs? Are you and others getting enough evidence on the results of your programs, or is there evidence on the results of programs that you and others really need but do not have?

#### **Do People Get Their Money's Worth?**

Do you know enough about the results of people's involvement in extension activities to account adequately to others-county commissioners, extension advisory committees, your district director? They each have a responsibility to judge whether extension programs are worth their costs.

#### Are the Programs Worth the Effort?

Do you know enough about the results of people's participation in programs to answer this question: Is the payoff of the program worth my time and the time of people who work with me—paid staff and volunteers?

#### How Can Programs Be Improved if You Don't Know Their Results?

Finally, do you and others know enough about the results of your programs to see how to help people more effectively? In other words, do you know enough about the results of programs to see how to improve them?

Better information on the results of past programs can help you improve future extension programs-their objectives, methods, and financial support.

Many extension workers get bits and pieces of information (evidence) about the results of programs. In their attempts to combine these bits and pieces of information, they often end up creating program evaluation reports that are stranger than the proverbial camel: "a horse put together by a committee."

If you are interested in learning how to *systematically* document extension's effects on program participants, then this publication is meant for you. Read on and we will show you how to do just that.

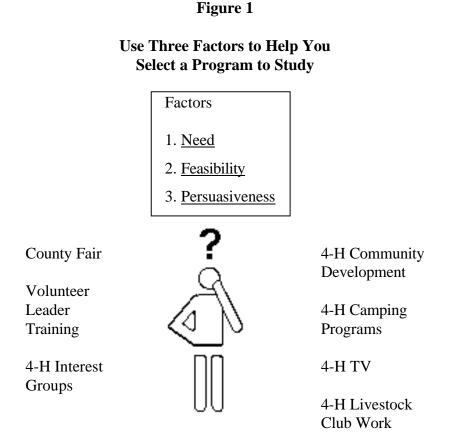
Below is a shortened version of Planning Aid A. Planning aids are only referred to in this guide, not completely presented. Planning Aid A and the other planning aids—B through T—are fully presented in the accompanying RAP workbook. The planning aids are intended to help you choose options for implementing a RAP study, and to help you record these options. A completed workbook can serve as the outline for a brief written plan or proposal for a RAP study.

Planning Aid A: Choose a program for a RAP study. (See page 1 of the RAP workbook.)

## **Step 2: Selecting a Program for a RAP Study**

#### Three Factors to Consider Before Selecting a Program for Study

Before you can select a program for your RAP study, you must first evaluate which program has the highest priority for such a study. The three factors shown in Figure 1 should help you do this (based on Harry P. Hatry, Richard E. Winnie, and Donald M. Fisk, *Practical Program Evaluation for State and Local Government Officials*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1973, pp. 108–112.)



**Factor 1: Which program is most in need of a study of its results?** Have your supervisors or groups external to extension requested information regarding the results of specific programs? Evaluation studies are often mandated for pilot projects, new programs, and continuing programs as extension, its funding sources, or its clientele raise questions about the results of these programs. If you have been asked to account for the results of a particular program, the decision as to which program to select for a RAP study has been made for you.

If you have latitude regarding which program to evaluate, there are three aspects of "need" that you should consider. First, how certain are you and others about the effectiveness of each program? You are likely to feel less certain about the effectiveness of pilot or new programs, mass-media programs, or programs that have not been evaluated as recently as others.

If the program is large or highly visible, the need for evaluation is heightened even further.

Second, how much will you and others gain if you can show that the program is working well? There might be an opportunity to increase the size of the program if you can document its results, or you might be able to increase the budget by producing such documentation. For example, the following types of programs have a high potential for increased or permanent funding if positive results can be demonstrated:

- Legislatively, administratively, or privately funded special projects
- Programs of high interest to legislative groups or the general public
- Programs with insufficient resources to permit participation by all who have expressed interest.

Third, how much risk are you and others taking if a program is not working well? For example, some programs may have declining participation or may require resources that seem too large for the apparent benefits. In other programs, participants could be harmed if they did not apply or if they misapplied information conveyed to them.

- Participants could be harmed handling dangerous chemicals while attempting to apply information conveyed by an extension program.
- Participants could be harmed if they had nutritional problems that were not taken into consideration during a program.
- Participants could be harmed if they misapplied food preservation techniques they were taught during a program.
- Participants could misapply crop production techniques promoted by a program.

**Factor 2: Which program can be studied most feasibly?** Some programs are more "evaluable" than others. Programs differ in their clarity of objectives. There may be financial barriers or political barriers to obtaining evidence on the results of some programs. The following specific questions should help you determine how convenient and practical it would be to evaluate the results of a program you are considering for a RAP study.

- Is it relatively easy to distinguish the program from other programs?
- Does the program lend itself to collection of data from clientele?
- Does the program have clear criteria by which it can be evaluated?
- Can the program be studied without disrupting it?

**Factor 3: Which program is most likely to be modified if a study shows need for modification?** How persuasive are your findings likely to be? For example, studies of program results will have more influence on decision makers if:

• vested interests in maintaining the program as it is are not as strong as they are in other

programs.

- preconceptions regarding the program's effectiveness are not crystallized.
- the program and administrative staff have several options with regard to the program.
- the program staff want to continue the program but have noticed problems in delivery or clientele response.

In addition to the considerations above, programs for RAP studies can be selected within the context of an established process such as constructing an annual plan of work, multi-year plans, county reviews, etc.

## Step 3: Identifying Who Will Use and Implement the RAP Study

Producing a RAP study is one thing, but getting it accepted and used by others is quite another. Michael Patton, author of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, has commented: "You can lead a decision maker to information, but you can't make him swallow it."

What can you do to ensure that your study will influence people who can help you make needed program changes and supply program resources? To answer this question, let's first briefly review the reasons for obtaining systematic information on the results of extension programs.

- 1. To improve extension's programs
  - by improving program staff decisions
  - by improving council or program-building committee decisions
  - by improving administrative decisions
- 2. To improve extension's accountability
  - to county, state, federal, and private funding sources
  - to the general public
  - to extension and university administrators
  - to lay committees and support groups
- 3. To improve understanding of and communication about extension programs
  - by clarifying program objectives
  - by analyzing and describing the costs, processes, and outcomes of programs
- 4. To improve morale
  - of productive extension staff members
  - of program participants who have made progress

Try to pinpoint the reasons different people or groups might have for studying a program's results. Who might use evidence on the results of programs, and how would they use it? For example, potential users of your RAP study might have the following types of decisions to make:

- whether to recommend or approve the same, more, fewer, or no resources for a program
- whether to revise the objectives of a program
- whether to modify the educational methodology and content of a program
- whether to modify the intended audience for a program
- whether to modify the delivery system of a program
- whether to alter how a program is managed by revamping its organizational structure and procedures

• whether to initiate or modify other programs, policies, and procedures related to the program being evaluated.

#### **Ensuring That Your Study Will Be Used**

Generally, the way to ensure maximum use of any study is to anticipate who might have an interest in its findings and to involve those people in the design, implementation, and interpretation of the study.

Apply Seaman A. Knapp's maxim to get acceptance and use of your study.

"What a man hears he may doubt; What he sees he may possibly doubt; But what he does himself he cannot doubt."

> Seaman A. Knapp, forerunner, Cooperative Extension Service

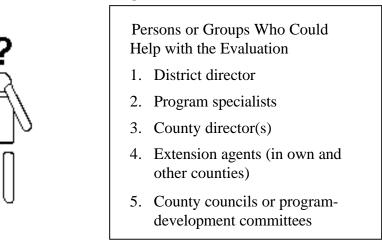
Planning Aid B: Identify who might use the RAP study and for what purposes. (See page 2 of the RAP workbook.)

#### **Recruiting a RAP Team**

Remember, sharing responsibility for the purpose, method, and completion of your RAP study can increase its relevance, credibility, and usefulness. A team can also make the workload lighter and the job more enjoyable. Think seriously about who you would like to invite to work with you in designing, conducting, interpreting—and then, we hope, using—a RAP study.



#### Decide Who Should Be Involved in a RAP Study of Program Results



Planning Aid C: Indicate the individuals or groups you will invite to work with you. (See page 3 of the RAP workbook.)

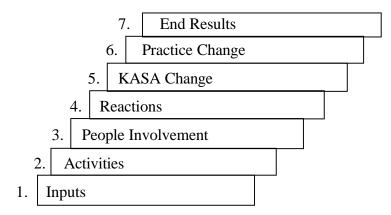
## Step 4: Defining the Scope of the Study

#### **Distinguishing Between Implementation and Results**

Objectives for extension programs exist at different levels (see Figure 3). The three lowest levels of objectives—the most immediate objectives for a program—concern implementation of the program. These levels are (1) extension staff invest a given amount of *inputs* (time and resources) in order to (2) conduct specified *activities* intended to obtain (3) *people involvement* in these activities. The levels of objectives concerning the results of the program include (4) participants' immediate *reactions* to program activities; (5) participants' *KASA* change—knowledge, attitude, skill, and aspiration changes; (6) their *practice change*; and (7) the *end results* that occur as a consequence of the KASA change and practice change.

#### Figure 3

#### Levels of Objectives in Extension Programs



#### Selecting the Activities and Program Participants You Will Study

The next step is to identify the activities and program participants you will study. This will define the scope of the evaluation. The activities and people involved in the program should be defined as they relate to four traits: (1) the educational or delivery methods of the program; (2) the content of the program; (3) the audience for the program, and (4) the time period you will study (see Figure 4).

**Methods**. The RAP approach is not intended for study of the results of a single event or activity such as a workshop. Rather, RAP helps you to examine the results of a combination of several delivery methods such as TV shows, newsletters, and demonstrations.

In identifying the delivery methods that were used, be sure to include clientele-initiated activities. For example, did clientele tend to call or visit the office to request program-related information or advice? If they did, you should consider including these activities in the scope of your study. Planned or unplanned ways of responding to participants' requests for information or advice is the most important educational method in some extension programs.

#### Figure 4

# Use Four Program Traits to Help Define the Scope of a RAP Study

	Program Traits	
	1. <u>Methods</u>	
	2. <u>Content</u>	
	3. <u>Audience</u>	
	4. <u>Time Period</u>	
Consumer Economics Institute	?	Series of Newsletters on Money
Lectures by		Management
Resource People		Budget Workshop
Television Spot Announcements	UU	for Young Homemakers

**Content**. The content or subject matter of a program includes (1) psychological, economic, and/or social processes, or (2) physical, chemical, and/or biological processes. Some extension programs focus exclusively on psychological, economic, and/or social processes, such as commodity marketing programs. Others focus exclusively on physical, chemical, and/or biological processes, such as some pest management programs. And some programs include information on both (1) and (2) above, such as farm and home development programs.

Audience. As you are defining the audience for your program, keep in mind that a program with two stages may also have two audiences. The following three examples illustrate this.

• Stage 1 of a program trains volunteer leaders of 4-H clubs and is followed by stage 2, in which leaders guide club programs with 4-H youth.

• Stage 1 is a demonstration for farmers where they try out a new practice. In stage 2, these farmers show neighboring farmers how the practice works.

• Stage 1 of a program helps community leaders organize task forces to address community problems. In stage 2, the task forces begin their work.

If you wish to evaluate the results of a program that has more than one stage, identify the scope of the first stage for one RAP study and the scope of the second stage for a separate, second RAP study. (You will need to complete two workbooks to do this.)

Time Period. People's memories tend to lapse increasingly as they are asked to recall events that took place a long time ago. For this reason, your study should evaluate only events that took place less than three years ago.

The scope of your study should be sufficiently general to be meaningful and important to the people who will potentially use it. In other words, it should:

- be applicable to the entire program or its principal parts
- deal with a number of activities
- deal with the main themes of the program.

At the same time, the study should not encompass such breadth that it becomes unmanageable. If too many audiences, subject matters, and methods are included in the scope of the study, it will become overly complex and unwieldy.

Involve the users of the study in making the important decisions on the scope of the RAP study.

#### Identifying the Results Expected from the Program

For the purposes of this guidebook, expected results are considered as they relate to the levels of reactions (to involvement in activities), KASA change, practice change, and end results.

Participants' reactions to program activities can be expected to vary depending on a combination of factors including the teaching methods (e.g., confrontational versus consensus-seeking) used in the program, the subject matter (e.g., innovative versus conventional wisdom) of the program; and the clarity of the audience's standards (e.g., precise versus diffuse).

Generally, you can expect that knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspiration (KASA) changes will closely relate to the program's subject matters. Likewise, any practice changes can be expected to closely relate to the subject matters. For example, a program with subject matter on wood burning in home heating would be expected to change an audience's knowledge, attitudes, skills, intentions (aspirations), and practices regarding home heating.

End results that can be expected from KASA change and practice change relate less closely to the subject matters of the program. Expected end results of the program on using wood as a source of home heating may include, for example, increased comfort, savings in heating costs, and increased esteem in the community or neighborhood.

> Planning Aid D: Indicate the scope of the RAP study. (See page 3 of the workbook.)

## **Step 5: Identifying Interviewees**

A RAP study will be meaningful only if its findings include data from a cross section of the participants in the program being evaluated. A return rate of only 20-30 percent is typical for mail questionnaires to most program audiences, and respondents tend to be those who are most positive toward the program and any who are extremely negative. We therefore recommend that you conduct telephone or personal interviews, in order to obtain responses from at least 75 percent of the program's participants.

How many participants should you seek to interview? The answer will depend partly upon how many people participated in the program within the time period covered by the study.

- If there were fewer than 40 program participants during the time period covered by the study, interview all the clientele the program reached during that period.
- If more than 40 people participated during the time period, randomly select participants from mailing lists, attendance lists, membership lists, etc.

Fortunately, interviews with 35–40 randomly selected participants yield information that is almost as accurate as that which would be obtained if all the participants were interviewed. If, however, you wish to obtain data on the results of the program as they are perceived by different groups, such as rural participants and urban participants, then you should interview 35–40 rural participants and 35–40 urban participants. Likewise, if you wish to see whether the results vary depending upon the delivery method that was used, interview 35–40 participants who were exposed to one method, 35–40 who were exposed to a second method, 35–40 who were exposed to both methods, and so on.

In addition, if the program includes more than one stage, such as a program to train community leaders who in turn lead committees working to improve various aspects of a community, you may elect to interview participants from each stage.

#### **Ensuring That Your Sample Will Be Representative of the Participants**

You can best prepare for a RAP study by keeping complete lists of the program participants while the program is being implemented. Using attendance lists, mailing lists, etc., compile a complete list of the program participants. Then follow these four steps to select a random sample.

1. Write in alphabetical order the names of the people who participated in the program during the specified time period and number this list. This list should include both participants who are still active and those who are inactive.

2. Write a number-1, 2, 3, 4, or 5-on each of five slips of paper so that no number is repeated and only one number appears on each slip. Place the five slips "in a hat" and draw one slip out.

3. Circle the number and the name on the list that correspond to the number on the slip you have just drawn. You have just selected your first interviewee.

4. Starting from the first name you have chosen, circle every second or third or fourth, etc., name after it so that 40 names are chosen. For example, if you have 120 names listed, you would choose every third name.

If you cannot compile a comprehensive list of participants, then use a more general list, such as an overall extension newsletter list, mailing list, or Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service county register. If you use such general listings, you will have to make more than 40 contacts to locate 40 people who participated in the program you are evaluating.

#### Modifying a Representative Sample

If you are interested in learning how a program affected certain subgroups of participants, then you might consider purposeful sampling. For example, suppose a program with 100 participants had 10 dropouts. A representative sample of 40 participants would, on the average, include 4 dropouts, too few dropouts to provide a reliable profile of all the dropouts. By interviewing all 10 dropouts, however, you could make general statements about this audience subgroup. Any discussion of the overall findings of the study should be based on data from the 4 randomly selected dropouts only.

Planning Aid E: Indicate your plans for selecting interviewees. (See page 6 of the RAP workbook.)

## **Step 6: Preparing an Interview Instrument**

One question that is often asked about a program's results is the extent to which they met program objectives. A program may or may not have objectives at each of the levels of reactions, KASA change, practice change, and end results. Even so, questions may be asked about the results of the program at these levels. For example, regardless of whether one of the objectives for your program was to increase participants' skills (level 5), you may need to answer questions. regarding skill change.

Although program objectives are only one basis for questions regarding a program's results, you should try to include in your study those levels of evidence that correspond to a significant degree with your program's objectives.

#### **Deciding Which Levels of Evidence to Study**

Before deciding which of the seven levels to include in your study, briefly consider the kinds of questions users might ask regarding these seven levels.

Level 1—Inputs. What kinds of personnel and other resources, and how many, did extension expend on the program?

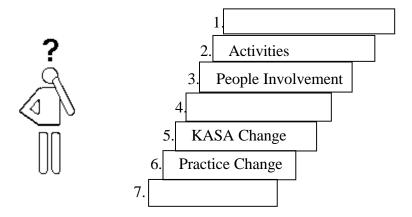
Level 2—Activities. What kinds of information and methods of delivery did extension use to interact with program participants?

Level 3—People Involvement. Who has participated in the program and how much? What have participants done in the learning situations provided by the program?

Level 4-Reactions. How much have program activities appealed to participants?

#### Figure 5

#### Select the Levels of Evidence Most Needed by the Users of the RAP Study



Level 5—Knowledge Change. How much have participants changed their awareness, understanding, and ability to solve problems?

Attitude Change. How much have participants' interests changed regarding the ideas or practices presented?

Skill Change. How much have participants changed in terms of their verbal or physical abilities?

Aspiration Change. How much have participants selected future courses of action or made decisions regarding future courses of action?

Level 6—Practice Change. How much have participants applied their KASA change to their personal and working lives? (KASA stands for knowledge, attitude, skills, and aspirations.)

Level 7—End Results. How much have participants and others been helped, hindered, or harmed by the results of changes in KASA and/or practices?

Be careful that you don't select too many levels of evidence or the study may become too time consuming and complex. In general, select for the study only the levels that are insisted upon by a majority of the study users. (Figure 5 shows a hypothetical example of levels selected for a RAP study.)

As the RAP team decides which levels of evidence to study, it should consider the following two factors.

- How many levels can adequately be covered during a brief interview.
- The amount of time that has elapsed since the program. Participants set aspirations (level 5), change their practices (level 6), and experience end results (level 7) over the weeks, months, and years following their involvement in a program. Thus, information on these levels of evidence can be obtained only after a significant portion of the participants have had the opportunity to apply KASA that they have acquired through the extension program.

Planning Aid F: Indicate the levels of evidence that are most needed by the study users. (See page 6 of the workbook.)

#### **Describing the Program**

For the first part of the interview instrument, you will have to prepare a half-page summary of the program's activities (level 2) and the people who were involved (level 3) over the time period being studied. This summary is to be read to or by the interviewee as the interview begins in order to: refresh his or her memory of the program; open up communication between the interviewer and the interviewee; and provide a common point of departure for the balance of the interview.

Include "who, what, how, when, and where" as you prepare the description of the program's activities.

- WHO conducted the program—extension, other agencies, volunteer leaders, etc?
- WHAT was the content or subject matter presented, discussed, etc.?
- HOW was the information communicated or delivered?
- WHEN did the program take place?
- WHERE did the meetings take place? Where was the source for broadcasts?

Include in your description of the people involved in the program:

- Who participated—characteristics such as age, sex, occupation, and perhaps socio-economic status
- How many participated—approximate numbers
- How often—an estimate of the frequency of clientele participation and the amount of time they expended in participation
- How intensely—as evidenced by participants' actions during learning situations.

Planning Aid G: Indicate your sources for evidence to describe RAP levels 2 and 3. (See page 7 of the RAP workbook.)

#### **Closed-End Items and Probe Questions**

The RAP interview instrument is composed of both closed-end items and probe questions. Closed-end items, unlike probe questions, provide the interviewee with optional responses from which he or she chooses an answer. The interviewer then checks the response category that most nearly corresponds with the respondent's answer. If the interviewee does not wish to choose one of the standard responses and wants instead to give his or her own response, the interviewer checks "other" in the interview instrument and writes in the answer the interviewee provides.

We encourage you to follow up each closed-end item with a probe question. Probe questions help you define what an interviewee meant by a standard response—"to a fair extent," "to a slight extent," etc. Probes also help check the validity of an interviewee's responses in that inconsistencies can become apparent between responses to closed-end items and probe questions. Such inconsistencies should be taken into account when the RAP team interprets the pattern of responses to closed-end questions.

Probes can be used to follow up all the closed-end questions, regardless of the level of evidence the question relates to.

The following probe or nondirective questions can be used for any of the closed-end items:

- Could you please explain.
- Would you give me an example of what you mean.

#### Validation and People Involvement

As the interview begins, the brief summary of the program's activities and the people who were involved in the program "sets the stage" for the rest of the interview.

The interviewee reads, or the interviewer reads to him or her, the summary description of levels 2 and 3. The respondent then is asked to "validate" the description and then to describe the extent to which he or she participated in the program's activities. You may want to use a standardized validation question or item to determine whether the respondent agrees with your description of the program.

The following is a suggested validation item.

Say to the interviewee: Is this account of the (name of program)

\_\_\_\_accurate as far as you know \_\_\_\_reasonably accurate \_\_\_\_not accurate \_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall \_\_\_\_other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

The validation item confirms whether you have described the activities and the people involved in them accurately as the interviewee sees it. This confirmation ensures that you and the interviewee are in fact talking about the same program and defining it similarly. You may want to use the following suggested item to determine the respondent's degree of participation in the program.

Say to the interviewee: *To what extent did you participate in/read or view (activity 1)?* 

to a great extent to a fair extent to a slight extent not at all don't know/don't recall other (specify)

*To what extent did you participate in/read or view (activity 2)?* (Use the same response scale as above.)

The items above identify any participants who believe they have not been in contact with the particular program you are studying and who therefore should not be interviewed further.

The following item can be used for parents of 4-H youth to determine their children's extent of participation.

Say to the interviewee: *To what extent did your son/daughter participate in/read or view (activity 1, 2, or 3)?* (Use the same response scale as above.)

Planning Aid H: Indicate what aspects of RAP levels 2 and 3 your interview will include. (See page 7 of the workbook.)

The next step in constructing the interview instrument is to select or adapt RAP's standardized interview questions regarding levels of evidence on program results.

#### **Reaction Items**

Use or adapt the interview questions below if you plan to obtain evidence on participants' reactions to the program. Refer to Planning Aid D as you "plug" an activity or activities into a prestated interview question.

Say to the interviewee: *To what extent did (activity 1, 2, and/or 3) meet your expectations at the time?* 

\_\_\_\_\_to a great extent \_\_\_\_\_to a fair extent \_\_\_\_\_to a slight extent \_\_\_\_\_not at all \_\_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall \_\_\_\_\_other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_ If the interviewee answers "to a slight extent" or "not at all," say: *Could you please explain.* Interviewee's explanation:

There are two approaches that can be used to prepare reaction items:

1. You can prepare separate reaction items for each activity, one for activity 1, one for activity 2, etc.

#### OR

2. You can include two or more activities in one reaction item.

You may wish to clarify the interview question on reactions as follows: To what extent did (method 1, 2, and/or 3) on (subject 1, 2, and/or 3) meet your expectations at the time?

(Use the same response scale as above.)

An example of a reaction item for an interviewee who is an observer rather than a program participant might be as follows:

Would you say that (activity 1, 2, and/or 3) met your sons/daughters expectations at the time?

(Use the same response scale as above.)

If you are eliciting reactions to several activities, you might consider listing the activities on the left of the interview instrument and the response categories across the page, and then checking the appropriate corresponding response.

Planning Aid I: Indicate any aspects of REACTIONS that the interview will cover. (See page 8 of the workbook.)

#### **KASA Change Items**

If you selected KASA change as a level of evidence on which to obtain information, use or adapt the items below for the interview instrument. Again, refer to Planning Aid D.

#### **Knowledge Change Items**

Say to the interviewee:

*Think back to the activities in which you were involved. To what extent did you learn more about (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?* 

to a great extent to a fair extent to a slight extent not at all don't know/don't recall other (specify)

("Other" here allows for any negative replies, such as: "I received mostly misinformation.")

If the respondent gives any of the first three responses or another applicable response, say: *Could you give me an example*. Respondent's answer:\_\_\_\_\_

You can vary the scope of the item(s) by using the options discussed in the section on reaction items:

- Preparing separate items for each subject or content area covered in the program.
- Including two or three closely related content areas in one item.

Remember, the subject or content areas covered in KASA change and practice change items can refer to a psychological or social process as well as a physical or biological subject.

The above options for knowledge change items apply to all of the RAP items that follow, but for the sake of brevity they will not be repeated.

The following is an example of a knowledge change item for an interviewee who is or was an observer rather than a participant. (This optional type of item will not be repeated, although it, too, is applicable to levels of evidence 5, 6, and 7.)

Say to the interviewee:

Think back to all the activities in which your daughter/ son was involved. To what extent did he/she learn more about (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

(Use the response scale and follow-up items above.)

You might also consider using the following item to detect the extent to which participants became more certain that what they already knew about a subject covered in the program was correct.

Say to the interviewee:

*To what extent did your involvement make you certain that what you already knew about (subject 1, 2, and/or 3) was correct?* 

(Use the previous response scale and follow-up items where applicable.)

#### **Attitude Change Items**

Say to the interviewee: *To what extent did you become more interested in (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?* 

\_\_\_\_\_to a great extent \_\_\_\_\_to a fair extent \_\_\_\_\_to a slight extent \_\_\_\_\_not at all \_\_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall \_\_\_\_\_other (specify)

Would you explain briefly what you mean.

(An interviewee who responded "not at all" might explain: could not become any more interested because 1 already was extremely interested.") The expression "to what extent did you become more interested in," in the above item, could apply, for example, to a public policy education program to increase citizen awareness, interest in, and inclination to vote on a referendum.

An alternate expression for detecting attitude change could be:

To what extent did you become more favorable toward (subject

1, 2, and/or 3)?

(Use the same response scale and follow-up item as above.)

This alternative expression, "more *favorable* toward," could be used for participants in an inducement, advisory, or advocacy-type extension program, such as a program designed to persuade families to use fluoridated toothpaste in an area in which there is no fluorine in the drinking water.

#### **Skill Change Items**

Say to the interviewee: To what extent did you acquire more skill in (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

to a great extent to a fair extent to a slight extent not at all don't know/don't recall other (specify)

(An "other" response could be: "I acquired a lot of skills that I've never really needed.")

If the interviewee selects one of the first three categories, say: *Could you give me an example or two.* 

#### **Aspiration Change Items**

Say to the interviewee:

To what extent did you become more determined to try out (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

\_\_\_\_\_to a great extent

\_\_\_\_\_to a fair extent

\_\_\_\_\_to a slight extent

\_\_\_\_not at all

\_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall

\_\_\_\_other (specify)\_\_\_

(An "other" response could be: "I became less determined because I saw that the idea does not apply to me.")

If the interviewee selects one of the first three categories, say:

Would you mind giving me an example of what you mean.

The expression "to what extent are you more determined to try out," in the above item, pertains to kinds of actions that the interviewee has not engaged in previously (e.g., use of a home

computer).

An alternate expression for an item on aspiration change could be:

*To what extent did you become more determined to try out ideas on (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?* 

(Use the same response scale and follow-up item as above.)

This alternate expression, "try out ideas on," is particularly appropriate for action that the participant has already engaged in but in a different way than recommended or offered by the program.

Planning Aid J: Indicate any aspects of KASA CHANGE that the interview will cover. (See page 9 of the workbook.)

#### **Practice Change Items**

If you selected practice change as a level of evidence on which you will obtain information, and if the interviewee indicates any increase in KASA change, use or adapt the items below. (Refer to Planning Aid D for the subjects to plug in to the standardized items.)

Say to the interviewee:

To what extent have you put to use the ideas or skills you learned regarding (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

\_\_\_\_\_to a great extent \_\_\_\_\_to a fair extent \_\_\_\_\_to a slight extent \_\_\_\_\_not at all \_\_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall \_\_\_\_\_other

(specify)\_

("Other" responses to the question above or to a probe question could include: "1 don't have the money to put these ideas into practice"; "I haven't yet had the opportunity to use these ideas or skills.")

Regardless of the response category chosen by the interviewee (except for "don't know/don't recall"), say:

Would you please elaborate or explain.

An alternative or supplementary item on practice change might ask:

To what extent have you shared with others the ideas or skills regarding (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

(Use the same response scale and follow-up items as above.)

So far we have suggested using nondirective probe questions to follow the closed-end items. A directive probe could obtain even more specific information on the frequency and variety of use of content presented in the program. Here are two examples of directive probes.

(a) Would you explain what you had in mind in giving your answer. For example, how often during the past (time period) have you/your son/daughter used the skills or ideas regarding (content 1)?

(b) Please provide an example or two-for instance, you/your son's/daughter's use of the ideas or skills regarding (content 2) at school, in community activities, or in jobs.

Planning Aid K: Indicate any aspects of PRACTICE CHANGE that the interview will cover. (See page 9 of the workbook.)

#### **End Results Items**

Use the items below or modify them as needed if you plan to obtain evidence on end results. To use end result items, interviewees must have indicated some degree of KASA and/or (preferably) practice change. Refer to Planning Aid D.

Say to the interviewee:

You indicated that you have made use of the ideas or skills regarding (subject 1, 2, and/or 3). Overall, how helpful have the results been?

\_\_\_\_\_very helpful \_\_\_\_\_fairly helpful \_\_\_\_\_slightly helpful \_\_\_\_\_no help at all \_\_\_\_\_harmful \_\_\_\_\_don't know/don't recall \_\_\_\_\_other

(specify)\_

(Interviewee's "other" response or response to the probe item might be: "It's too early to tell what the results will be"; "I haven't made up my mind whether the results are, on balance, a help or a hindrance"; "I received some financial benefit"; "What we did has helped some members of the community but has had an unfavorable impact on others.")

Regardless of the response category chosen by the interviewee (except for "don't know/don't recall"), say:

Would you please explain or give me an example or two.

The closed-end item suggested above can be made more specific by plugging in various types of expected end results into an alternate expression of the item, such as:

You indicated that you have made use of the ideas or skills regarding (subject I, 2, and/or 3). How helpful have the results been in terms of (expected end result 1, expected end result 2 and/or expected end result 3)?

(Use the same response scale and follow-up item as above.)

Again, use non-directive probes to help you obtain the interviewee's explanation for his/her selection of one of the optional responses.

A directive probe can help obtain more specific kinds of explanations or examples regarding perceived end results. An example of a directive probe on the financial results of a practice change is:

About how much money have you gained, saved, or lost over the past (time period) as a result of using the ideas or skills from (subject 1, 2, and/or 3)?

Develop your own meaningful response categories (i.e., more than \$2,000 lost; less than \$2,000 lost; no losses, savings, or gains; less than \$2,000 gained or saved; from \$2,000 to \$4,000 saved or gained, etc.).

Planning Aid L: Indicate any aspects of END RESULTS that the interview will cover. (See page 9 of the workbook.)

#### **Other Items and Procedures**

Although more time consuming and difficult to use than the type of reflective items above, other approaches can obtain more detailed evidence of perceived program results. You may wish to consider the approach of constructing lists of specific, possible program results and asking respondents to indicate which of these results apply to themselves. Also, you may wish to include several other items in the interview, such as the following open-ended question:

What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

#### **Estimating Input**

If level 1 was chosen for the purpose of studying the cost to extension of offering the program, first determine the total number of staff days expended on the program, within the time period covered by the study, for the staff from the county, area, district, and state levels. Then multiply the number of extension staff days expended by the average daily cost for each position. This will allow you to calculate the total estimated cost of the program. (Your state extension fiscal office should be able to supply you with the average daily cost for positions at the county, area, district, and state levels.)

You may wish to include volunteer time expenditures, also. To do this, calculate the dollar cost of the program had volunteers been paid employees. This figure will represent the degree of savings gained through reliance on volunteer staff.

#### **Biographical Data**

It is usually helpful to gather background data (biographical) during the interview. This assists in describing the interviewees as a whole and in analyzing the impact of the program on different types of participants.

The following information should generally be included in the biography:

- The participant's approximate age (i.e., 20–30, 30–40, etc.)
- How much formal education the participant has had
- The participant's sex

You might also ask respondents for this information:

- Occupation
- Residence (city, suburb, town, rural community, farm)
- Race
- Family status
- Other items as necessary

#### **Field-Testing the Interview Instrument**

The interview instrument should be field-tested with two or three program participants. Test and modify the interview questions as necessary to ensure that:

- The evidence the users need is obtained.
- Each item elicits accurate and complete information.
- The interview is brief enough and interesting, as judged by the interviewees.

Planning Aid M: Indicate any additional items or procedures that will be included in the RAP interview study. (See page 10 of the workbook.)

## **Step 7: Interviewing Program Participants**

#### **Selecting Interviewers**

The next step of your RAP study involves planning who will do the interviewing and deciding how much training they will need. Interviewers may need to be trained to ensure that they each get equally accurate and complete information. At the very least, all the interviewers should assemble to discuss the procedures for the interview and each of its questions.

As you choose your team of interviewers, consider the following:

- Will the interview data be more credible to users of the study if the interviewers are "nonproviders" (not responsible for conducting the program)?
- How many nonproviders are available to help conduct interviews?
- How many "providers" are available to conduct interviews?
- How much training will the interviewers (nonproviders and providers) need?

One of the most important considerations in selecting an interviewer is whether the person has the confidence needed to contact people and pose questions to them. Having this confidence depends partly on whether the person feels it is appropriate to ask program participants to provide interviews.

Once you have selected a set of interviewers, assign them to the interviewees in a way that will minimize bias. You might consider doing this randomly.

Planning Aid N: Indicate who will do the RAP interviewing. (See page 11 of the workbook.)

#### **Training the Interviewers**

The interviewers must be able to establish rapport with the person they are interviewing, but at the same time must remain neutral. The interviewer must not act more favorably toward the interviewee if he or she says favorable things about the program's results. Likewise, the interviewer must not act shocked, angered, saddened, or embarrassed if unfavorable results are reported. (For further information on this, see Michael Quinn Patton's *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1980.)

Make sure that interviewers are willing and able to take each respondent through the prescribed sequence of questions, asking each question as it is written. Interviewers should practice by interviewing each other. Practice should be by telephone if the survey is to be done by telephone.

The following three steps "set the stage" for the interview. Have interviewers practice beginning the interview as follows:

- 1. Interviewer introduces himself/herself in an appealing way.
- Interviewer explains why the survey is being conducted. The interviewer could say: "Extension's success depends on meeting people's information and assistance needs. We are interviewing people who have been in contact with the \_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_program. By finding out how participants have been affected by this program, we expect to find ways for extension to do a better job."

3. Make the interviewee feel secure. The interviewer might say: "We are contacting all the people who participated (or we selected your name through a chance drawing from a list of participants) in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ program during the (time period). None of the information you give us will be released in a way that will identify you. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Planning Aid O: Indicate who will train interviewers and test the interviewing procedures. (See page 11 of the workbook.)

#### **Deciding on Face-to-Face or Telephone Interviewing**

Telephone interviewing is much more economical than face-to-face interviewing and usually is satisfactory for brief, standardized/open-ended interviews. Face-to-face interviewing provides more opportunity to establish rapport and communication through facial cues, etc., but telephone interviewing also has several advantages.

- 1. It requires less of a time commitment from the interviewer and the interviewee.
- 2. It is convenient for the interviewee.
- 3. Sometimes the interviewee feels more free to express his or her opinions or report behavior.

Face-to-face interviews may be necessary with low-income program participants, many of whom do not have telephones.

Suggestions for Telephone Interviews

- 1. Try to contact the interviewees by mail to prepare them for the telephone calls. Perhaps the chairperson of the county program planning committee could write a letter indicating the purpose of the interview, the approximate time of the call, and how long the interview will take.
- 2. Consider sending a copy of the interview questionnaire to the respondents to prepare them for the interview. If this is not advisable, expect to repeat some questions during the interview.
- 3. Because the voice is more important in telephone communication than in face-to-face communication, voice modulation, diction, and appropriate pauses must be emphasized.
- 4. Most of the interviews can be done in the evening, but interviewers should not be intrusive and should offer to call back at a more convenient time if necessary. Two interviews per evening is a realistic target for most interviewers.

Answers to the probe questions may be difficult to summarize unless you use a technique during the interview to classify answers. Consider precoding the subjects and the expected types of responses to probe questions. For example, precoded categories for probes regarding changing practices in family resource management could include:

Subject 1—Long-range planning for family finances 1a—Made plans for financing children's college education 1b—Made plans for retirement 1c—Made plans for estate management

As interviewees respond to probe questions, tally their responses, to the extent possible, according to the code you have developed (see Figure 6).

It is not only the frequency of different types of responses to probes that is important. Some comments and suggestions express extraordinary insights or typify the results for various participants especially well. Recording these comments or suggestions verbatim can greatly enhance the quality and liveliness of the interview findings (see Figure 6).

> Planning Aid P: Indicate plans for interviewing procedures. (See page 12 of the workbook.)

# **Step 8: Analyzing, Drawing Conclusions and Evaluating, and Making Recommendations**

#### Analyzing

To obtain a numerical profile of clientele-perceived results of the program, you should count and record the number of interviewee responses in each response category of each item.

Explore whether you can get the interview data computer analyzed through the state extension office or through a county extension office computer or computer terminal. If you have fewer than 15 completed interviews, it may be simpler to analyze the data with tabulation forms and a hand calculator.

Tallies of the responses to the closed-end items will provide answers to questions such as: To what extent did the program's activities meet clientele's expectations? To what extent did clientele receive benefits or harm from KASA change or practice change? Consider converting tallies to percentages and bar charts. This will present the results of the program in a graphic, easy-to-understand way.

You may wish to find out under what conditions the program had the most favorable results and the least favorable. This will help you and others modify the program so that its overall effectiveness will be enhanced. For example, suppose interviewees who were involved in a program's demonstration activities indicated practice change and beneficial end results-two objectives of the program-but that those who were exposed only to other delivery methods of the program reported no such change or benefits. Such a finding might lead the RAP team to recommend emphasizing the demonstration method of delivery or recruitment of participants who would be receptive to demonstrations.

Interviewee-reported program results can be analyzed according to:

- The characteristics of the participants—age, income, residence, size of farm operation, etc.
- The delivery method or type(s) of activities that participants were exposed to.
- The subject matter that participants were introduced to.

Consider presenting survey findings along the lines shown in the figure on page 17. Interviewees' other responses and responses to nondirective and directive probes should supplement and complement the analysis of the responses to the closed-end items. Use illustrative verbatim replies along with numerical profiles to present an overall picture of the frequency of similar kinds of responses.

> Planning Aid Q: Indicate plans for analysis. (See page 12 of the workbook.)

#### Figure 6

improvement of Skins in Weed Control				
Present RAP Findings as in This Hypothetical Example				
<u>Size of</u> participants farm	Degree of Improvement in Weed Control Skills			
500 acres or more	(a) (b) (c)	<ul> <li>45% to a great extent</li> <li>35% to a fair extent</li> <li>20% to a slight extent</li> <li>0% to no extent</li> <li>(32) respondents</li> </ul>		
Less than 500 acres	(d) (e) (f)	<ul> <li>55% to a great extent</li> <li>35% to a fair extent</li> <li>10% to a slight extent</li> <li>0% to no extent</li> <li>(35) respondents</li> </ul>		

#### Participants' Ratings of Their Program-Induced Improvement of Skills in Weed Control

Examples of Illustrative and Verbatim Comments of Interviewees, Relative to Response Categories

Response category (a), larger farms:

- Learned how to calibrate herbicide sprayer (5 respondents) Verbatim comment from 1 respondent: "Through extension's conservation tillage program, I received hands-on training in calibrating an herbicide sprayer."
- Learned how to identify noxious weeds (5 respondents) Verbatim comments from 2 respondents: "As a result of an extension workshop, I learned how to control multiflora rose in my pastures"; "I decided that extension's recommendations on chemical control of weeds are not as complicated as I thought they'd be."
- No response to probe (4 respondents)

Response category (b), larger farms, etc.

#### **Drawing Conclusions and Evaluating**

The study's numerical findings--the percentages of respondents who answered the items in certain ways—should be converted to narrative findings. Narrative findings that could be based on the figure on page 17 are as follows: All the participants interviewed perceived that they had gained at least some skill in weed control through their participation. About half the participants felt that they had made gains in weed control "to a great extent" rather than to a "fair" or "slight" extent, and those with smaller farms perceived greater gains than those with larger farms.

To draw conclusions about the program's results requires interpreting study findings: findings have little meaning of their own. Insofar as the principal users of the study are going to eventually make decisions based on the findings, they should be encouraged to apply their particular perspective to drawing conclusions from the study's findings. We therefore recommend that the entire RAP team or a committee of the team inspect and interpret the findings. This group can examine the tables or charts, draw conclusions about the results of the program, and summarize these conclusions.

In stating conclusions, it is probably wise not to attribute full credit for the practice changes and end results reported by interviewees to the KASA change that interviewees gained through program participation. In most programs, factors unrelated to the extension program have also influenced the participants. Most practice changes and end results of extension programs are affected by such diverse influences as the weather, other sources of information, financial resources of the program participants, and their motivations. It may be judicious, therefore, to state that "the (name of the program) helped (proportion of the audience) to (change given practices with particular end results)."

*Conclusions* about a program's results should be general statements about the results. Evaluations should be appraisals or judgments about how adequate or successful these results are. To judge a program's success or failure in terms of its results requires that the results be compared with established goals or standards. Evaluation always demands an answer to the question "Success or failure as compared with what?" Thus, we suggest that the actual pattern of RAP findings be compared with an expected pattern. Furthermore, unless these expected findings are agreed upon *before* the survey is conducted, the team may be unable to agree on an evaluation of the program's results. For this reason, we recommend that the RAP team (e.g., volunteer leaders, district agent, and others) join you, before the interviews are conducted, in specifying what findings would indicate that a program was "successful," successful, that is, in terms of interviewees' estimate of the results.

The procedure of specifying the expected pattern of RAP findings will establish "exact objectives" against which participants' reflective evidence can be compared. The percentage of interviewees who are *expected* to select given responses can then be compared with the *actual* percentage selecting these responses, thus determining the degree to which program results are judged to be adequate. For example, suppose a RAP team set the following criterion relative to the findings presented in Figure 6: At least two-thirds of the interviewees should indicate that they gained skills in weed control "to a fair extent" or "to a great extent." Since over 80 percent of the interviewees stated that they acquired weed control skills "to a fair extent" or "to a great extent," the program could be judged to be quite successful as far as improvement in skills is concerned.

Planning Aid R: Indicate procedures for drawing conclusions and evaluating the programs results. (See page 12 of the workbook.)

#### **Making Recommendations**

To make recommendations regarding future programs, the study's conclusions and evaluation as well as informal evidence must be taken into account. Thus, the evaluation of a program's results based on reflective evidence has no automatic relationship to recommendations for future program funding or operation. For example, you may recommend continuing an ineffective program long enough to find out whether certain modifications will work adequately.

Before you recommend how a program can be improved, you should do the following.

- 1. Determine the effectiveness of the program at different levels (e.g., practice change) by comparing the actual and the expected program results.
- 2. Select the level or levels that appear most in need of improvement.
- 3. Suggest how to produce needed improvements.

Program results at the higher levels are brought about partly by results at the levels below them. For example, changes in practices are assisted by a significant degree of KASA change. Thus, if objectives for end results and/or practice change are not met and those for KASA change are met, it may be necessary to either revise the objectives for KASA change or find out what barriers are preventing participants from applying their acquired knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations. This may mean deciding whether to initiate or recommend other types of programs, policies, and procedures related to the program.

If KASA change is found to be inadequate by program participants, the RAP team should consider:

- whether to modify the educational methodology and/or the content of the program or both
- whether to modify the intended audience or audiences for the program
- whether to modify the delivery system of the program internally or in relation to other organizations
- whether to alter the way in which the program is managed (organizational structure and procedures)
- whether to modify the program staff

Consider alternative plans for improving the program and then recommend which of these alternatives should be adopted. If it is not possible to make specific recommendations, state the issues, alternatives, or implications that should be considered.

Recommendations of the type mentioned above relate to level 1 of the levels-of-evidence model; changes recommended for levels 2 through 7 raise the question of whether to approve the same, more, or fewer resources for the program. The question of the amount of resources to recommend for the program will exist, of course, regardless of the degree of success ascribed to

the program by the RAP study. A successful program may thus be expanded if the need for the program still exists or increases. Likewise, extension may decide that it should try harder (allocate more resources) to improve a program judged not yet successful in terms of its results. On the other hand, a successful program may receive fewer resources because the program's very success makes its continuation less necessary. Also, the lack of success of a program may suggest that resources should be used more effectively in some other way.

Planning Aid S: Indicate plans for helping decision makers to use the RAP study. (See page 13 of the workbook.)

## Step 9: Communicating the RAP Study

Study findings, conclusions, appraisals, and recommendations should be shared with decision makers in a way that will facilitate their decision making.

Generally, there are two audiences for your findings, conclusions, and recommendations-stakeholders and the general audience. Stakeholders are those people who helped plan and conduct the study in order to obtain answers to their own questions. In the general audience are those people who became aware of the study and its findings only after it was under way or complete.

With both of these groups your objective will be the same: to encourage them to understand and use the study. The strategies for reaching these two groups and meeting your objective will, however, be different. Your final reporting strategies for stakeholders may be less important, since they will know about and begin to use the study's findings before the final report is completed. Nonetheless, you should explore with the stakeholders how the report should be packaged and presented so that it will be of the greatest help to them.

How to best share your findings, conclusions, and recommendations with general audiences or nonsponsors of the study (e.g., agricultural agency officers, bankers, clergy, local business people) will require insight into their responsibilities, interests, and capacity to apply the study to decision making.

Try to direct specific findings, interpretations, and recommendations to individuals who need such specific evidence. Bear in mind that different findings are likely to be of interest to different individuals and groups.

Planning Aid T: Indicate plans for communicating the RAP study. (See page 13 of the workbook.)

Additional copies of the RAP package may be ordered for \$2.00 (New York State residents) or \$2.50 (out-of-state residents) plus postage and handling. Minimum order: \$10.00. Address all inquiries to:

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