

## **A Global Perspective of Extension: Trends and Issues**

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### **Introduction**

The evolution of Extension as an instrument of development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and future possibilities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a provocative topic for debate among policy makers, administrators, academics, researchers, and practitioners. Given that Extension is a worldwide institution, with differences in the way Extension systems around the world are philosophically grounded, financed, organized, planned, delivered, and evaluated, and yet have common threads and face similar issues implies interesting possibilities for such a debate.

### **Purpose**

The purpose is to present an overview of the significant trends and discuss the emerging issues in Extension from a worldwide perspective.

### **Method**

The information has been gathered from secondary sources, both published and unpublished, and will be a review of extant literature on the subject.

### **Major Points**

Significant organizing trends to be presented include public sector extension, private sector extension, NGO sector extension, sector combinations, emerging systems in Eastern and Central Europe, and paradigms for the future. Ways in which extension is financed, how extension programs are developed, differences in perspectives of the functions of extension as a system, and emerging roles will also be presented.

Some of the emerging issues facing extension to be discussed include the appearance of a new “extension vocabulary”, the roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors in meeting individual needs and/or the public good, program and financial accountability, and relevance and sustainability, indeed in some instances, survivability of the extension system.

### **Conclusions**

There are both similarities and differences in the way extension systems are organized and operate around the world. While there is likely a basic underlying philosophical tenet of education and change directed to development and improving the lives of citizens, country systems are products of their specific traditions and cultures, and have to be recognized and understood in those contexts.

A number of common critical issues face extension systems around the world. These have to be addressed by countries in their own specific situations. There is no panacea. However, experiences and lessons learned need to be shared.

### **Educational Importance**

The sharing of a worldwide perspective of trends and issues in extension will contribute to the literature and should enhance understanding of this topic among conference participants and the profession.