AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
http://ageconsearch.umn.edu
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

USE OF ADR IN EXTENSION PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ROLES EXTENSION CAN PLAY IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Leon E. Danielson and Simon K. Garber
North Carolina State University

Potential Extension Roles in Dispute Resolution

Many roles can be played by the extension educator in public policy education and alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The role chosen will depend on many factors, including the particular issue being addressed, timing of the educational program with respect to evolution of the issue, the degree to which positions have hardened among target audiences, the skills/interests of the educator, and the level of support from extension administration.

Policy Education Roles

We identify five policy education roles. These are grouped by "content" and "process" because both are normally needed for successful public policy education programs. Content roles include: *Information Provider* (offers facts or concepts that are authoritative, or relates his or her own experience as input into the decision-making process); and *Technical Advisor* (helps stakeholders sift through the facts and interpret them in different contexts).

Process roles include: *Convener* (someone who takes the initiative in bringing people together to deal with an issue. Once the parties have been brought together it is possible for the convener to assume another role); *Facilitator* (a person or team selected by participants to help format the meetings, set the ground rules for discussion and focus participant attention on the process); and *Program Developer* (helps develop a long-range plan for the educational program and a set of short-run actions to implement the plan. This role might contain both content and process dimensions, content in that it concerns "what" is contained in the program, and process in that it is concerned with "how" it is carried out).

Traditional Alternatives-and-Consequences Approach

The alternatives-and-consequences approach typically involves three main steps: clarification of the problem or issue, development

of policy alternatives, and identification of the consequences of each alternative. After proceeding through these steps it is assumed an informed citizenry will make good policy choices.

However, our experience has shown that, regardless of the public policy role being played, groups still may not be able to make and implement policy choices once the public policy education, alternatives-consequences process has been completed and extension has become less involved. The policy process may stop or be sidetracked, stakeholders may become frustrated, policies and plans are not implemented, and issues are not resolved. In addition, the increased importance of issues programming and the increased priority given to measurement of results have increased pressure to take a "resolution-of-the-issue" approach toward public policy education. Bingham (p.6) suggests that the adequacy test of consensus building and joint problem solving often is how agreements are reached and whether they are adequately supported through the implementation process.

Dispute Resolution in the Public Arena

In the public arena, dispute resolution involves resolution of public issues through citizen-participation processes, interest-based negotiation and consensus building. (Notice the emphasis is on process, not content; furthermore, interest-based negotiation and consensus building focus on decision making or policy choice. We choose to label these processes, along with group facilitation, as issue facilitation.) Thus, facilitation skills that have evolved out of "small group" facilitation typically taught in traditional leadership development programs need to be supplemented by collaborative process/dispute resolution skills as well as citizen-participation processes that are more appropriate for the more complex social setting in which issue facilitation takes place.

Let us be clear what we mean by the three processes:

1. *Citizen-participation processes*—are intentionally-planned processes designed to bring citizens together with representatives of public and private organizations to make public choices. To be successful, the process design must be explainable and agreed upon by all parties.

2. *Interest-based negotiation*—emphasizes the awareness of own/other parties "interests," rather than "positions" or "proposed solutions." This focus on interests and avoidance of positions allows the invention of new alternatives that satisfy mutual interests. These may be non-policy alternatives.

3. *Consensus building*—is a method for making decisions that all members of the group can support. The method encourages the mutual education of parties, the creation of joint knowledge,

the generation of multiple options and the selection of an option that satisfies mutual interests; it is a process for resolving conflicts, not just surviving or managing them (Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, p.2).

Expansion of Public Policy Education Roles

The traditional public policy education paradigm can be effectively modified through adoption of these alternative dispute-resolution processes and principles to focus more effectively on the resolution of public issues. In doing this, the public policy educator continues to work with interested parties in an agreed-upon process role. However, they work during and beyond the policy choice phase, not just through the identification of the alternatives and consequences.

First, the *Facilitator* role would be expanded from emphasis on small group facilitation to issue facilitation. Issue facilitation should continue to be viewed as an educational contribution, because it involves learning an alternative resolution process (as opposed to litigation or arbitration) and the mutual education of involved parties. Second, two new alternative dispute resolution (ADR) roles would be added: *Promoter of Dispute Resolution* (one who suggests the parties consider facilitated collaboration. He or she should also be prepared to recommend competent facilitators); and *Mediator* (one who works with the disputing parties individually or collectively to increase their skills in collaborative problem solving; or one who assumes middle position intervening, interposing, reconciling differences, thereby bringing about consensus and settlement).

Content roles identified for policy education, that is, information provider and technical advisor, remain appropriate. Thus, we suggest an extension of traditional public policy education roles rather than replacement. Dispute resolution techniques are essential if the issue is so controversial that education is impossible. However, we do not visualize the dispute resolution and mediation roles identified here as only being useful in cases in which the alternatives-and-consequences "teachable moment" has been lost. Most notably, issue facilitation techniques should be useful at all stages of the educational process, as would the content roles and the other process roles that remain unchanged under an ADR approach.

Examples of ADR-Related Extension Programs

The following list of activities and projects on facilitation and dispute resolution are examples of the various ways extension personnel have already incorporated ADR concepts and techniques into their public issues and public policy education programs.

Facilitation Programs

1. University of Hawaii Extension. Donna Ching. Materials prepared during 1989-1991 for use in facilitating a strategic planning

workshop. Instructional videos and participant guides were developed on the importance of content and process focus and on explanations of the "meeting roles" for facilitators, recorders and participants in a facilitated meeting.

2. Western Rural Development Center. *Facilitating Strategic Management.* January, 1993. Project was designed to guide potential facilitators through the steps for conducting strategic management. The manual produced included sections on facilitation; roles and functions of key players; initial agreements between the facilitator, recorder and participants; and giving feedback. An appendix focuses on more specific tools and techniques to assist with facilitation. The target audience was facilitators designated to coordinate strategic management efforts of community, governmental and non-profit organizations in which staff and volunteer time is limited.

3. Universities of Vermont and Connecticut Extension. Ester W. Shoup, Luane J. Lange, Lois M. Frey and Barry W. Stryker III. *Master Facilitator Training Program: Facilitating to Enhance Community Participation and Problem Solving.* August, 1992. This project provides a curriculum and materials (workbooks, overheads, numerous handouts, etc.) designed to enhance the leadership skills of citizens committed to guiding people through a discussion that may lead to a plan of action on a local issue. Skills addressed include nominal group process techniques, team building, keeping focused, summarizing comments, responding to expressed feelings, evaluating what is happening and related topics.

4. Louisiana State University Extension. Bill Branch, Karen Overstreet and Satish Verma. *Coping with Crisis in the Southern Region.* 1992-1993. This project developed a video and *Instructor's Guide* that build on Module 6 of *Working with Our Publics.* The video includes a discussion of issue evolution, twelve examples of extension involvement in controversial issues in the South, and guidelines for working with controversial issues.

5. University of Wisconsin Extension. Terry Gibson and Duane Dale. *Public Issues Education AG*SAT Project.* 1993-1994. Involves production of materials and three satellite video conferences beginning in October, 1993, that focus upon public issues education (PIE), conflict resolution and various educational strategies for extension. PIE is viewed as a broad approach utilizing methodology and techniques from public policy education, leadership development, community development and related fields.

Mediation and Dispute Settlement Programs

1. University of Massachusetts Extension. Christina Petersen. Christina has served as mediator-facilitator and technical infor-

mation provider for a wildlife and hunting conflict. In addition, Massachusetts extension is providing mediation training to persons making the decisions at the local level in the state: various boards, planners and other local officials.

2. Oregon State University Extension. David Cleaves and A. Scott Reed. *Resource Issues and Options-RIO Project.* 1989-present. This project focused on getting technical forestry information into public policy discussions, getting more people involved in forestry issues, developing more effective methods for helping people understand the issues, and providing more research-based information in policy debates. Goals included settlement of natural resources issues through policy development, dispute resolution and citizen action alternatives. Process skills used came from Module 6 of *Working with Our Publics* and involved the alternatives-and-consequences approach; discussions of facts, myths and values; models of decision making; and related concepts.

3. University of California Extension. Leigh Johnson and Valerie Mellano. San Diego Bay wetlands and water quality project. Efforts combined techniques from three approaches to resolving public policy issues: public policy education (California's "Ladder for Policy") whereby alternative policies and their consequences were identified; National Issues Forum procedures whereby well-researched background information was developed to educate participants on issues and policies; and facilitation and mediation techniques through which it was possible to help citizen groups work together to develop enduring agreement on issues and policies.

4. University of Nevada Extension. Mike Havercamp and Dave Torell. Have participated in a wide variety of activities as mediators and facilitators in both dispute resolution and consensus-building processes. Training programs, fact sheets and other materials on mediation, facilitation, shared visioning and alternative dispute resolution have been prepared. A "Natural Resource Issues Conflict Management and Mediation Team" has been formed jointly between California and Nevada to address public land issues. Activities include involvement in a mule deer/cattle grazing controversy near Susanville, California; the Tahoe Basin Watershed Planning project; "conflict avoidance" efforts in an elk introduction project; and training in Ely, Nevada, on conflict resolution and coordinated resource planning. Projects to follow will involve the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, a rancher and several public constituencies.

5. North Carolina State University Extension/Orange County Dispute Settlement Center. Andy Sachs, Leon Danielson, Si

Garber, Mike Levi and David Mustian. *Extension's Role in Environmental Policy Conflict.* Project involved production of satellite video conference in February, 1993, and training handbook. The program was downlinked in thirty-three states and Washington, DC. The program was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service and was jointly developed by extension personnel and a public issues dispute settlement expert. It focused on establishing the linkage between public policy education and conflict resolution. Roles in each that can be played by extension professionals were identified.

6. Southern Extension Public Affairs Committee (SEPAC). Contact: Leon Danielson (North Carolina State University). *Mediation/Conflict Resolution Project.* New in 1993, this project was developed to disseminate materials to SEPAC members from the North Carolina satellite uplink noted above, to develop an ADR resources library, and to develop additional materials that would be useful in developing conflict resolution training. A SEPAC e-mail mailing group was established in September, 1993, to share ADR, public policy and public issues education information.

7. Oregon State University Extension. Andy Duncan. *Miracle at Bridge Creek.* Satellite uplink and training materials focused upon coalition building. Process roles of convener and issues facilitator are effectively demonstrated. An e-mail mailing group on public issues education is operational.

8. Washington State University Extension/Association of Washington Cities/Washington Association of County Officials/Washington State Association of Counties. *Program for Local Government Education.* Greg Andranovich, Ron Faas, Kelsey Gray, Lois Irwin and Nick Lovrich. The 1989-1992 project was supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Interest-based problem solving approaches were applied to multi-jurisdictional demonstration sites: the Grand Coulee Dam Area annexation/consolidation study; and the Mason County Criminal Justice Task Force involving county and city officials, school districts and Indian tribes.

9. Western Rural Development Center. *Environmental Conflict Resolution.* Dave Cleaves (OR), Ron Faas (WA), Emmett Fiske (WA), Kelsey Gray (WA), Neil Meyer (ID), David Rogers (UT), Rudy Schnabel (AZ) and Tim Wallace (CA). February, 1993. Training and notebook. This 1992 three-day training project focused on "interest-based problem solving," and produced an in-depth training handbook covering a number of topics related to meeting management facilitation, consensus building and interest-based negotiation. The regional training involved commitment to do state training back home or get involved in an actual issue.

10. Utah State University Extension. Allen Rasmussen. Several examples of ADR applications as part of on-going projects. In conflict management, examples include dealing with livestock grazers and public land managers on issues related to watershed protection and access to petroglyphs; and dealing with public land managers, recreation, wildlife, livestock, rural communities and Native American interests on public land and associated private lands. Mediation examples include dealing with agricultural and wildlife interests to reduce "mutual animosity"; and developing a rangeland monitoring system (related to data collection) for the Forest Service that has reduced the number of conflicts with livestock interests.

Lessons Learned/Educational Needs of Extension Educator

To support agents and specialists interested in expanding their role(s) to include ADR concepts and activities, new training needs to be offered. Among other things, this training needs to include issue facilitation and mediation skills. Skill training should include extensive role-playing practice in a risk-free setting and involve various scenarios. Also, a summary of ADR resources available for extension's use should be developed. Because ADR has been developing for twenty years, materials, case studies, resources centers, personnel and experience are extensive. We should not reinvent the wheel.

There is a need for increased support from extension administration because of the additional risks taken by educators becoming involved in ADR of controversial issues. This support may be coming. Conflict resolution is one of four competencies proposed by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Personnel and Organizational Development Committee, along with strategic planning and management, coalition and group system building, and responding to and facilitating change.

Successful role performance will require that the extension educator be seen as having no professional interest or affiliation that would interfere with his or her responsibility for helping the parties satisfactorily resolve the issue. Perceived individual bias by any of the parties, whether or not it is warranted, will negate effective role performance of the extension educator.

It is our belief that public policy educators should evaluate whether or not incorporation of dispute resolution concepts and techniques would improve their programs. According to O.E. Smith, director of the Oregon State University Extension Service, the importance of developing dispute resolution skills and competencies cannot be overemphasized: "Extension's survival may very well depend upon our ability to acquire, utilize, and help others use these skills. The political and social environment in which we must live and operate

will no longer permit the protective blanket of "non-biased" education. The extension policy of non-involvement, of simply presenting the technical facts, will not suffice" (Smith, p. 10).

We have identified several examples from throughout the nation that demonstrate how dispute resolution can be incorporated into extension programs. Fact sheets, training handbooks, videos and other materials are becoming available. It is up to us to adapt them to our own use.

REFERENCES

Bingham, Gail. *Resolving Environmental Disputes: A Decade of Experience, Executive Summary.* Washington, DC: Conservation Foundation, 1985. p.10.

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. *An Introduction to Negotiation and Conflict Resolution.* Fairfax, VA: George Mason University, 1993.

Smith, O.E. "Closing Remarks." *Western Wire News.* Corvallis, OR: Western Rural Development Center, Autumn, 1992, p. 10.