Understanding the Challenges to Extension's Urban Programming to Increase Impacts

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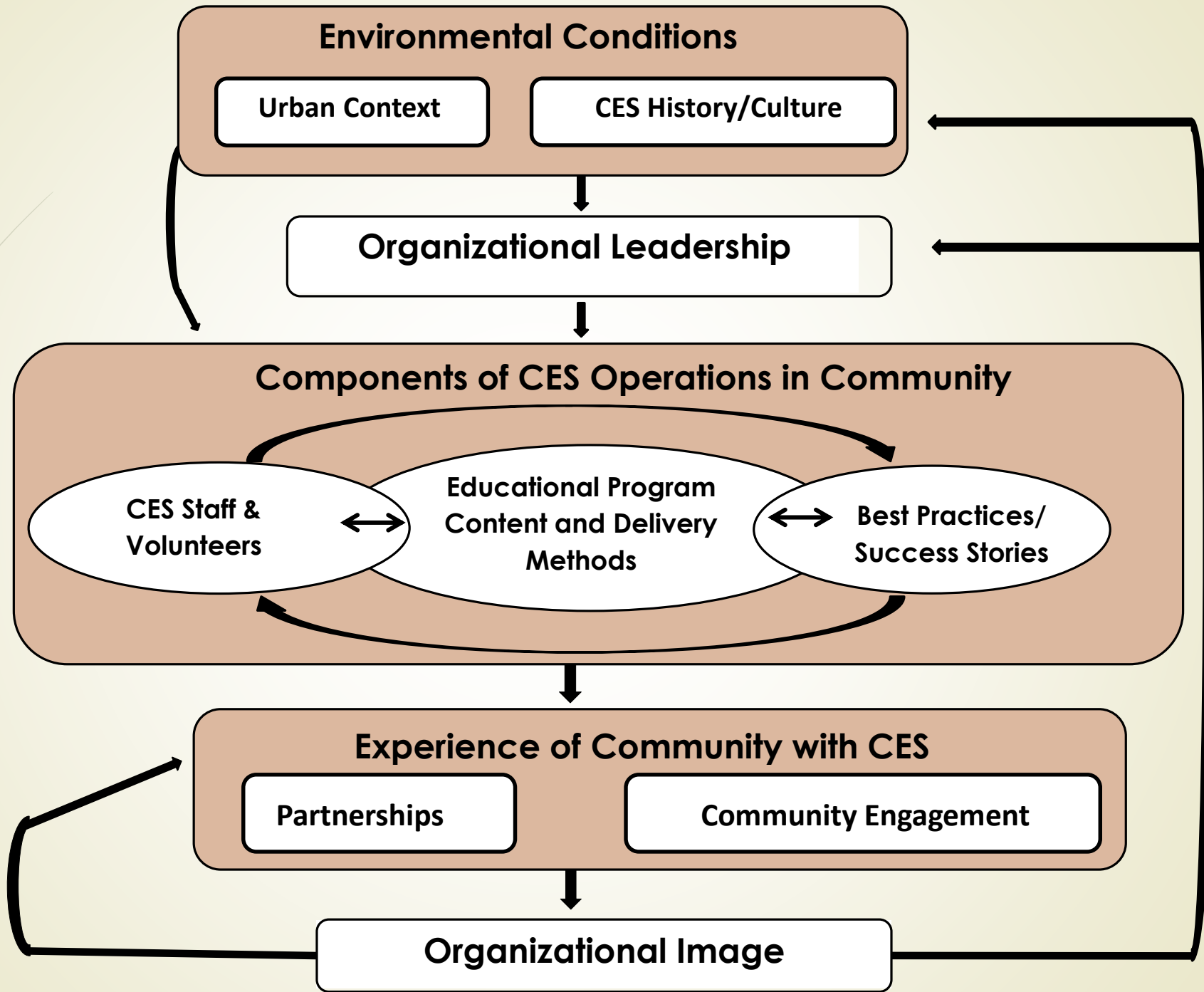
School of Planning, Design & Construction

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What are the factors that influence Extension's ability to deliver educational programs and services in urban/metro settings?

- Three stages of data collection
  - Stage one – reviewed content of 17 documents from 10 states outlining urban plans
  - Stage two – interviewed 16 high level Extension administrators
  - Stage three – surveyed staff in 14 states, 17 LGUs (n=955)
  - Data gathered from 31 states

Environmental Conditions

Urban Context	CES History/Culture

Organizational Leadership

Components of CES Operations in Community

CES Staff & Volunteers	↔	Educational Program Content and Delivery Methods	↔	Best Practices/ Success Stories

Experience of Community with CES

Partnerships	Community Engagement

Organizational Image

Environment

- Urban context is different than rural - size, scale, diversity, political complexities

- Issues may look the same, but have different causations

- CES does not have as much experience working with, approach with rural/ag lens

- Historic funding & LGU placement primarily ag/rural

- Traditional funders/advocates see it as either or

Extension Leadership

- Need visionary leadership, understands & supports urban & risk taking - need "urban" champions

- Share vision across organization, broadly across org, LGU, external funders, partners

- Supportive of adjusting current resources, funding, procedures, policies & willing to aggressively seek to expand the funding "pie"

- Welcoming and supportive environment for staff working in urban/metro

Staffing & Volunteers

- Adjust staffing positions, job descriptions & pattern to meet urban needs

- Recruit people with appropriate urban competencies/ experiences, look for them in non-traditional places

- Need special/specific professional development

- Utilize more volunteers to expand staffing

- Look at adjusting curriculum and delivery methods for volunteers

Program Content & Delivery

- Content must be relevant, issue-based & impact oriented, research based & unbiased, learner identified & learner driven

- Delivery modes need to range from "wholesale" to "retail"

- Need to use technology to be accessible 24/7 to large numbers of people & to manage relationships

- Need to use creative/innovative 21st Century promotion strategies to attract range of audiences

Best Practices/ Success Stories

- **Must identify and implement Best Practices to move CES beyond piloting**

- **Identify principles/practices behind urban/ metro successes and share them across national system**

- **Must have broad replication ability, nationally, globally**

Partnerships

- Need broad urban networks/ connections/partnerships

- Staff need to be able to do rapid community assessments to identify the "right" partners and the "right" tables

- Need to complement, not compete, with other urban serving organizations

- Must figure out how to measure and communicate collective impact and importance of work

Community Engagement

- Need to get to know urban audiences as well as rural/ag

- Relationships need to be built on trust, honesty & mutual respect

- Need broad relevant LGU expertise

- Extension and LGU to be seen as one entity

Community Image

- Urban audiences do not know/have history with Extension

- Need comprehensive urban focused marketing plan

- With define Extension's unique urban "niche"

- Must learn to talk and effectively communicate to urban residents

Conclusions

- Barriers/challenges identified might be in exactly the same places that staff working in rural or agricultural settings would identify them

- HOWEVER THE STUDY SHOWED A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY THE LITERATURE, INTERVIEWEES AND SURVEY PARTICIPANTS RESPONDED OR REACTED TO THEM

The **DIFFERENCE** was the way that Cooperative Extension Service system **acknowledges**, **addresses**, and **provides or does not provide solutions** to the barriers/challenges identified.

The "DIFFERENCE"

- **Described phenomenon in different ways**
  - **Need to deal with inertia of system in order to change**
  - **Need for disruptive innovation, change or leadership**
  - **Uncertainty about how to address barriers/ challenges**
  - **Need to understand "Why" Extension should be working in or "How" to work in urban/metro**

Questions?

- What resonated most to you?

START HERE

- Recognize that just because the areas where barriers/challenges occur might be the same as in rural/ag underlying causes in urban/ metro often different – NEED DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

- Been "piloting" urban work for over 60 years, some of it works

- Identify, collect and disseminate a set of urban "Best Practices" around areas identified in ecology map

- Cultivate internal & external "Visionary Leadership"

- Look at ways to do more urban work with current resources & aggressively seek new resources, cannot rely primarily on soft grants and contracts

- Work to address barriers/challenges identified around Extension's community operations

- Make effective use of technology to reach more people

- Identify Extension's unique urban/metro "niche" and aggressively market to build positive/strong brand identity

Best Practices

➤ **Are you aware of any good examples of where Extension is successfully addressing one, or more, of the factors identified in the study that could be used as "Best Practices" or case study?**

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Community Image/Marketing

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