

**FAMILY ISSUE  
COMMUNITY GROUPS**

***Characteristics and Outcomes***

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# FAMILY ISSUE COMMUNITY GROUPS

## Characteristics and Outcomes

### Acknowledgments

In the mid nineties, a theme group within the UW-Extension-Cooperative Extension Family Living Programs initiated a process to evaluate its work with community groups across the state. Considerable time and effort was given to investigating procedures for capturing the process and outcomes of community groups. Two instruments were designed, pilot tested and implemented along with a variety of support and instructional materials. Mary Gruenewald and Ann McLean co-chaired the theme group that included Linda Boelter, Sue Futterer, Karen Hintz, Mary Fran Lepeska, Peggy Nordgren and Pat Rychter. Many other Family Living Educators and Nutrition Program Coordinators participated by engaging their community groups in this evaluation process and used the resulting data to help improve group performance. The full list of counties that participated in this study may be found in Appendix B. Special thanks goes to Marcus Renner, Carol Hermann and Weiwu Zhang for their contributions to data analysis and preliminary report preparation.

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This is the final report in a series of publications related to community group work and collaboration. The other documents include:

***Extension Role in Community Groups***, available at  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/Evaluation/estudies.htm>

***Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential***, available at  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/Evaluation/evaluat.html>

***Community Group Member Survey: Using the Results***, available at  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/Evaluation/evaluat.html>

# FAMILY ISSUE COMMUNITY GROUPS: Characteristics and Outcomes

## INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen people and agencies come together in new ways to problem-solve community issues. To focus on the educational needs of these community-based initiatives, Family Living educators at the University of Wisconsin–Extension Cooperative Extension established a theme group entitled Parent Support and Community Partnerships. As part of their work, they designed an evaluation process that provided data for Extension reporting as well as empower community groups to engage in evaluation for self-learning to improve group functioning and accountability. The following report describes the findings of a survey that was completed by community groups across the state. Individual groups used their results for group learning and local reporting with the guidance of the manual, *Community Group Member Survey: Using the Results (1999)*. A related survey was conducted that provided information on the particular role and contributions Extension educators make to community groups. The results of that study were reported previously in *Extension Role in Community Groups (2000)*.

## METHODS

Based on a review of the published research and personal experience working in community groups addressing family issues, the evaluation team designed a survey for community group members. The purpose of the survey was (1) to provide data for statewide reporting and (2) to provide information that groups could use for internal improvement and local accountability.

After pilot testing, the questionnaire was distributed to all Family Living educators, Family Nutrition Program coordinators and Family Living specialists – anyone who was involved with community groups. They were asked to use the survey with one to four community groups within a 15-month period. Background information and instructions were provided about the purpose and process of the survey and ways to use the survey annually to monitor progress, provide longitudinal data over time or as a capacity building tool.

The questionnaire was to be completed only by “active” group members – members who regularly came to meetings and were well informed about the work of the group.

Three central questions formed the basis of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for questionnaire):

1. What are these community groups like—what is their focus, who is represented in their membership, how long have they been in existence, what are they working on, what level of collaboration do they exhibit? (descriptive information)
2. How well are they functioning? (process information)
3. What outcomes are they achieving—for group members and for the community in general? (outcomes information)

A total of 554 respondents from 44 community groups in 36 counties participated in this evaluation (Figure 1).

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Most frequently, the Extension educator who was a member of the group distributed the questionnaire at a group meeting. Group members completed the questionnaire at that time or they filled it out at home and returned the questionnaire to the Extension educator at a later date. Then the completed questionnaires were mailed to the state office for data processing and analysis.

Available data for 22 of the 36 participating counties showed an average response rate of 77 percent. Groups in five counties returned surveys at 100 percent and one county returned at 36 percent. For a list of the participating counties and response rate see Appendix B.

**Figure 1. Responding Wisconsin counties.**



The survey collected information from group members about the nature of the group, membership and activities, participation in the group and perceptions of the group's effect on members and the community. We used the information obtained to examine results at the group level (n=44) and/or the individual member level (n=554). This survey was conducted during the time when many Wisconsin communities had received funding through Family Preservation and Support to engage in collaborative groups to address children and family issues.

## Description of Community Groups – What are these community groups like?

Part of our research interest was to better understand the nature of community groups serving families in Wisconsin. We included a number of questions that would help us describe these groups and that would provide information for exploring relationships about group effectiveness and outcomes as discussed in the empirical research.

**Group age.** Three groups in this sample traced their beginnings back ten years. Four groups had been together less than a year. The majority of these groups (37) had been together from one to three years at the time of the survey.

**Sector representation.** The sector diversity of group membership is a factor that has been linked to group outcomes. Kegler (1995), for example, found that the number of sectors represented affects the number of activities completed and resource mobilization.

In this sample, groups included representation from at least two to 14 community sectors (Table 1). Because not every member of every group responded to the survey, groups may have consisted of an even broader range of community sectors than is demonstrated here. One group contained members of 14 different sectors possible. The majority (55%) of the groups in the survey had members that represented two to six sectors.

**Table 1: Number of sectors represented in groups**

Sectors represented	# groups	% groups
14	1	2
12	1	2
11	3	7
10	2	5
9	4	9
8	4	9
7	4	9
6	7	16
5	4	9
4	9	20
2	5	11

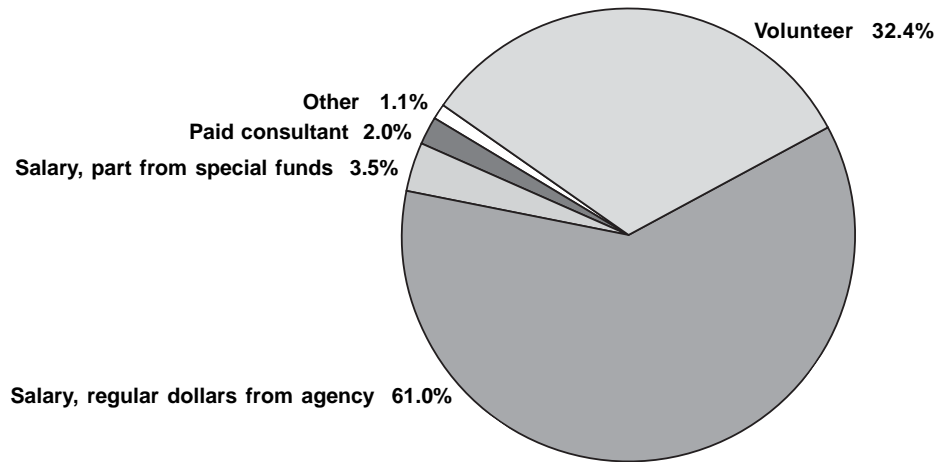
Table 2 lists the 20 possible sectors that respondents were asked to select from regarding who they *primarily* represented as a member of the group. The largest number of participants in this survey (51%) represented the health/medical, public or private, non-profit social service and pre-school sector. From 50 to 77 percent of the groups had respondents representing those sectors and also Extension. Few groups had respondents representing tribal services, for-profit social services, the justice system or higher education. As we look at sector representation in these community groups, it is important to remember that this survey does not represent all community groups serving families in Wisconsin. Extension educators initiated the survey so the reported groups are ones in which Extension was playing a role.

**Group member status.** A majority of the respondents were paid agency staff members (Figure 2). Sixty-four percent of respondents were salaried – 61 percent were paid with regular salary dollars from their agency/organization/business and 3 percent were paid with salary that came from special or additional funds. Volunteers made up 32 percent of those who responded.

**Table 2: Sector diversity within community groups (n = 44)**

Sector represented	Groups		Respondents	
	#	%	#	%
Health/medical	34	77	80	15
Public social services	34	77	71	13
Private, non-profit social services	30	68	78	14
Extension	23	52	34	6
Pre-school	22	50	60	11
Day care/child care/Head Start	15	34	25	5
Concerned citizen	15	34	19	4
Mental health	14	32	28	5
Youth	13	30	18	3
Senior citizen	12	27	17	3
Religious organization	12	27	14	3
Business	11	25	20	4
Elected official	11	25	17	3
Parent	11	25	23	4
Law enforcement	10	23	12	2
Higher education	8	18	10	2
Justice system	6	14	6	1
Tribal social services	2	5	3	1
Private, for-profit	2	5	3	1
Other	2	5	3	1

**Figure 2: Paid or volunteer status of respondent (n=544)**



Three of the 44 groups in the study had no respondents who were volunteers; all respondents for these three groups were paid staff members.

**Length of participation in community group.** For the responding members there was a considerable range in the amount of time people had been working in these community groups. The highest percentage (82 %) had been involved in their community groups for less than three years; this is consistent with the majority of groups being in existence for one to three years. Of this 82 percent, 25 percent

had been involved for 12 months or less. Nine percent had been involved for three to four years and 9 percent had been involved for more than four years.

**Type of group.** Community groups work together in a variety of ways. Different relationships are more or less effective depending upon the purpose of the group. Collaboration, the most complex form of group work, is espoused as the strategy for achieving broad community goals as it represents increased synergy, participation and ownership. Using standard definitions as found in the published literature, we asked members to select one choice that best described their group. These definitions denote a continuum from network, to partnership to coalition to collaborative:

- a. Members interact primarily for the purpose of exchanging information and communication.
- b. Members provide helpful resources to support each other's interests and goals; there is some joint planning and activity but resources are separate.
- c. Members work together on goals that are complementary; there is coordination and some sharing of resources.
- d. Members share (or are working toward) a common vision that links diverse interests; actions are jointly created and resources, authority and decision-making are controlled in the collaborative group.

Of the total respondents, 58 percent chose (d.), defining their group as a collaborative. Twenty-three percent defined their group as a coalition (c.). Twelve percent and 7 percent described their group as a partnership (b.) and a network (a.), respectively. When the responses of individuals from the same group were compared, group members were more likely to disagree than to agree on their group's structure. In only four cases (11%) was there unanimous agreement. In 11 cases (40%), each of the possible descriptions was selected by at least one respondent. In 13 groups (30%), two of the possible descriptions were selected and in 16 groups (36%), three of the possible descriptions were selected. We were also interested if a majority of members within a group identified their group with the same description. In 25 of the 44 groups, a majority (defined to be greater than 50%) agreed on the structure of their group. In two of the 25 groups, the majority described its group as a coalition. In the remaining 23 groups, the majority of member respondents described its group as a collaborative.

## **Processes of Community Groups – How do these community groups function?**

For our purposes, we included questions that asked about member roles and levels of involvement, time spent in group work and group functioning.

**Member participation.** To function successfully, community groups need people who serve in a variety of roles. Typical roles are listed in Table 3, as are the results for these respondents.

Paid staff members were more likely to direct the implementation of a particular program ( $t = 3.59, p = .000$ ) or chair/co-chair the entire group ( $t = 2.65, p = .008$ ) than were volunteer members of groups. For all other roles, paid staff members and volunteers participated in them equally.

Two percent of respondents indicated that they did not play any of the roles described (Table 4). Eighty-five percent of respondents played three or more roles within their community group, with 58 percent of respondents playing five or more roles in their group.

**Table 3: Roles respondents played in their community group in the 12 months prior to the survey (n = 523)**

Role	% respondents
Attend meetings regularly	88
Talk at meetings (make comments, express ideas, etc.)	94
Serve as a member of a committee	76
Work for the group outside of meetings	75
Help organize activities (other than meetings)	55
Direct the implementation of a particular program	45
Chair/lead a committee or sub-group	34
Serve as an officer other than chair (e.g. treasurer, secretary)	10
Chair/co-chair the entire group	15

**Table 4: Number of roles participated in (n = 497)**

Number of Roles	Respondents	
	#	%
0	12	2
1	21	4
2	44	9
3	63	13
4	70	14
5	80	16
6	76	15
7	70	14
8	43	9
9	18	4

**Time spent in community group work.** Concern within professional agencies about the amount of time spent in community group work and the increasing numbers of community groups to be engaged in resulted in a question that asked members to estimate the number of hours they spent in an *average month* over the 12 months preceding the survey on nine different activities. Recognizing the potential for error in reporting retrospective time data, we found that on average, paid staff spent more than 14 hours each month and volunteer staff spent nearly 10 hours each month on work related to their involvement in the group. Attending meetings required the most time, followed by subcommittee work and group-sponsored activities outside of meetings.

Paid staff group members spent significantly more time than did volunteer group members in the following activities: preparing for meetings or activities; administration and paperwork; group-sponsored activities outside of meetings; fundraising including grant-writing and facilitating group processes (Table 5).

**Group Functioning.** What a community group accomplishes can depend on how well the group functions. We included 26 different items to measure group functioning. Members were asked to rate the effectiveness of their group on each item from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

We clustered the 26 items into five separate dimensions, all of which had a

**Table 5: Hours spent in average month in last 12 months**

Activity	Paid n = 366	Volunteer n = 171	p Value
Regular group meetings	3.64	3.87	ns
Subcommittee work outside of meetings	2.07	1.78	ns
Networking and communicating outside of meetings	1.24	0.79	ns
Preparation for meetings or activities	1.49	0.97	.029
Administration, paperwork	1.59	0.40	.003
Group-sponsored activities outside of meetings	2.20	1.12	.001
Fund raising, including grant writing	0.59	0.20	.001
Facilitating group process	0.47	0.13	.009
Teaching subject matter	0.72	0.39	ns
Other	0.42	0.08	ns
Total	14.42	9.72	

ns = not significant, p < .05

reliability measure of greater than .80: (1) connecting with other interested people and groups; (2) planning and executing the mission and working of the group; (3) processing and facilitating the group dynamic and discussions; (4) focusing on developing members and (5) evaluating progress of the group's work. We then examined the overall means for each of the dimensions (Table 6). From these results we see that

- Groups were most effective at connecting people and parties interested in the group's work.
- Planning and executing the work of the group as well as facilitating group process also received high scores.
- Evaluating progress was a group function that was seen as more than moderately effective.
- Being member-focused received the lowest overall score of the five different dimensions. Orienting new members received the lowest item score overall.

**Member satisfaction.** The extent to which members feel valued, accepted and comfortable in the group is associated with their participation, commitment and ultimately group outcomes. Satisfaction with the group was measured with an average of the following items: "My viewpoint is heard," "I am viewed as a valued member," "I feel comfortable in the collaborative group" and "I am satisfied with the collaborative group's progress" in which respondents could indicate a value of 1 through 5, where 1 = "infrequently" and 5 = "all the time." This index has a reliability measure of .87.

Satisfaction was positively correlated with serving in more roles within the group within the 12 months prior to the survey ( $r = .31, p = .000$ ). Satisfaction was also positively correlated ( $p < .05$ ) with each of the types of roles served, with a maximum correlation of  $r = .34$  for "talking at meetings" and a minimum correlation of  $r = .11$  for serving as an officer.

There was no significant difference in level of satisfaction between paid and volunteer community group members.

**Table 6: Functioning of group****Connecting (n = 484)**

Bringing together parties with interest in the issue	4.1
Making inter-organizational linkages	4.1
Communicating with external constituencies	3.8
Gaining support from other organizations	3.7

**overall mean\* 3.9****Planning & executing (n = 476)**

Providing effective leadership	4.0
Conducting meetings that accomplish what is necessary	3.9
Carrying out planned actions	3.9
Doing effective planning (assess needs/assets, set goals, develop plan)	3.8
Building clear mission (members know where collaborative group is headed)	3.7
Developing group operating procedures (setting up subcommittees, rules, structures)	3.7
Securing adequate resources so group can do its work	3.7
Developing capacity to sustain efforts	3.5

**overall mean\* 3.8****Processing & facilitating (n = 443)**

Creating mutual respect, understanding and trust within the collaborative group	4.0
Making decisions accepted by all parties	3.9
Communicating the interests and views of all parties	3.8
Facilitating compromise when needed to further progress	3.8
Resolving conflict within collaborative group	3.7
Listening to minority views	3.4

**overall mean\* 3.8****Evaluating progress (n = 502)**

Communicating progress and achievement	3.8
Reviewing, reflecting and evaluating to assure progress and results	3.6
Celebrating progress	3.5

**overall mean\* 3.6****Focusing on members (n = 387)**

Identifying and using members' resources	3.8
Involving volunteers	3.2
Providing for training of members as appropriate	3.2
Retiring and adding new members	3.1
Orienting new members	2.9

**overall mean\* 3.3**

\*overall mean: calculate as 1 = low, 3 = moderate, 5 = high

Each of the four items that make up the member satisfaction index is positively correlated with each dimension of group functioning – connecting; planning and executing; processing and facilitating; focusing on developing members and evaluating (all at  $p = .000$ ). Correlations range in magnitude from .38 to .70.

## Outcomes of Community Groups: What outcomes are groups achieving?

We hypothesized that individuals working in community groups personally gain from their involvement through an increase in knowledge, beliefs and skills. These gains potentially grow into social capital that sustains community building. Additionally, community groups are expected to achieve any number of results that affect individuals, families, agencies and the community in general.

**Outcomes for individual group members.** The survey included 17 items to measure individual-level outcomes including such items as “understanding of community needs and assets,” “ability to conduct a needs/asset assessment,” “ability to help a group achieve its goal,” “skills to influence local policy,” etc. Each item used a 5-point scale from 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact) with options for the respondent to record “uncertain” and “not appropriate.”

Using exploratory factor analysis, we created three main outcome groupings related to (1) understanding, (2) group process and (3) abilities and skills. Each dimension had a reliability measure of .87 or greater.

As seen in Table 7, respondents reported the greatest gains overall in understanding and the lowest gains in task-focused abilities and skills. For particular items, individuals felt that their participation in the group had the greatest impact on them in the area of understanding of community needs and assets and the sense that together group members can make a difference. The lowest impact on individual members was reported as the ability to write grants and/or generate resources.

**Table 7: Impact on individuals**

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### Understanding (n = 542)

My understanding of community needs and assets	4.1
My sense that together we can make a difference	4.1
My knowledge of resources available in the community	4.0
My understanding of others' perspectives	4.0
My knowledge of ways to respond to community issues	3.7
	<b>overall mean* 4.0</b>

### Group processes (n = 510)

My ability to work with others	3.8
My understanding of group processes	3.6
My ability to help group achieve its goals	3.5
My ability to communicate effectively in a group	3.4
My ability to help resolve group conflict	3.1
	<b>overall mean* 3.5</b>

### Abilities and skills (n = 412)

My ability to help solve community problems	3.5
My ability to conduct a needs/asset assessment	3.3
My leadership ability	3.3
My ability to design and implement action plans	3.2
My ability to evaluate progress and results	3.2
My skills to influence local policies	3.1
My ability to write grants and/or generate resources	2.6
	<b>overall mean* 3.2</b>

\*overall mean: calculate as 1 = low, 3 = moderate, 5 = high

Those who were members of groups whose members varied more on what type of group they belong to were more likely to indicate less growth in the area of individual abilities and skills outcomes ( $r = -.13$ ,  $p = .010$ ) than those who were members of groups that tended to give less varied answers regarding their group's structure. There were no significant differences in the areas of understanding and group processes.

The more effective a respondent thought his or her group was in the five group functioning areas mentioned previously (Table 6), the more likely he or she was to report individual-level gains in the areas of understanding, group processes and abilities and skills. This was true of every relationship examined ( $p = .000$  for all).

**Outcomes for the community.** The ultimate goal of community group work is positive improvements in community welfare. This may involve outcomes for individual community residents, families, agencies, and/or the community as a whole. Based on the empirical research and our own experiences working in community groups focused on family issues, we included 43 items grouped into seven categories to cover the full range of expected community outcomes. Given the developmental nature of community groups and the fact that no two are alike, we sought to create as comprehensive a measure as possible so that all respondents could find outcomes their groups were addressing.

Table 8 lists these 43 items and the reported frequencies for each stage of each outcome along a nominal scale from "not likely" (to be accomplished), "plan to work on," "working on," "has been done" and "doesn't apply."

Few respondents reported that their groups were likely to become incorporated. Public policy outcomes were also frequently reported as "not likely" to be accomplished. It is unclear whether this is due to the purpose and scope of these groups or the difficulty inherent in affecting policy outcomes.

The two most frequently reported achievements were "grants written" and "new/improves networks and relationships built among groups, agencies, and businesses." Other frequently reported outcome achievements included the following (reported by 40% or more of the respondents):

- People are optimistic – there is a feeling that together we can make a difference
- Skills and knowledge of individuals increased
- New services created
- Organizations working together more effectively
- People working collectively on community issues
- Planning has led to better targeting of services and programs
- Planning results are shared

The greatest activity was reported in terms of "working on" outcomes, indicating that progress was underway. This may be symptomatic of the developmental nature of community group work and/or the age and stage of these groups.

Significant, positive correlations were found to exist between many of the individual and community outcomes (Table 9). All seven of the community outcome dimensions were significantly and positively correlated with the individual level outcome of increased understanding. This may indicate that the items comprising understanding (refer to Table 7) are particularly important in order to achieve community level outcomes. The strongest correlations existed between understanding and

**Table 8: Level of completion of community-level outcomes**

	% not likely	% plan to work on	% working on	% has been done
<b>Involvement of People</b>				
People are now working together on this community issue	1	5	67	27
More residents are actively involved in this issue	7	21	55	17
Different, "new faces," are involved	7	21	47	26
New group(s) have formed to address the need/issue	13	13	40	34
All key stakeholders and interests are represented	7	18	53	23
Consumers/clients/beneficiaries are involved	9	24	44	23
Community-wide awareness of the issue has increased	4	13	56	27
There is greater public support for the issue	5	16	58	20
<b>Planning</b>				
Community planning is more systematic and comprehensive	6	12	54	27
Results of community planning are used to determine priorities and allocate resources	6	13	45	37
Planning results are shared among community groups	3	12	44	40
Planning has led to better targeting of services and programs	3	12	44	41
<b>Capacities</b>				
Individuals' knowledge and skills have been increased	2	5	48	45
People are better equipped to work collectively on community issues	2	7	50	41
Individuals have developed skills transferable to other situations	3	9	51	37
People are optimistic – there is the feeling that together we can make a difference	3	7	42	48
Our community group has become incorporated	45	13	26	17
New/improved networks and relationships have been built among groups, agencies and businesses	2	7	41	50
Organizations are working together more effectively on community issues	3	8	46	44
<b>Resources (time, money, materials, staff, space, etc.)</b>				
Resources are shared among groups/ organizations	6	11	44	39
Existing resources have been realigned or modified	9	15	52	24
Grants have been written	4	15	23	59
There is increased funding/grants in the community	9	22	34	35
We are able to influence budget/funding decisions	12	19	43	25
<b>Services and/or Programs</b>				
Services/programs have improved	2	10	52	35
New services have been created	4	11	40	45
Service delivery system has been redesigned	11	21	49	19
Service delivery is more efficient	7	19	55	19
Services/programs are more affordable	12	20	51	17
Services/programs are more available	4	15	54	27
Accessibility to services and programs has improved	4	13	59	25
Underserved groups have increased their use of services	5	23	55	17
There is less duplication	6	16	57	22
<b>Public Policy</b>				
Policies, rules or laws have been evaluated	17	27	37	20
Policies, rules or laws have been changed	24	30	35	11
New policies, rules or laws have been implemented	23	31	34	11
<b>Conditions in Our Community</b>				
People are better off in our community	4	12	66	18
There is an increased understanding of community needs	2	5	54	38
People share a common direction for our community	6	8	65	20
People have an increased sense of community	5	11	63	20
There is increased local responsibility for community concerns	5	13	61	21
People have been encouraged to have a voice and use it	5	9	58	28
The need that gave rise to our group has been resolved	24	10	59	7

**Table 9: Individual-level relationship between community-level outcomes**

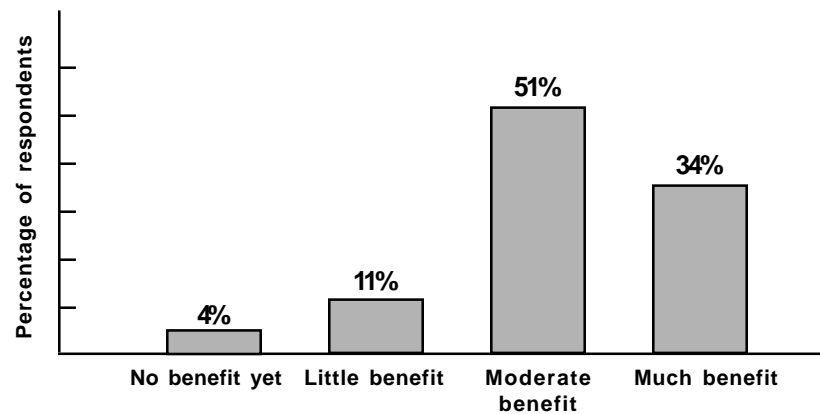
Individual-Level Outcomes	Community-Level Outcomes						
	Involvement of People	Planning	Capacities	Resources	Services & Programs	Public Policy	Community Conditions
Understanding n =	.31* 404	.23* 451	.39* 305	.19* 372	.20* 304	.14* 335	.23* 407
Group Processes n =	.17* 384	.12* 431	.28* 301	.08 356	.07 287	.02 391	.13* 391
Abilities & Skills n =	.25* 316	.26* 351	.36* 254	.16* 298	.18* 242	.00 269	.15* 331

\* = p < .05

capacities and understanding and involvement of people. Individual outcomes in terms of improvements in various abilities and skills were significantly, positively correlated with six of the seven community outcomes, the strongest relationships being between individual abilities and skills outcomes and community capacities and planning outcomes. Individual outcomes in terms of improved group process abilities were significantly, positively correlated with four of the seven community outcomes. While not conclusive, these findings do suggest the importance and relationship of individual outcomes for achieving community outcomes.

**Perceived benefit to the community.** About 85 percent of the group members participating in this survey reported that their groups were having a moderate to high level of community benefit (Figure 3). Four percent reported “no benefit yet.”

**Figure 3. Perceptions of group benefit to community (n=523 members).**



### Summary and Conclusion

Members of 44 community groups in 36 Wisconsin counties responded to this survey. In all, 554 respondents contributed to the description of groups working on family issues in the state.

The majority of these groups had existed from one to three years and had representation from two to 14 community sectors. Almost two-thirds of the respondents were paid agency staff members; volunteers made up 32 percent of those

who responded. Paid members were more likely to chair or co-chair the group and direct implementation of particular activities. By and large, these groups could be described as “professional groups” in contrast to grassroots, voluntary community groups.

Fifty-eight percent of the responding group members described their groups as collaboratives, where members share a common vision, jointly create action and share authority, decision making and resources. Another 23 percent described their groups as coalitions, the next highest level of integrated relationship. Overall, these findings suggest that respondents perceive that these community groups are working at fairly high levels of coordination and integration.

Respondents indicated that they play a variety of roles, often simultaneously, in order to sustain a community group. A positive correlation was found to exist between number of roles played and satisfaction with group performance. In other words, the more roles respondents played in the community, the more satisfied they were with the groups performance. Paid staff members were more likely than were volunteers to contribute more time and carry out specialized roles such as fund raising, group administration and facilitation. Paid staff spent more than 14 hours per month and volunteer members spent nearly 10 hours each month on work related to their involvement in the group. These findings attest to the time and capabilities needed for community groups to function.

By and large, respondents reported satisfaction with the functioning of their community groups. Many factors can be considered in “functioning.” Of the 26 items included, all received relatively positive ratings (above the mid point on the 5-point scale) except the item, “orienting new members.” In fact, all aspects dealing with membership – recruitment, orientation, training, retiring members – received the lowest ratings. This clearly is an area for work and improvement since attending to member needs is related to the likelihood of a group being successful in its work.

Respondents reported many positive outcomes as a result of participating in these community groups. The greatest gains were reported in terms of increased understanding of the community including its needs, issues, and resources and the development of the sentiment that “together we can make a difference.” The extent to which this sentiment is related to longer-term community outcomes requires further study. According to the respondents, the ability to write grants and generate additional resources are two areas needing the most help.

Community level outcomes generally take time to occur. Of 43 possible items, respondents to this survey most frequently reported that “grants had been written” and new or improved networks and relationships had been built. Few respondents reported that they were working on or had impacted local policy changes. This is an area that may need continual work and support. Significant, positive correlations were found to exist between many individual outcomes and the community-level outcomes. It is possible that paying attention to the individual member – his/her recruitment and training, knowledge and skill development, understanding and satisfaction with the group – could pay dividends in terms of longer-term community gains.

## **REFERENCES**

Kegler, Michelle Crozier, 1995. "Community Coalition For Tobacco Control: Factors Influencing Implementation." Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Public Health.

## **APPENDIX**

Appendix A      Questionnaire for Community Group Members

Appendix B      Participating Counties and Response Rates

## Appendix A

Code # \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBER SURVEY

#### I. BACKGROUND (Following is completed by Extension Agent)

A. Name of community group: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Date group initiated: \_\_\_\_ (Month) \_\_\_\_ (Year)

C. Primary focus/purpose of community group (Check ONE):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Alcohol, tobacco, other drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> k) Learning disabilities           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Teen pregnancy                | <input type="checkbox"/> l) Run away youth                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c) Housing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> m) Juvenile justice/delinquency    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d) HIV/AIDS                      | <input type="checkbox"/> n) School truancy/drop out         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e) Child abuse and neglect       | <input type="checkbox"/> o) Prevention networks/programs    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f) Day care                      | <input type="checkbox"/> p) Aging                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g) Early childhood education     | <input type="checkbox"/> q) Parenting (or parent education) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> h) Health                        | <input type="checkbox"/> r) Family violence                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> i) Nutrition/hunger              | <input type="checkbox"/> s) Family support                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> j) Eating disorders              | <input type="checkbox"/> t) Other (please name) _____       |

D. Name of program (Check ONE if appropriate):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Youth Futures                   | <input type="checkbox"/> h) Community Health Assessment (APEX) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Teen Assessment Project (TAP)   | <input type="checkbox"/> i) Child Care Coordinators (4 C's)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c) School Age Child Care           | <input type="checkbox"/> j) Choices                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d) Employee Child Care             | <input type="checkbox"/> k) Alliance for a Drug-Free Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e) School Readiness                | <input type="checkbox"/> l) W2                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f) Family Preservation and Support | <input type="checkbox"/> m) Other (please name) _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g) Goals 2000 (DPI)                | <input type="checkbox"/> n) No program name                    |

E. Date survey distributed: \_\_\_\_ (Day) \_\_\_\_ (Month) \_\_\_\_ (Year)

## II. Member Involvement in the Community Group

1. Which of the following *best* describes your community group (check ONE):

- a) Members interact primarily for the purpose of exchanging information and communication.  
 b) Members provide helpful resources to support each others interests and goals; there is some joint planning and activity, but resources are separate.  
 c) Members work together on goals that are complementary; there is coordination and some sharing of resources.  
 d) Members share (or are working toward) a common vision that links diverse interests; actions are jointly created and resources, and authority and decision making are controlled in the group.

2. Who do you *primarily* represent as a member of this group (check ONE):

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a) Business                           | <input type="checkbox"/> h) School, PreK-12   | <input type="checkbox"/> o) Religious organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b) Law enforcement                    | <input type="checkbox"/> i) Higher education  | Social Services Organization:                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c) Justice system                     | <input type="checkbox"/> j) Youth             | <input type="checkbox"/> p) Public                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d) Elected official                   | <input type="checkbox"/> k) Parent            | <input type="checkbox"/> q) Tribal                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e) Health/medical                     | <input type="checkbox"/> l) Concerned citizen | <input type="checkbox"/> r) Private, non-profit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f) Mental health                      | <input type="checkbox"/> m) Senior citizen    | <input type="checkbox"/> s) Private, for profit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g) Day care/child care/<br>Head Start | <input type="checkbox"/> n) Extension         | <input type="checkbox"/> t) Other _____            |

3. How long have you participated in this community group? \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS

4. What kind of roles have you played in the past 12 months *and* before then in the community group? (Circle YES or NO in each column for each item.)

	Past 12 Months			Before Then	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
a) Attend meetings regularly					
b) Talk at meetings (make comments, express ideas, etc.)					
c) Serve as a member of a committee					
d) Work for the community group outside of meetings					
e) Help organize activities (other than meetings)					
f) Direct the implementation of a particular program					
g) Chair/lead a committee or sub-group					
h) Service as an officer other than chair (e.g., treasurer, secretary)					
i) Chair/co-chair the entire group					

5. Which of the following *best* describes your current situation as a participant in this community group (check ONE):

- a) I am a volunteer
- b) I receive a salary, paid with regular salary dollars from my agency.
- c) I receive a salary, part of which comes from special/additional funds designated for the group's work.
- d) I am a paid consultant.
- e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. During the past 12 months about how many hours, *in an average month*, have you given to the community group carrying out the following activities (including face-to-face and phone contacts). Please fill in the number of hours for each activity.

- a) hours for regular community group meetings
- b) hours for subcommittee work outside of meetings
- c) hours for group sponsored activities outside of meetings
- d) hours for preparation for meetings or activities
- e) hours for administration, paperwork
- f) hours for networking and communicating outside of meetings
- g) hours in facilitating group process
- h) hours in teaching subject matter
- i) hours in fund raising, including grant writing
- j) Other activities not mentioned above. Please list \_\_\_\_\_

*End of Part II. Survey continues at top of page 4.*

### III. IMPACT OF GROUP ON MEMBERS

7. Your participation in this community group may have influenced your personal knowledge, beliefs or skills. Please indicate this group's IMPACT ON YOU by rating each item below on a scale from 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact). Circle the number which best describes your position. If you are uncertain about any of these effects, or if it is too early to assess the group's particular impact on you, please circle U. If the item does not apply to your group, and probably never will, circle N/A in the last column.

To what extent did the community group have an IMPACT ON YOU in terms of...

	IMPACT					<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	<u>LOW</u>				<u>HIGH</u>		
a) My understanding of community needs and assets .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
b) My knowledge of resources available in the community.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
c) My sense that together we can make a difference .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
d) My knowledge of ways to respond to community issues .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
e) My ability to conduct a needs/asset assessment .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
f) My ability to design and implement action plans.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
g) My ability to evaluate progress and results .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
h) My ability to write grants and/or generate resources ..	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
i) My understanding of others' perspectives .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
j) My ability to work with others .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
k) My understanding of group processes.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
l) My ability to communicate effectively in a group .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
m) My ability to help resolve group conflict.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
n) My ability to help a group achieve its goals.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
o) My leadership ability .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
p) My skills to influence local policies .....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
q) My ability to help solve community problems.....	1	2	3	4	5	U	N/A
r) Other (please specify)_____							

8. What is the greatest impact that working in this community group has had on YOU as an individual?

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#### IV. GROUP FUNCTIONING

9. What a group accomplishes is often dependent upon how the group functions. Think about the way your group works and how effective you think the group is in the following ways. Please rate each item from 1 [low] to 5 [high] by circling the number which *best* describes your position. Circle U if you are uncertain or can't answer.

<b>Effectiveness of group in</b>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>		
a) Bringing together parties with an interest in the issue .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
b) Listening to minority views .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
c) Creating mutual respect, understanding and trust within the group.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
d) Building a clear mission (members know where the group is headed).....	1	2	3	4	5	U
e) Developing group operating procedures (setting up subcommittees, rules, structures) .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
f) Communicating the interests and views of all parties.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
g) Doing effective planning (assess needs/assets, set goals, develop plan .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
h) Providing effective leadership .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
i) Making inter-organizational linkages .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
j) Conducting meetings that accomplish what is necessary .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
k) Securing adequate resources so group can do its work.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
l) Involving volunteers .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
m) Carrying out planned actions .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
n) Making decisions accepted by all parties.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
o) Facilitating compromise when needed to further progress .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
p) Resolving conflict within group.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
q) Communicating with external constituencies .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
r) Gaining support from other organizations .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
s) Retiring and adding new members .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
t) Orienting new members.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
u) Celebrating progress .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
v) Identifying and using members' resources .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
w) Providing for training of members as appropriate .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
x) Reviewing, reflecting, and evaluating to assure progress and results.....	1	2	3	4	5	U
y) Communicating progress and achievement .....	1	2	3	4	5	U
z) Developing capacity to sustain efforts .....	1	2	3	4	5	U

10. Please indicate your perceptions about the group as follows, using a 5-point scale from “Infrequently” (1) to “All the time” (5). Circle the number which *best* describes your position.

	<u>Infrequently</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>All the Time</u>		
a) My viewpoint is heard .....	1	2	3	4	5
b) I am viewed as a valued member .....	1	2	3	4	5
c.) I feel comfortable in the group.....	1	2	3	4	5
d) I am satisfied with the group’s progress .....	1	2	3	4	5

## V. IMPACT OF GROUP ON OTHERS

11. Listed below are various results that community groups achieve that affect individuals, families, agencies and the community in general. They may or may not be relevant to your community group depending upon the purpose of your group and how long you have been together. For each item, Circle 1 if this is something that is not likely to be accomplished; circle 2 if this is something the group plans to work on in the future; circle 3 if the group is currently working on this ; and circle 4 if your group has accomplished this already. Circle N/A if this is something that does not apply to your group.

### As a result of our group...

	<u>Not likely</u>	<u>Plan to Work On</u>	<u>Working On</u>	<u>Has been Done</u>	<u>Doesn't Apply</u>
<b>Involvement of People:</b>					
a) People are now working together on this community issue.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
b) More residents are actively involved in this issue .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
c) Different, new faces , are involved .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
d) New group(s) have formed to address the need/issue.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
e) All key stakeholders and interests are represented .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
f) Consumers/clients/beneficiaries are involved.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
g) Community-wide awareness of the issue has increased .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
h) There is greater public support for the issue .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
<b>Planning:</b>					
i) Community planning is more systematic and comprehensive .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
j) Results of community planning are used to determine priorities and allocate resources .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
k) Planning results are shared among community groups.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
l) Planning has led to better targeting of services and programs.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
<b>Capacities:</b>					
m) Individuals’ knowledge and skills have been increased .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
n) People are better equipped to work collectively on community issues.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
o) Individuals have developed skills transferable to other situations .....	1	2	3	4	N/A
p) People are optimistic there is the feeling that together we can make a difference.....	1	2	3	4	N/A
q) Our community group has become incorporated.....	1	2	3	4	N/A

**As a result of our group...**

Not likely    Plan to Work On    Working On    Has been Done    Doesn't Apply

- r) New/improved networks and relationships have been built among groups, agencies and businesses ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- s) Organizations are working together more effectively on community issues..... 1    2    3    4    N/A

**Resources: (time, money, materials, staff, space, etc.)**

- t) Resources are shared among groups/organizations ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- u) Existing resources have been realigned or modified ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- v) Grants have been written ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- w) There is increased funding/grants in the community ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- x) We are able to influence budget/funding decisions ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A

**Services and/or Programs:**

- y) Services/programs have improved..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- z) New services have been created..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- A) Service delivery system has been redesigned ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- B) Service delivery is more efficient ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- C) Services/programs are more affordable ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- D) Services/programs are more available ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- E) Accessibility to services and programs has improved ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- F) Underserved groups have increased their use of services..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- G) There is less duplication..... 1    2    3    4    N/A

**Public Policy:**

- H) Policies, rules, or laws have been evaluated ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- I) Policies, rules, or laws have been changed ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- J) New policies, rules, or laws have been implemented ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A

**Conditions in our Community:**

- K) People are better off in our community ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- L) There is an increased understanding of community needs ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- M) People share a common direction for our community ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- N) People have an increased sense of community ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- O) There is increased local responsibility for community concerns ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- P) People have been encouraged to have a voice and use it..... 1    2    3    4    N/A
- Q) The need that gave rise to our group has been resolved ..... 1    2    3    4    N/A

12. What do you think is the **greatest** impact that this community group has had on the community to date?

13. Please indicate the extent to which you think the group has benefited your community (check ONE):

- a) No benefit yet
- b) Little benefit
- c) Moderate level of benefit
- d) Much benefit

14. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the group's effectiveness?

15. What do you think has been Extension's major contribution to this group thus far?

16. What do you think Extension could contribute to the group in the future?

*Thank you for contributing to this evaluation.*

**Appendix B**  
**Groups Participating in Community Group Member Survey (based on available data)**

County	Name of Group	Primary Focus	# Distributed	# Returned	Return Rate (%)
6-County Area	Regional Council	Prevention networks	na	8	na
Barron	Family Preservation Support	Family Support		10	
Bayfield	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	10	10	100
Calumet	Senior Family Fest Steering Committee	Aging	na	13	na
Calumet	Family Preservation Support	Family Support		13	
Chippewa	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	15	10	60
Columbia	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	15	13	87
Crawford	Family Preservation Support	Preservation of Family Unit	na	9	na
Dane	Health Family Network	Family Support	na	19	na
Dodge	Community System Wide Response to Underage Drinking and Driving	Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs	na	5	na
Dodge & Jefferson	Family Preservation Support	Prevention Networks	28	25	89
Door	Family Preservation Support	Prevention Networks	17	17	100
Douglas	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	na	8	na
Dunn	Family Preservation Support	Prevention Networks	23	16	70
Eau Claire	Hunger Prevention Coalition	Nutrition/Hunger	na	8	na
Fond du Lac	Council for Nurturing Families	Family Support	na	11	na
Fond du Lac	Vision 200 - Long Term	Health	na	8	na
Fond du Lac	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	15	10	67
Forest	Forest County Partnership	Youth	na	18	na
Grant	Platteville Community School Readiness Project	Early Childhood Ed.	na	5	na
Green	Family Preservation Support	Child Abuse	14	13	93
Green Lake	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	72	25	36
Green Lake	Family Resource Council	Prevention Networks	na	7	na
Jefferson	Watertown School Readiness	Early Childhood Ed.	4	4	100
Juneau	Family Preservation Support	Abuse, Neglect & Teen Pregnancy Prevention	na	6	na
Juneau	Necedah School Readiness	Early Childhood Ed.	na	12	na
Kenosha	Trevor School Readiness Project	Early Childhood Ed.	na	8	na
Lincoln	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	22	13	62
Marinette	Family Preservation Support	Child Abuse/Neglect	13	9	69
Marquette	Family Preservation Support	Prevention Networks	24	18	75
West Allis/ West Milw.	School Readiness	Early Childhood	na	20	na
Monroe	FPS-Monroe County Planning	Family Support	27	14	52
Monroe	School Readiness	Early Childhood Ed.	na	6	na
Outagamie	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	5	3	60
Ozaukee	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	8	8	100
Pierce	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	10	7	70
Polk	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	7	7	100
Portage	Family Preservation Support	Parenting	11	11	100
Richland	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	na	6	na
Rock	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	na	27	na
Vernon	Family Preservation Support	Family Support	18	14	78
Waupaca	Family Preservation Support	Child Abuse/Neglect	17	14	82
Waushara	Family Preservation Support	Prevention	40	15	43
Winnebago	Community Collaboration	Collaboration/Info Exchange	na	41	na

na = data not available



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***Family Issue Community Groups: Characteristics and Outcomes* by Ellen Taylor-Powell and Heather H. Boyd**