

**National State Strengthening Program Sustainability Study:
Patterns of Early Sustainability**

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October 2003

INTRODUCTION

Once a program makes an impact in the community, there is an “ethical” obligation to sustain that program (Akerlund, 2000). However, Lerner (1995) and Little (1995) report that many community-based programs fail to sustain within a few years after their initial funding ceases. Currently the literature cites a growing need for sustainability planning, but the actual literature on program sustainability is emergent and the systematic study of the components of sustainability is limited (e.g., Bamberger & Cheema, 1990; Mancini & Marek, 1998; Marek, Mancini, & Brock, 1999; Lefebvre, 1990; Goodman & Steckler, 1989; LaFond, 1995; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998) leaving programmers with little information to guide them through this difficult process. Our goal in conducting sustainability research is to develop an understanding of what contributes to sustaining community-based programs and to transform that knowledge into usable products and information for program professionals and researchers.

Our specific interest in sustainability is in the understanding of its components and how it is achieved, maintained, and enhanced. We began our sustainability research in 1996 with data collected from ninety-four community-based programs funded by CSREES/USDA through the annual congressional appropriation for the National Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Initiative. This funding was distributed to Land Grant University Cooperative Extension services over a period of five years with the purpose of developing community-based programs to serve at risk children, youth, and families. Qualitative and quantitative data on sustainability were collected at two years, four years, and six years post CYFAR/USDA funding. From this data we developed and refined a conceptual sustainability framework (Mancini & Marek, 1998; Marek, et al., 1999) that was further informed by the existing literature on sustainability, a nationwide organizational change survey of 6,000 program professionals (Betts, Peterson, Marczak, & Richmond, 2002) and a quantitative survey of 250 program professionals (Marek, Mancini, Earthman, & Brock, 2002). The result of this cumulative knowledge is the following seven-factor conceptual framework:

- 1. Leadership Competence:** Leaders are committed to the program, communicate a clear mission, and are able to develop, early in the program life-cycle, a realistic program plan with multiple strategies for sustainability.
- 2. Effective Collaboration:** Collaborators include key community stakeholders that share a common vision for the program and understand that their responsibilities include providing resources, program development and implementation, and program evaluation.
- 3. Understanding the Community:** Program developers know community needs and assets through regular assessments and develop programs in which the community is involved in and supportive of.
- 4. Demonstrating and Disseminating Program Impact:** Evaluation plans are developed early and used to demonstrate program effectiveness, inform program modification, and disseminate program successes to key stakeholders and potential funders.
- 5. Strategic Funding:** Funding is sufficient for program operations and there are plans in place for obtaining additional long-term funding.

- 6. Staff Involvement and Integration:** Staff are committed to the program, are involved at all levels of program operation, are flexible and creative in their approaches, and are well qualified and trained to work on the program.
- 7. Program Responsiveness:** Programs are responsive to changing community needs and resources.

It is this most current rendition of the sustainability framework that we implemented with community-based programs funded by CSREES/USDA through the CYFAR-USDA State Strengthening Program Initiative. Similar to the original CYFAR Youth at Risk Initiative, funding was distributed through Land Grant University Cooperative Extension services for a period of five years with the purpose of developing community-based programs for at risk children and their families. This report focuses on the State Strengthening Programs two years after their initial five years of funding ended. Areas of focus include:

- I. Functioning of the programs with regard to the seven Sustainability Factors
- II. The current level of program sustainability including measures of competency, capacity, and continuity over time
- II. The relationship of the seven Sustainability Factors to program sustainability
- III. Cooperative Extension's role in the sustainability of these programs

METHODS

Procedures

In May of 2000, 33 programs within five states completed their five years of USDA/CSREES State Strengthening Funding and in May of 2001 another 36 programs within nine states did the same. Data collection for the first 33 programs began in fall 2001 and data collection for the second 36 programs began in fall 2002.

A point of contact for each of the 69 programs was identified via their program closeout reports and then confirmed with the State Strengthening Program Director. These potential respondents were then contacted to confirm their suitability for completing the sustainability survey or to obtain a more suitable participant. For three of the programs there were two contacts that completed and returned one survey. In two cases the same contact was identified for two programs; in one case the same contact was identified for three programs. All but two contacts were affiliated with Cooperative Extension.

Contacts for the first 33 programs were e-mailed a web address at which they could complete a web-based Sustainability Survey but due to difficulties with web survey completion, a copy was sent to non-respondents via standard mail. Contacts for the second 36 programs were sent the Sustainability Survey via standard mail. In order to maximize the response rate incentives were offered, and follow-up e-mails and survey mailings were sent to non-respondents. Eight non-respondents were contacted either by phone or e-mail and requested to complete a shorter form of the survey. In sum, contacts from 16 programs completed the survey over the web, contacts from 45 programs completed the long form survey by mail, contacts from

four programs completed the short form survey, and contacts from four programs did not participate thereby yielding a program response rate of 94%.

Program Description

The majority of these programs (68%) are located in relatively small communities with populations between 2,501 and 50,000 whereas larger urban areas account for 24% of these programs (see Table 1).

Table 1: Community size where State Strengthening Programs were located (n = 55)

Population Of Community	Percent
Less than 2500	9%
Between 2501 and 8000	33%
Between 8001 and 50,000	35%
Between 50,001 and 250,000	15%
Over 250,000	9%

Programs most commonly offered by these projects included Community Service/Volunteerism and Life Skills for youth, Parent Involvement/Volunteerism and Parent Education Skills for parents, and Coalition Building in the community (see Appendix A for a complete listing of types of programs).

Instrument

The Sustainability Survey was constructed based on information obtained from qualitative and quantitative data collected for the Youth at Risk Sustainability Study (Mancini & Marek, 1998; Marek, Mancini, & Brock, 1999; Marek, Mancini, Earthman, & Brock, 2002). It includes items pertaining to program status, goals, programs, number of sites and participants, Cooperative Extension involvement, and facilitators and obstacles to sustainability. Current program functioning as well as changes since the program completed its funding two years prior (at the end of its original funding) is assessed. In addition, respondents were also asked to complete the Program Sustainability Index (PSI). The PSI is a 53 item measure of the seven Sustainability Factors (Mancini & Marek, unpublished).

Data Analysis

Data were entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and results were categorized into four sections that reflect the four areas of focus for this research. Frequencies are reported for items within sections I, II, and IV of the results. In section III mean PSI factor scores and in section IV mean Cooperative Extension involvement, commitment, and integration scores were correlated with the “Sustainability” outcome variable. This variable is a mean of two items: 1) Perceived Sustainability (“In your opinion, to what degree has your program been sustained since the end of CYFAR/USDA funding?”) and 2) Program Activity (“Compared to your program’s activity during its peak time, how would you categorize your program’s current level of activity?”). These items were combined into a single variable labeled “Sustainability” due to their high intercorrelation ($r=.84$).

All coefficients reported in Sections III and IV are product-moment correlation effect sizes. Focusing on effect sizes rather than on tests of statistical significance may be helpful in

reporting and interpreting exploratory research on small samples—enabling the researcher to focus more on substantive significance (Cohen, 1988). According to Cohen a small effect size is between .10 and .29, a medium effect size is between .30 and .50, and a large effect size is greater than .50. With the exception of frequencies reported for Perceived sustainability and Program activity, inactive or unsustained programs (n = 7) are not included in any of the analyses, leaving a total sample size of 58.

RESULTS

I. CURRENT PROGRAM FUNCTIONING: THE SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The purpose behind the development of the Sustainability Framework was to identify what contributes to and detracts from program sustainability. Thus, for this study, the first level of sustainability assessment involved identifying the presence of the framework factors within current program functioning.

1. LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE

All of the active programs have leadership that is committed to the goals and longevity of the program and has strategically planned for program survival. The most commonly reported sources of leadership for these programs were Cooperative Extension (79%), community coalitions (40%), or schools (35%). The majority (91%) were committed to their programs ongoing work plan and to the goal of serving at risk youth and families. Furthermore, 26% of respondents reported planning for sustainability during the initial proposal phase, 44% reported planning during the first three years of the program, and 30% reported planning during the fourth year of the program or later.

2. EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

Respondents reported that they collaborate with a variety of organizations in the maintenance and/or expansion of their program. Over three-quarters reported collaborating with Cooperative Extension, schools, and/or community service agencies. Furthermore, since the ending of CYFAR/USDA funding, over one-third (35%, n=20) reported increases in their number of collaborators while only 14% (n=8) reported decreases. Increases were largely attributed to increased community awareness (60%), increased emphasis on recruitment (55%), and changes in program needs (40%). Decreases were largely attributed to decreased emphasis on recruitment (33%). Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that local businesses (33%), Cooperative Extension (31%), and schools (30%) provided funding for the continuation of the program.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

The majority of respondents agreed that community members are informed about their program (94%), are aware of their programs' successes (90%), and actively support their program (94%). However, actual participation of community members in determining program needs, selection, delivery, and successes, as well as involvement in advisory boards and participant recruitment was low. Less than one quarter of respondents reported that parents of youth were involved in any of these aspects of the programs, while less than one third of youth and adult participants were involved in most of these aspects of the programs.

4. DEMONSTRATING AND DISSEMINATING PROGRAM IMPACT

The majority (71%) reported that their program conducted some level of program assessment. Of these programs, 76% assessed participant satisfaction, between 61% and 71% conducted formal assessments through pre- and post-testing, and 66% conducted informal assessments through testimonials or other forms of communication. These evaluations were used for assessing program effectiveness (88%) and for program planning (87%) as well as for marketing the program to collaborators and funders (85%), community members (58%), and potential funders (58%). However, despite recognition of the importance of evaluation to program sustainability, only 27% (n=11) of these programs were able to obtain specific funding targeted toward evaluation of their programs and likewise, only 18% were able to obtain outside consultants as evaluators.

5. STRATEGIC FUNDING

Overall, these programs relied heavily on grants (71%) and Cooperative Extension (57%) to provide funding for the continuation of their programs. Primary sources of funding for these programs included grants (41%), private donations (33%), local businesses (33%), Cooperative Extension (31%), and schools (30%). Furthermore, long-term funding was questionable. While 62% (n=36) of respondents indicated that their program has secure funding for one more year, this decreased to 38% (n=22) for two more years, and decreased further to 12% (n=7) for three more years. These findings suggest that State Strengthening programs struggle with long term funding options.

6. STAFF INVOLVEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Respondents reported struggling to maintain adequate staffing. Only 19% indicated that there was enough staff “all of the time” while 31% indicated that there was “rarely” or “never” enough staff to support to program. These numbers were comparable to reports on the sufficiency of volunteer support. Additionally, 38% of respondents reported a decrease in paid staff and 33% reported a decrease in volunteers since CYFAR/USDA funding ended. Lack of resources and decreased funding were the primary reasons for these declines. The majority of respondents indicated that both staff (72%) and volunteers (55%) received formal training on the goals of the program. Respondents also reported that 69% of paid staff and 31% of volunteers were “very much” involved in suggesting new program ideas.

7. PROGRAM RESPONSIVENESS

All respondents reported that their programs have gone through some changes since CYFAR/USDA funding ended. Typical program changes included: 1) changing program goals (77%), 2) expanding (85%) or reducing (62%) programming, and 3) increasing the number of sites (37%) or participants (61%) or decreasing the number of sites (19%) or participants (29%). These adaptations were made in response to changing community needs, meeting participant needs, changes in funding, and/or changes in staff or collaborators.

II. CURRENT LEVEL OF PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

In determining the current status of these programs, three aspects of sustainability were measured: 1) perceived sustainability, 2) program activity, and 3) the ability of the program to meet the needs of at risk youth and their families. These variables reflect, to a degree, our definition of sustainability involving competency, capacity, and continuity over time. Frequencies for these items are reported below.

1. **Perceived Sustainability:**

- Sixty-one (61%) percent (n=39) reported that their program was “Mostly” to “Completely” sustained; 28% (n = 18) reported their program was “Partially” sustained; and 11% (n = 7) reported their program was not sustained at all.

2. **Program Activity:**

- Eighty-nine (89%) percent (n=58) of programs continue to be active two years post CYFAR/USDA funding.
 - Forty-four (44%) percent (n = 28) reported expanded activities.
 - Thirteen (13%) percent (n = 8) reported that activity levels were maintained.
 - Thirty-three (33%) percent (n = 21) reported reduced activities.
- Eleven (11%) percent (n = 7) of respondents reported that their program had terminated all activities.

3. **Ability of the Program to Meet the Needs of At Risk Youth and their Families:**

- Fifty-six (56%) percent reported that their program was “Mostly” to “Fully” meeting the needs of at risk children, youth, and/or families; 34% (n = 21) reported “Somewhat” meeting their needs; and 10% (n = 6) reported that their programs were inactive and thereby “Not meeting their needs at all”.

Overall, these programs continue to operate and to retain their original goal of serving at risk children, youth, and families.

III. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE SEVEN FRAMEWORK FACTORS TO SUSTAINABILITY**

The purpose of the PSI is to assess the presence of or absence of each of the seven sustainability factors. Within the PSI, items under each factor are considered independent scales in which a mean score can be determined. As seen in Table 2, an examination of relationships between PSI factor scores and “Sustainability” indicates that all of the factors are related to sustainability. A large effect was found for both Leadership Competence and Strategic Funding in relation to sustainability with medium to small effects found for the other five factors.

Table 2: Relationship of Sustainability Factors to Sustainability

Sustainability Factors	Effect Size
Leadership Competence	.54
Effective Collaboration	.37
Understanding the Community	.36
Demonstrating and Disseminating Program Impact	.36
Strategic Funding	.67
Staff Involvement and Integration	.41
Program Responsiveness	.21

Small effect size = .10 through .29; Medium effect size = .30 through .50; Large effect size = .50 or greater.

In addition to asking about the presence of these factors, respondents were asked what they believed impeded the sustainability of their programs. Almost three-quarters indicated that their program faced at least one significant obstacle. These obstacles are categorized under four of the framework factors: Leadership Competence, Understanding the Community, Strategic

Funding, and Staff Involvement and Integration. Correlations between the four mean obstacle scores and sustainability are consistent with the findings found for the same four PSI Sustainability Factors. Overall the presence of obstacles within all four of these factors is related, at least to a small effect size, to decreased levels of sustainability (see Table 3). As with the PSI Sustainability Factors, obstacles within Leadership Competence and Strategic Funding had the largest impact on sustainability (medium effect size).

Table 3: Relationship of Obstacles to Sustainability

Obstacle Categories	Effect Size
Leadership Competence	-.32
Understanding the Community	-.16
Strategic Funding	-.37
Staff Involvement and Integration	-.14

Small effect size = .10 through .29; Medium effect size = .30 through .50; Large effect size = .50 or greater.

These findings suggest that all of the Sustainability Factors are important to program survival, particularly Leadership Competence and Strategic Funding. However, despite the lack of long term funding, the majority of these programs were still active and maintained at high levels of sustainability two years after CYFAR/USDA funding ended. Moreover, 88% of respondents are “Somewhat” (45%) or “Very Much” (43%) confident that their program will be active five years from now. To explain this high level of sustainability and confidence in future sustainability in face of these programs’ current funding struggles, we suggest an “eighth” Sustainability Factor unique to these State Strengthening Programs—the contributions and commitment of Cooperative Extension.

IV. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: THE EIGHTH SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR

These programs accessed many resources developed through CYFAR to assist in program planning, development, administration, evaluation, and sustainability. Resources included the provision of personnel, equipment, training, conferences, and web resources. To assess the importance of these CYFAR resources to sustainability, respondents were asked to identify what CYFAR resources aided them, what Cooperative Extension currently provides, and the level of program integration within Cooperative Extension.

CYFAR Resources

The CYFAR initiative itself provided programs with resources developed with the intention of increasing the probability of program survival. Resources are listed in Appendix B and include the provision and support for connectivity, program directors and evaluators; web resources found on CYFERNet; and CYFAR resources such as the evaluation guides and the connectivity, sustainability, and organizational change reports. Overall, the resources reported as being most helpful to program sustainability by at least three-quarters of respondents were: Having a Program Director (78%), the annual CYFAR Conference (75%), and the CYFERNet [Parent/Family information] Web Resource (76%).

Resources Provided by Cooperative Extension

Table 4 lists the resources that are directly provided by Cooperative Extension. Resources provided to more than half of the programs include both program direction (leadership, supervision of personnel, and involvement in a coalition) and maintenance

(implementation, evaluation, and fiscal management). Overall, the more involved Cooperative Extension was in providing resources, the higher the ratings of sustainability (small effect, $r = .28$).

Table 4: Resources provided “Very Much” by Cooperative Extension (n=50-52)

Cooperative Extension Involvement	Very Much
Program leadership	67%
Supervision of staff and volunteers	59%
Involved in a formal coalition for the program	57%
Program implementation	57%
Evaluation of programs	54%
Fiscal management	53%
Provision of program materials/equipment	50%
Provision of personnel	46%
Provides training/workshops for program personnel	44%
Advisory board member	44%
Grant proposal writing	42%
Curriculum development	39%
In-kind (non-monetary) support	39%
Provision of space	33%
Direct funding (cash) support	23%

Commitment to Sustainability and to Serving At risk Populations

In addition to continuing to provide resources to these programs, Cooperative Extension was committed to serving at risk audiences and developing sustainable community-based programs. Over three-quarters (86%, $n = 48$) of Cooperative Extension respondents in the sample “strongly agreed” (50%) or “agreed” (36%) that the State Strengthening Program was a part of their ongoing work plan. Additionally, 86% ($n = 48$) “strongly agreed” (52%) or “agreed” (34%) that serving at risk audiences is an expectation of their organization or agency. Overall, the greater Cooperative Extension’s commitment to the sustainability of the State Strengthening Programs, the higher the level of sustainability (small effect, $r = .26$).

Integration within the Cooperative Extension System

Cooperative Extension was instrumental in sustaining many of these programs through integration into the Cooperative Extension system. Findings on integration revealed that:

- Seventy-four (74%) percent ($n = 43$) of respondents reported that their program had been “Somewhat” (46%) or “To a great extent” (28%) integrated within their state’s Cooperative Extension.
- Seventy-one (71%) percent ($n = 41$) of respondents reported that their program had been “Somewhat” (52%) or “To a great extent” (19%) integrated into ongoing 4-H programs.
- Eighty-one (81%) percent ($n = 47$) of respondents reported that County Cooperative Extension Agents are “Somewhat” (41%) or “To a great extent” (40%) involved in the State Strengthening programs.

The high levels of integration into the Cooperative Extension system occurred despite reports from the majority of respondents that Cooperative Extension staff are overloaded (82%) and have limited time to devote to the programs (58%).

CONCLUSIONS

All seven factors in the Sustainability Framework are empirically related to program sustainability. The relationship of obstacles to decreased levels of sustainability provides additional support to the efficacy of four of these seven factors (Leadership Competence, Understanding the Community, Strategic Funding, and Staff Involvement and Integration). These findings support the relevance of the Sustainability Framework to sustainability as well as the usefulness of the PSI in assessing the presence of the seven Sustainability Factors.

Program Leadership and Strategic Funding had the greatest impact on the level of program sustainability. This is of some concern since findings on program functioning revealed that these programs are struggling with both current and future funding issues. However, despite these struggles programs are sustained in that they demonstrate both continuity of programming and goals. In other words, the majority of these programs are reportedly active at high levels of perceived sustainability two years after initial CYFAR/USDA funding ended, have either expanded or maintained their activity as compared to their peak year, continue to meet the needs of at risk youth and families, and are confident that their program will survive another five years into the future. It is suggested that the presence of Cooperative Extension within State Strengthening Programs is responsible for providing these high levels of sustainability and confidence.

Findings on Cooperative Extension involvement revealed a strong ongoing commitment to serving at risk youth and families. This commitment is further supported by actions such as the vast provision of resources to support, conduct, and direct these programs as well as the partial to complete integration of the majority of these programs within the Cooperative Extension system. Analyses to determine the relationship of these three aspects of Cooperative Extension involvement to sustainability indicated that commitment and resource provision, but not integration, were related to higher levels of sustainability. This may be due to the increased commitment and resources needed to integrate a program, even partially, within a system that is already overburdened. Cooperative Extension staff are overloaded with responsibilities and their time to devote to these programs are limited. The result is that integration into Cooperative Extension may be a “survival” tactic, but not necessarily a “sustainability” tactic. Program leaders that choose this path, to their credit, are able to save important programming that makes a difference to the community.

Findings indicate that program leaders are effective at informing the community and garnering their support and feedback. However, leaders are not as effective at involving community members in determining program needs, selection, delivery, and success as well as participating in advisory boards and recruitment. In other words, the population that these programs are serving had very little involvement in the actual program development. While this does not directly impact sustainability in the manner that Strategic Funding may, it can, in the long-term be as detrimental to program longevity. When the community is involved in a program from the ground up it is more difficult for them not to be committed to the sustainability of the program. Community members are key stakeholders and their commitment may open doors to integration within the community and other resources that would allow these programs to sustain in a more holistic manner than what might occur only under Cooperative Extension’s umbrella.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Leadership Competence

The role of leadership in successfully sustained community-based programs involves planning, multiple strategies, commitment, realism, and having a clearly articulated mission. Consequently leaders must come to programs with a range of skills and experiences that enable them to both plan and to execute that plan. Program developers should look for leaders who have 1) a commitment to sustainability, 2) the ability to develop, articulate, and execute a long-range plan, and 3) the foresight to engage the community in their plans. Because of the critical nature of competent leadership, contingencies for unstable leadership should be incorporated into the sustainability plan. These contingencies may mean a more collaborative approach to leadership and ownership should be taken.

Effective Collaboration

Networks of organizations in a community become critical elements in program sustainability and success. Program developers that expect to sustain their programs should recognize that a partnership must be active rather than passive; must be about supportive behaviors rather than only about supportive sentiments. Partnerships should be pursued when organizations have the potential to more effectively address community issues together rather than separately. The role of partners and collaborators in sustainability is most evident with regard to the resources they bring to the program and the breadth and depth of their involvement. Furthermore, over time partnerships may provide a permanent or longstanding home for a program and all collaboration should be initiated with this potential in mind.

Understanding the Community

Elements of connections with the community are especially important for sustainability. Programmers often overlook knowledge of community assets in their attempts to assess community needs. Such an oversight reflects an inadequate understanding of the community that is being served by the program and should be avoided. Furthermore, program success will be augmented when program professionals and program funders are careful about involving the community, including adult participants or parents of youth participants, in programming efforts. Involving the community in the program early on is a good means to assess the receptivity of community members, community organizations, and local politicians prior to program inception. Strategic public relations and marketing campaigns to the public will continue to promote program success thereby further increasing community buy-in.

Demonstrating Program Impact

Another dimension of connecting the program with the community it serves pertains to evaluation and the marketing of those evaluation results. Program monitoring and evaluation data are useful in serving the needs of the program with regard to indexing success but also in terms of enlisting future support for a program. These program successes need to be documented through outcome based evaluation, therefore; when creating program budgets, program planners should specify monies dedicated to evaluation. Furthermore, the success of a program is largely determined by its match within the community. In this regard, continuous assessment of community needs and assets become very important, as does the process of monitoring program implementation. Finally, programs that do not inform stakeholder groups, whether they are

community members or funders, are undermining their own success. Individuals and groups with vested interests in a program and its programs not only want to know if there is current success but also are willing to contribute to future success, therefore; these successes should be marketed to the community and to funders.

Strategic Funding

Sustained, adequate funding is a primary element in sustainability. It is apparent that successfully sustaining a program requires that the search for additional funding is an ongoing activity. Since many programs do not have the luxury of dedicating a great deal of staff time to securing funding, arranging a mechanism whereby another person or organization is responsible for obtaining funds will prevent staff time from being diverted from program implementation.

Staff Involvement and Integration

The selection of staff is one of the key components of sustainability. A primary obstacle to program success revolves around having staff that are not well trained or educated or that are poorly matched with the program. To address the issue of insufficient qualified staff, staff training should be an ongoing component of a program. To address poor matches between staff and program needs, program developers should continuously assess program needs and hire and retain staff that are well matched with those needs.

Program Responsiveness

For various reasons, some programs appear to be more flexible with regard to their program development and implementation. This may have to do with leadership or with constraints imposed by a funder. Highly sustained programs develop new programs in response to changes in the community and respond accordingly to redundancy, gaps, and duplication of services. Rather than being content with their original plan, regardless of what is happening in the community, these programs create new programming approaches to match needs and interests in a manner that is both timely and relevant with what is transpiring in the community. Programs that are more likely to be sustained have a system in place, whether formal or informal, for assessing and then responding to changes in the community.

The Role of an Established Organization

Although Cooperative Extension's involvement in the State Strengthening programs was a unique asset, it does contain a lesson for community-based programs in general: the support of an established organization may be critical for early program vitality and subsequent sustainability. Organizational characteristics that promote the sustainability of a community-based program include:

- Involvement in the program from its inception,
- Commitment to addressing community issues,
- Involvement in program implementation and evaluation,
- A sense of responsibility toward sustaining programs that demonstrate positive impacts, and
- Openness to integrating a program into the ongoing operations of the organization.

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APPENDIX A: Percent of programs that offer specific youth, parent, and community programs (n = 54)

Youth Programs	
72%	Community Service/ Volunteerism
65%	Life Skills (i.e. decision-making, problem-solving, goal setting, anger management, conflict resolution)
61%	4-H Clubs
61%	Leadership
57%	Healthy Lifestyles (health promotion-aids prevention- drug/alcohol/tobacco prevention, pregnancy prevention)
57%	Nutrition Programs
57%	Mentoring
52%	Character Education
46%	Cultural Awareness
46%	Computer Technology
46%	After School Child Care
44%	Reading and Literacy
44%	Creative Arts
44%	During School Enrichment
37%	Homework Assistance/ Tutoring
35%	Workforce Preparation/ Job Readiness/ Career Exploration
35%	Summer Child Care
33%	Gardening Programs
30%	Sports/Recreation
26%	Cross-age Teaching
26%	Science Literacy
19%	Math Literacy
17%	Before School Child Care
Parent Programs	
69%	Parent Involvement/Volunteer Opportunities
65%	Parent Education Skills
54%	Family Activities
35%	Resource Library
32%	Support Groups
26%	Computer Technology Skills
22%	Workforce Preparation/ Job Readiness
Community Programs	
65%	Coalition Building
61%	Determining Community Needs/Resources
50%	Special events/Fairs
50%	Community Development
35%	Adult Training
33%	Resource and Referrals

APPENDIX B: Usefulness of CYFAR and CYFERNet Resources for Sustaining State Strengthening Programs (n=55)

CYFAR Resource	Percent
State Strengthening Program Director	78%
Annual CYFAR Conference	76%
Receiving a computer from the original grant	73%
State Strengthening Technology Contact	46%
State Strengthening Evaluator	44%
CYAR Liaisons	42%
Other national CYFAR trainings	16%
Satellite Trainings	4%
Belonging to a National Outcome Work Group	0%

CYFERNet Web Resource	Percent
Parent/Family Information	76%
Youth Information	71%
Child Information	55%
Community Information	42%
Evaluation Information	40%
Technology information	40%
Program Profiles	24%
Program Support	22%
"What's New"	13%
Professionals Database	11%

CYFAR Developed Resources	Percent
Evaluation Guide	46%
Sustainability Research Reports	24%
Connectivity Research Reports	20%
Organizational Change surveys and reports	16%