





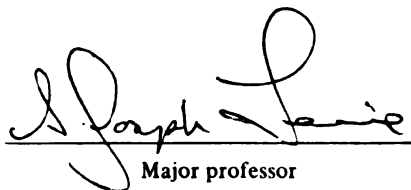
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INTO DECISION MAKING OF THE  
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AS PERCEIVED BY THE CLIENTELE  
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ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR CLIENTELE INPUT  
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By

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## ABSTRACT

### ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR CLIENTELE INPUT INTO DECISION MAKING OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE AS PERCEIVED BY THE CLIENTELE

By

Michael Anthony Warnakulasooriya

Mechanisms to involve people in organizational decisions was examined through the perspectives of people that the organization is attempting to serve. A mailed questionnaire was sent to a sample population eliciting perceptions about the local county Extension office. A number of clientele perceptions were documented in response to the following study objectives: (1) identification of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making; (2) clientele beliefs regarding organizational mechanisms; (3) clientele level of satisfaction with perceived mechanisms for their input; (4) clientele opinion about their input in important county decisions, and (5) organizational responses to clients. A typology of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making was developed.



Dedicated to,

My beloved parents.

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Knowledge is what you produce and share. So I heard and believe. Yet you cannot claim sole ownership for what you have produced. There is always someone there who has helped you. Turned you to the right track and watched you. By all means this held true in producing this thesis.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

#### **The Study**

##### **Purpose of the study**

Organizations that are created to serve people must have mechanisms that support the involvement of people in the organization's decision making processes. This study examines this idea from the perspective of the people that the organization is attempting to serve. In particular, it has focussed on organizations that are engaged in helping people find solutions for their problems and meet their needs. Study objectives can be broadly grouped into two major categories: (a) learning about organizational mechanisms for clientele input into the decision making process, and (b) learning clientele perceptions regarding those mechanisms that exist and are used. The idea of studying existing organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making through perspectives of clients was to grasp the overall image that clients have for their linkage with organizations.

##### **Study objectives**

This study was designed to (1) explore what organizational mechanisms exist for clientele input into the decision-making process as perceived by the clientele, (2) explore how clientele indicate that they make input into organizational decision making, (3) explore the clientele

level of satisfaction regarding their perceived mechanisms for clientele input, (4) assess the clientele opinion regarding their input in important decisions which impact their community, (5) explore clientele perceptions about organizational responses to them, and (6) attempt to organize the perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into a some form of typology or a hierarchy of mechanisms.

It was assumed that learning of existing organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making through client perceptions is more convincing, because, they demonstrate the extent to which clients are aware of such mechanisms. The assumption is that the clientele maintain a relationship with an organization that is engaged in processes of helping them and they tend to participate in programs that result from this relationship. Evidently, such participation can occur directly or through the leadership of community organizations (Garkovich, 1989). This can also occur through organized community groups which have direct linkages to organizational programs that result from action planned by or action planned in collaboration with organizations (Phiifer, 1989).

People tend to participate in programs and make input into the organizational decision making processes when decision out- comes have an impact on their lives or enable them to accomplish needs and resolve their problems. If

people are to participate with organizations for finding solutions for their problems, either their attitudes should correspond to organizational goals or their attitudes should be transitional and organizational objectives should transcend needs and interests of people who are expected to participate (Friedman, 1973).

The study was broadly expected to gather information about what primary reasons cause clients to participate in programs which were presumably created to develop linkage to organizations and to learn how they explain this linkage in terms of their interaction with organizational participants. The idea was to see if there is a stimulus for clients to make their input into organizational decision making in relation to their needs and problems.

Studying clientele perspectives can benefit those organizations that are engaged in processes of helping people accomplish needs and resolve problems. Organizations can re-examine how far their organizational goals are in congruence with needs and expectations of people that they are expected to help. This may help organizations to learn how far their clients are aware of the opportunities that they have for participating in making input into the decision making processes. Learning of clients' perceptions may promote self-learning for organizational participants to understand the kind of response expected from clients. It

may also help comprehend the level of opinion that clients hold regarding the way organizational participants presently respond to them. Such a knowledge would help organizations to review and reinforce mechanisms that presently exist for clientele input into the decision-making process. Both the understanding of those perceived mechanisms for clientele input into decision making and the perspectives that clients have for their relationship with organizations would help further build and refine concepts that have already evolved in relation to decision making and participation.

#### **Description of the Study**

In accomplishing the objectives, the research was conducted to grasp perceptions of a selected group of clients. A survey instrument was administered via a mailed questionnaire to a sample of research subjects, 4H volunteers. The study focussed on the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service's 4H program in two county extension offices in the state of Michigan.

Prior to the survey research, the available literature was reviewed in the Chapter Two as a part of the study to better understand the existing knowledge base related to this subject. The research design, described in Chapter Three, discusses the data collected and how the data collected were analyzed for drawing conclusions. Chapters Four and Five deal with this analysis and the conclusions that were drawn.

### **Problem Analysis**

This section examines the matters of concern in relation to the concept of clientele input into decision making and discusses why the present study is considered important. Thus, the discussion includes the following six areas in the analysis of problem:

- (1) the idea of clientele input into decision making,
- (2) the idea of 'fit',
- (3) perspective of learning from the societal knowledge,
- (4) organizational communication,
- (5) collaboration and organizational commitment for coping with emerging needs, and
- (6) lack of concern for clients' views.

### **Idea of Clientele Input into the Decision-making Process**

The concept of clientele input into the decision-making process is receiving attention because it is believed that programs and activities that result from those decisions of organizations which engage in helping people affect the rest of the society. The role of these organizations is to help people reach decisions that enable them to meet their own situations. This will be effectively done if organizations can work together with their clientele for the achievement of mutually shared goals (Lippitt, 1981). The idea of clientele input into decision making explains one of the

specific phases of working within this orientation. Lippitt (1981) noted that ways and means by which organizations and their clients can work together for accomplishing mutually shared goals have not been adequately developed. Before sharing actions for mutual goals, the existence of mutual understanding between clients and organizational participants is imperative. It will emerge only if organizational participants tend to listen to their clients. As Korten (1983) noted skills in listening to people and "dejargonizing technical language" are yet to be developed.

#### **The Idea of 'Fit'**

Organizations are continuously making decisions on enormous programs and activities for helping people. But there is often a poor 'fit' between needs of members in societies and the help that is offered in terms of services and knowledge (Korten, 1983: 183). People served are treated more as beneficiaries of what is offered, but not as partners or clients. Bryant et al, (1982) noted that there is no 'fit' in (a) access to decisions, (b) access to information, and (c) access to planning and programming.

Those ideas of helping people change, helping people help themselves, social development, and people-centered development, are some of the often used concepts to describe approaches through which different organizations are engaged in helping people bring about changes that people desire to

have. But, the specificity of these ideas and existence of appropriate mechanisms for making each idea work is less clear than what was virtually suggested. This makes them ambiguous and self interpretative (Korten, 1983).

Korten (1983) iterates that a "fit" should exist between organizations and those who are affected by decisions of organizations. According to him, proposed fit should be a triangular link in a single process. On one axis people articulate their own needs and communicate them to decision making processes of organizations. On the next axis organizations have to build a fit between their tasks and the competence of performing those tasks. This will result in an emergence of a fit between output of organizational processes and the needs of the people on the final axis. He argues that the process can not wait for spontaneous emergence of systems to see this fit occur, but mechanisms have to be developed so that the fit will naturally emerge (Korten, 1983).

#### **Idea of Learning from the Societal Knowledge**

An important role of organizations that are engaged in helping people accomplish their needs and resolve problems is to develop knowledge and disseminate it to those who need it. This is a dynamic process for which continuous understanding of problems and expectations of clients are crucial. It is believed that among those who need help from organizations, there exists a reservoir of unused knowledge

(Berger, 1979).

The task of organizations engaged in helping people is to enable, recover, and graft this existing knowledge with new knowledge that is created. Berger (1979) finds that knowledge does not always appear in rational terms or in the form of ideas. Rational thinking or "'ideas' are not that important in society, because, only a limited group of people engage in constructing ideas. But, every one in the society participates in creating knowledge in one way or another" (Berger, 1979).

Etzioni (1969) argues that what is needed is to make societal knowledge an input into decision making processes in order to arrive at a quality decision that will derive optimum advantages. What Berger has expressed implies the need for using societal knowledge as an input for building new knowledge. Etzioni emphasized direct input for decision making processes. Sanoff (1978) suggests the same more strongly. He believes that environmental problems requiring technical guidance can best be solved through the active participation of those affected by decisions of organizations. He finds that users have a particular "expertise" that is different from the formal decision maker, but equally important for the decision maker. The question is how can organizations draw from the expertise or existing knowledge in the society, or that possessed by clients. The answer relies heavily upon how organizations



engage in helping people establish and maintain linkages with their clients.

One problem expressed in relation to drawing ideas and input from clients is that the basic concepts themselves are not clear. The advocacies that are made in relation to concepts carry heavy ideological baggage around (Fagence, 1977). This may also cause, due to the lack of specificity of organizational mechanisms for participation, interaction with clients that is not focussed. What seems most important is to learn how clients feel about what they need to accomplish or what they really need to know.

#### **Organizational Communication**

Organizations maintain upward and downward communication within a systematic communication network (Etzioni, 1969; Rogers, 1976). This upward and downward communication system is to ensure organizational behavior in compliance with the organizational goals. Sometimes, such a formal network cannot be followed by clients. They are not concerned about the organizational compliance and are not obligated to the hierarchical order of the organization. Through a formal communication network, messages may be exchanged, but meanings may not effectively communicate (Freidman, 1973). The linkage of an organization with its clients can be described as a two-way communication channel between organizational participants and their clientele. One side of this communication channel is to allow the inflow of

clientele input in terms of expressing their needs, views, and suggestions into the organizational decision making processes (Keefe, 1971). The other side of this communication channel is to flow out the knowledge that is developed for use or to exchange ideas frequently.

Rogers (1976) stated that communication is "the life blood of an organization. It provides means for making and executing decisions, obtaining feedback, and correcting organizational objectives, and procedures". Rogers (1983) further defined it as the process by which participants of an organization or community create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This idea seems in congruence with the objectives of clientele input into decision making, because it expects to reach mutual understanding between organizational participants and clients for helping the other.

Communication becomes more effective if the parties involved are hemophilus (Rogers, 1976). The idea is that there should be an empathy of the two parties that are involved in the communication process. Inflow of clientele input into decision making becomes real only when this empathy or mutual understanding occurs between organizational participants and clients (Roethlisberger, 1962). This was also stated as the empathetic dialogue (Friedman, 1973).

Clientele input into decision making is "a way of doing

business and is not just a set of procedures that are followed" (Langton, 1978). The idea of making quality decisions (Etzioni, 1969) suggests the meaningfulness and the effectiveness of a decision that is made. Making such decisions requires quality or genuine information. Such quality or genuine information can only be expected by organizations if trust exists between the clients and the organizational participants (Rogers, 1983). This trust emerges according to how organizations respond to client concerns. Vosburgh (1981) explains the responsiveness in terms of the extent that organizational participants engage the client's problem, makes it the focus of effective activity, and achieve results.

Learning of client perceptions is most important to understand how clients view the desired responsiveness in relation to their concerns. It will demonstrate how they view the way things are happening. The learning of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making thus includes the understanding of methods that exist for communication between clients and organizations and the perspective of clients for the type of communication that is taking place.

#### **Idea of Collaboration and Organizational Commitment for Coping with Emerging Needs**

The key concept behind clientele input into decision making is the idea of collaboration which is considered the

vehicle for problem resolution (Lippitt, 1981). An organization will be more likely to succeed in effecting collaboration if it has credibility for its commitment to enable clients resolve their problems. Credibility will occur if structural arrangements exist and are visible to clients who participate in exchanging their ideas, expressing their needs and interests for participating in program decisions (Lippitt, 1981). These structural arrangements also need to be reviewed and renewed in time to time in order to maintain the needed collaboration between organizations and clients under changing circumstances.

Needs and problems of clients change frequently due to changing societal environments (Zaltman, 1973). Organizations have to be open to its environments and to be innovative for coping with changing needs (Rogers, 1976, 70). This calls for organizations to make more innovative decisions, that help people adapt to changing situations. Friedman (1973) thinks this is a creative social response to changing situations and problems that occur consequently and that are only vaguely understood.

#### **Lack of Concern for Clients' Views**

Effective mechanisms for registering views of clients are especially critical with organizations for which there are no alternative agencies that clients can return. One can find profound negligence by organizations for perceptions, experiences, and reactions of people they are supposed to be

helping or serving (Katz, 1977). Once an organization has existed for a period of time, organizational participants tend to assume that its legitimacy is confirmed and is always present regardless of changing situations (Perrow, 1970).

In the absence of specificity in the mechanisms for clientele input into decision making, organizations have a tendency to adopt strategies to get information from clients in order to secure legitimacy of certain decisions that organizations wish to make (Friedman, 1979). Such decisions may not make much sense if concerns of clients are not reflected. Inquiry into perceptions of clients are needed, since it can prevent such strategies that organizations tend to adopt for clientele input only in support of organizations regardless of what clients need. When organizations are not committed to clientele input into their decision-making processes, mechanisms that adopted become only procedural practices or empty rituals of organizations (Arnstein, 1969). If such mechanisms get co-opted to routine organizational behavior, rarely will they enable people to resolve their problems (Selznick, 1972).

### **Research Framework**

#### **Focus Organization**

The research focuses on county extension offices of the

Michigan Cooperative Extension Service (CES). The Cooperative Extension Service has been created for the purpose of extension in mutual combination with federal, state, and local level agencies. The county extension office is the local link in this tripartite combination of organizations. The CES as a whole is considered most appropriate in studying citizen involvement. True (1928) reproduced the following statement from one of the USDA annual official reports which implies the extent to which CES has historically been attached to communities and how it has tended to work with its clientele:

The maxim that all programs of extension work should be based on analysis of local or community needs has been given increasing support, as shown by the greater number of community programs developed throughout the United States. More than 21, 000 communities.... have local committees or clubs which join with extension agents in developing and working out local programs of work (True, 1928, p 175).

The CES is recognized for its unique achievement in American education and its broader roots to the larger society over a period of more than seventy-five years (Rasmussen, 1989). This institution has been created as an agency for helping people change, solving problems, and enabling individual and group action. The CES is considered to be important in promoting extensive clientele relationships with several programs conducted by county extension offices throughout the United States.

County extension offices are particularly known as a local service-delivery unit that have a unique set up for

responding to local needs and interacting with communities for learning of their needs and helping them, especially through its educational programs. Due to its existence within communities and because of its closeness to the people it serves, it has more opportunity for obtaining clientele input into its decision-making processes.

Rasmussen (1989) explains the future challenge of county extension offices in the following statement:

It should initiate local anticipatory planning for local needs and issues and cooperate with local organizations and agencies in the conduct of programs. The county level organizations will require greater planning and communication skills than what it has in the past (Rasmussen, 1989).

Different county CES offices may be conducting different programs in order to cope with the needs of its clients . County CES offices are unique as organizations because they have grown under the common mission of education and sharing of information with people (Rasmussen, 1989). Within the course of their growth over decades, there can be a tremendous sharing of knowledge among different county extension offices. This may be true with respect for the way business is conducted in extension offices. Thus, it is assumed that despite the tendency for extension offices in different counties to use different mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making processes, several commonalities exist among these organizations.

**Clientele**

The idea of clientele input into decision-making does not imply any practical possibility of integrating concerns of each individual citizen in a community. Thus, community organizations are considered and recognized as the most visible and effective means of linking citizens' concerns to the agencies expected to deal with such concerns. Such an organization provides opportunities for people with concerns to form friendships, share interests, increase cohesiveness within the community, and provide individuals with a focus which remains stable through time. Berger (1977) defines such groups as value generating and value maintaining "people-sized" organizations.

4H volunteers are recognized as an organized group of individuals who provide identified leaders and a pool of human resources. Finley (1987) names it an "on-deck" source of person power. This group creates a national networking of clientele which has attracted the CES throughout its decades long history and usually represents highly diverse communities.

Wessel (1982) states that the overall mission of 4H is to assist fellow youths in acquiring knowledge and developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of the society. This is found to be in congruence with the mission of the Cooperative Extension



Service. 4H volunteers are specifically known for their cooperation with fellow youths in taking part in programs provided as the result of action planned and facilitated by county extension personnel. Thus, not only is their clientele with county extension office obvious, but it is also assumed that 4H volunteers have more opportunity for making input into the decision-making processes with respect for programs conducted by the county extension offices.

#### **Assumptions**

This study was primarily based on three assumptions. First, it is assumed that integrating ideas, suggestions, and criticisms of citizens are an integral part of the decision-making in these organizations engaged in helping people. Second, it is assumed that citizens feel that their perceptions, ideas, suggestions, and both positive and negative reactions have to be recognized and responded to, and by so doing empowers the citizen. Third, it is also assumed that organizations use certain mechanisms in receiving and incorporating clientele input into their decision-making but in varying degrees and in different ways. This input includes citizens' ideas, suggestions, reflections, and criticisms pertaining to their needs, problems, and expectations.

Once organizations exist for a considerable period of time, and once their legitimacy is believed to be confirmed,

organizational participants tend to assume that such legitimacy is always present (Perrow, 1970). Organizations tend to believe in their "protected status" in spite of the ever changing environmental conditions. On account of this fact, it cannot be expected that each organization is paying equal attention to the needs of integrating clientele input into their decision-making processes. Therefore, it is assumed that organizations that maintain a favorable attitude toward clientele are better equipped to obtain clientele input into decision-making processes. This explains why organizations which pay less attention to clientele responses, may not only have negative perceptions of their clientele, but also may not be well enough geared to incorporate clientele ideas, suggestions, and both positive and negative reactions.

People within the environment, either directly or indirectly, supply cognitive resources to organizations and are the recipients of organizational outputs. Understanding how legitimate organizations tend to recognize such input is a key ingredient in their organizational agenda and is a crucial factor to be considered. It is believed that clientele attitudes and values are one of the vital elements in measuring this aspect.

Not all citizens or clients are interested in contributing their ideas, suggestions, and criticisms into the decision-making processes of organizations even though

they know the organizations exist for helping them. Some people may not feel it is necessary. Others may have time constraints due to involvement in their own priorities which precludes their involvement with the organization. In these cases organizations cannot be held responsible for the lack of client input.

### **Delimitations**

This study is concerned with exploring mechanisms that are presently used for clientele input into the decision-making processes of organizations engaged in helping people resolve their problems and meet needs. But, it was not an attempt to build a concrete theory or broader generalizations about the concept of clientele input into decision making. The existing organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making is also studied as to how clients view such mechanisms, but not in relation to their effectiveness. For measuring the degree of effectiveness in the perceived mechanisms that are used must be the focus of further research. This study limits its scope to surveying perceptions of the clientele and was therefore only one side of the approach. In fact, further research is needed for matching perceptions of clients that have emerged through this study, with the organizational perspectives.

The effectiveness, however, was explored to the extent of how satisfied were clients and how interested they felt

the organization was for learning of their views through existing mechanisms. Their perceptions were dependent on what meaning they have given to the underlying concept. It was hoped that this study would give an adequate base for building a future perspective about effective organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision-making processes.

### **Limitations**

As the survey was limited to two counties, it was not able to grasp the whole series of mechanisms for clientele input in decision-making used in different county extension offices. Because, not only among organizations, but also within similar types of organizations, there can be diversity of mechanisms used for clientele input into decision-making. This is due to the diversity of social systems, different levels of clientele sophistication and the organizational attachments to different environments.

The respondents may have some biases on account of belonging to an established institution. But, it was also assumed that this aspect may cause a reverse effect. Because, there is an advantage for 4H members to form a more clear perspective based on the knowledge and experience which they may have gained through involvement with the organization over a period of time.

Each person may hold his or her own perspective that may differ, or even be in conflict with that of others. This

was one limitation for building an aggregate pattern of responses.

### Definition of Terms

Clientele is used and implies in addition to the common notion of citizenry, the individuals or persons who are expected to be served by agencies for obtaining services, information and help solve their problems and accomplish needs.

Participation is used to indicate the opportunity which a person or a group of persons has in expressing their needs, views, suggestions, criticisms, and objections toward activities, programs, and the conduct of an organization. It also implies the sharing of ideas, and views with those participants of organizations.

Mechanisms and strategies are used interchangeably in implying ways and means through which a person or a group of persons can express and share their needs, ideas, suggestions, criticisms, views, and objections to which organizations are expected to respond.

Decision-making processes is a term used to describe the process which takes place in making decisions about designing or planning programs, executing programs and evaluating programs in meeting the goals of an organization.

This is the context in which clientele input is assumed to be incorporated.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

The concept of clientele input into decision-making processes suggests a precise act by a recognized group of people. Searching for organizational mechanisms that are used to make it happen is an effort to pinpoint how this act is taking place. This concept is only one element that has evolved through a myriad of other concepts under the apex of participation. Participation itself is a concept which is yet to be fully developed and hasn't found its niche in the continuum on which it presently moves.

Examining the present knowledge base with regard to other related concepts such as citizen participation, and helping people through organizations was found to be important in developing a conceptual base. This chapter examines the perceived role of an organization in the context of changing societal needs and expectations in order to understand the thrust of organizational decision making. Dimensions of participation and desired linkage that organizations and clients ought to have also receives attention. On the basis of available studies, the nature of the relationship that exists between the Cooperative Extension Service and 4H volunteers is studied. The chapter concludes with an examination of some of the participatory models that have been proposed for clientele input into the

organizational decision making process.

## **Organizations**

### **Role of Organization in Society**

Compliance was traditionally thought of as the central guiding principle of an organization. Evidence has been found regarding the search for a 'universal organization model' for maintaining organizational compliance (Etzioni, 1975). But this thinking has now changed and differences of organization types and purposes for which they exist are becoming more and more recognized. Bryant (1982) said that "organizations are instruments to do things." Thus, attention is invited for concerns of both organizational efficiency and organizational effectiveness.

The need for re-examining organizational structures became evident especially during the past few decades, and new dimensions about organizational behavior began to evolve (Bryant, 1982). Organizational participants were urged to re-orient their way of thinking for "fitting into" the purposes for which the organizations exist (Korten, 1983). This emphasis even went to the extent that legitimacy of some traditional organizations were questioned. Korten (1983) argued that "No institution should expect to maintain a prestige position in society or to run it unless its activity is relevant to the society"(p 239). The assumption was that as societies develop and the public becomes more



and more restless and articulate, improved bureaucratic performance is called for, and the public sector will likely become the principle support source (Korten, 1983,P 240).

The service delivery organizations run by public funding may be the main focus of such arguments. The assumption is that organizations should not merely act as service delivery organizations, but as enabling agencies for helping people solve their problems (Bryant, 1982). He stressed that such organizations be creative to benefit both rural and urban poor, because they deserve to be helped. The four major reasons for this, which can be explained in terms of limitations, were believed to be prevalent in traditional organizations: (a) limited ability by the rural and urban poor to reach organizations that exist for helping them, (b) organizational inability to sustain necessary local level action, (c) limited adaptability of organizations to local circumstances, and (d) the creation of organizational dependency for those who deserve help (Korten, 1983).

Sanoff (1978) made the same assertion with a different perspective. His observation was that as a social order becomes more prominent, people become further removed from direct control of their lives. He has appealed to regain it through public awareness and participation and to reward it by enabling power and recognizing human capabilities. Such an approach calls for a major organizational change (Creighton, 1979).

An organization is a "system" in which all parts are interrelated. How trivial it is for an organization to make a change in its existing behavior was viewed by Creighton (1979) as

"The change that is made in one part of the system, without supportive or reinforcing changes made in other parts of the system will usually result in the extinction of that change."

The concept of organizational culture implies a similar behavior in a given collectivity. The culture includes a set of values and cognitive perspectives and participants in a given organization differ in their orientation to their culture (Creighton, 1979). As the result of pre-existing culture, some organizations may be receptive to new approaches, while others may become antagonistic (Creighton, 1979). These are some of the advocacies of those who are concerned about the stability of organizational structure. Because the products of an organization are considered important for the society, it is generally assumed that an organization should have protected status (Perrow, 1970).

But, an organization is part of a larger system that includes all societal characteristics that are influential (Bryant, 1982). Thus, organizational behavior and its changing role seems to be receiving more attention than its structure and status. Friedman (1973) believes that organizations should translate their role into a people-centered approach so that wholly new categories of activity will be created which he calls innovative planning.

Innovative planning is fundamentally concerned with the translation of existing values into new institutional arrangements. This he believes to be a creative organizational response to perceived societal needs. He advocates that organizations engage in societal guidance. As Freidman (1973) put it, the assumption is "through the conscious choice, society may guide the future course of development" and that there is pressure for a wider involvement of society in that process.

Etzioni (1969) has used the term "societal guidance" to replace the "social control" which was assumed to be the role that organizations traditionally practiced. He has concluded that "in fact, it is the lack of authentic participation of the members of a society in the treatment of a problem that often helps account for the problem's seemingly intractability or even its very existence". The basic question is how can the societal processes be guided by the participants if the ongoing conditions are different from what is expected.

### **Decision Making in Organizations**

Like any other organizational activity, decision making does not take place in a vacuum. Over the years Max Webber's (Gerth et al., 1972) criteria of hierarchical order for decision making has been changed and decision making became a highly socialized activity with communities, study groups, review panels or task teams contributing in a variety of

ways (Krietner, 1983). Decision-making has five basic steps which include:

1. analyzing the problem,
2. identifying components of the decision situation,
3. estimating such components as determination of probabilities, feasibilities, time framing, and trade-off's,
4. designing of alternatives, and
5. choosing of the best possible alternative.

These five steps could be followed in order to have the best outcome if the necessary resources are ready at the table. This is because, decision making may require a great deal of information about variety of alternatives. This has other aspects too. It includes the question of who is going to engage in the process and how a person or a group of persons are going to make the decision. It was argued that two or more heads are better than one, assuming collective experience and the wisdom of all those involved function as effective tools for sound decision making. (Krietner, 1983). But this assumption too was encountered by arguing that when a joint decision was made, personal responsibility for the decision is lost.

A traditional formula for resolving such a problem is to have the group recommend a decision, with the person in charge or the manager holding responsibility for the final decision. Krietner (1983) states that individual decision

making is faster, but the group-aided decisions usually are of higher quality and more acceptable to those who will be affected. The group-aided decisions have both advantages and disadvantages. Under advantages, a group can bring together much more information and experience pertinent to the decision or to the problem that was addressed than an individual acting alone. It helps to view the problem in different perspectives and to stimulate alternatives for its resolution. Those who have personal experiences with group interaction tend to come out with alternative courses of action while focusing on a workable decision. People who participate in the decision making process are more likely to help "make it work". Those who play an active role in the group decision making and problem solving tend to review the outcome as "ours" rather than "theirs" (Vroom, 1973).

Depending upon the decision making situation, several disadvantages can occur in group-aided decision making. The social pressure and the individual preferences may dominate the process if a high stake is involved in the decision to be made. Vroom (1973) says that those who 'speak loudest and longest' may reduce the quality of group action. Political "wheeling and dealing" can also displace sound thinking when vested interests are leading the process.

Decision making appears to be becoming a 'universal act' and a rapidly renewing concept. The refining of this concept is often a spoken subject. Kreitner (1983) believes

that ignorance to the decision maker's personal value system as a serious oversight. Rokeach (1972) observed "values are abstract ideals that shape an individual's thinking and behavior". This can have a greater effect on the way people determine the course of actions that they take and the predictions about the outcome that people wish to have. (Rokeach, 1972). But, those who are affected by decisions may not share the same individual values and may not wish to have the same outcome. Thus, it is desirable that decisions are free of any dominance by such personal value systems.

As the decision making process was considered the central element in organizational dynamics more emphasis was called for making quality decisions (Bryant, 1982). Etzioni (1969) observed that "The quality of decision making becomes more important the more active a societal unit is. Obviously the more assets a societal unit has and the more mobilized these are for societal action, the more advantages it can derive from their effective use." Fagence (1977) believes that as society has developed, and become culturally and technologically sophisticated, Insistence is growing for making compatibly refined and expert decisions. He also argues that it should be infused with more democratic expressions. These thoughts are based on the question "who is to decide society's content and course" (Bryant, 1982). Fagence's (1977) definition for participation is that it is a means of re-interpreting the democratic ethic. However,

two fundamental factors are imperative in the process of decision making. One is the competence of the decision maker. The other is the relationship or the impact it makes on the rest of the society or a particular societal unit. Ickis (1983) sees that the conventional practice of decision making that was confined to organizational efficiency, uniformity and hierarchy has only marginal applicability because organizations become more interdependent, multiply committed, and politically uncertain (Perrow, 1970). The competence of the decision maker in this sense implies a skill which is much more the wisdom of an individual, but a renewing skill of a process which is developed, and equipped with. The main need is to make societal input into the societal decision making, says Etzioni (1969).

## **Participation**

### **Citizen Participation**

Several concepts have emerged during the last three or four decades to guide organizations that are engaged in helping people change the situations that they are in. Among them, the client-centered development approach is one such concepts (Garcia-Zamor, 1985). This is a further development of the earlier concept of a people-centered development approach. In defining how this approach can be accomplished, concepts such as participatory development, collaborative planning (Garcia-Zamor, 1985), and citizen participation

seems to have emerged. It also appears that the concept of citizen participation was commonly used in combination with the ideas that were brought in by the other concepts. Sometimes the term "citizen participation" is used in different contexts as a general and "symbolic term" (Langton, 1979).

Langton cites that

Particularly for citizen activists, citizen participation seems to mean interest in exerting influence and achieving power. To public organization administrators it implies citizens' assistance and support in establishing and implementing policies and plans. For political leaders citizen participation particularly implies participation in political parties, campaigns, and voting.

However, the use of this concept in implying such extremes mainly precludes the understanding of what it really suggests. There are even criticisms found against the misuse of this concept in meeting extreme individualistic goals. Rosenbaum (1978) stated that this sort of practice is a "slaying of beautiful hypotheses with ugly facts."

Participation being a multifaceted concept includes both involvement and the level of commitment (Haeberle, 1987). The idea of participation simply implies that people without sophisticated management skills can work together (Garcia-Zamor, 1985).

Clientele input into decision making appears to be a newer concept than citizen participation. It seems to have evolved from the later one. Both concepts have often been used with the same meaning. Pollak (1985) finds that



"representation of private citizens' interests in the form of citizen participation is now a fairly common practice in local urban planning decision making processes".

### **Legislative Mandates for Citizen Participation**

The concept of citizen participation has a fairly long history in the United States (Boone, 1972). The Housing Act of 1954 mandated incorporation citizens' interests into organizational decision making. Subsequent legislation has broadened citizen participation in large numbers of public programs with the introduction of the clause "maximum feasible participation" of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Rosener, 1978). Title 2 of the Act (Boone, 1972) has defined the term 'community action programs' emphasizing the development of programs by organizations with the 'maximum feasible participation' of those rural and urban residents who are affected. The two paragraphs of Section 202 (a) reproduced below has state this objective:

The term 'community action program' means a program -  
 (1) which mobilizes and utilizes resources, public or private, of any urban, or rural or combined urban and rural, geographical area (referred to in this part as "community"), including but not limited to a state, metropolitan area, county, city, town, multicity unit in the attack on poverty,  
 (2) which provides services, assistance and other activities of sufficient scope and size to give promise of progress toward elimination of poverty or a cause or causes of poverty through developing employment opportunities, improving human performance, motivation, and productivity or bettering the conditions under which people live, learn, and work.

(Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Title 2 - Urban and Rural Community Action Programs: Part A- General Community Action Programs)

The Development Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966 and The Community Development Act of 1974 combined a number of programs and the objective was further broadened. It includes the idea of "widespread citizen participation." The provision of adequate opportunities for citizen participation in planning and development activities was continuously mandated considering the impact which it can have on the lives of people.

Despite the series of such legislative provisions, there were no adequate precedents or structural arrangements existing to make participation work in the proposed program areas at their introduction. Legislative mandates were even vague (Rosener, 1978). Boone (1972) noted fundamental knowledge gaps in translating what the legislation provided. Guidelines were later prepared and the idea of community action program boards were introduced. The policy guidelines decreed these boards to be one third participation representation for private service agencies and one third for representatives of the poor communities. This was called a "three legged stool system" which took the form of an advisory committee appointed to the new emerging service agencies. Parent participation in policy and program development in Head Start programs was one which was resulted from this provision (Boone, 1972).

The Rural Development Act of 1972 by its Title 5 also had a provision to promote citizen participation in planning

and implementing programs for community problem-solving. This provision stated that programs of work in each state be developed with the advice of a special rural development advisory council made up of representatives from educational institutions, farmers, workers, businesses, and financial institutions (Patrick, undated). The clients who were involved in these councils were influential people and potential community leaders and volunteers. Many states reported that emphasizing local citizen involvement through these councils was especially helpful in identifying problems, determining priorities, checking for legitimacy of Title 5 programs, and the approval of projects.

In addition, they stressed a need for making informal contacts with people to get more information to make programs workable. However, it was noted that the citizen involvement in program decisions was not the same everywhere. Practice has often been dependent on the philosophy of the program staff and the strength of the local groups and individuals involved. Some agencies seem to have more concerned for protecting their domain. MacNair (1981) noted that organizations with protective postures tend to drive more for their stability than the concerns of clients. Patrick (Undated, P 133) quoted from Washington described the same situation, but in a somewhat different way. He said that "people have problems and organizations have structures.... There is a competition and feelings of

audience possessiveness among agencies." However, the participation becomes real only if people can see how their needs are complementary, rather than in conflict. Avent (1972) noted that the "real key to citizen participation is the willingness on the part of both the technicians and policy-makers to really have citizens participating".

### **Participation in Public Decision Making**

The most typical mechanism for citizen input into public decision making is the public hearing. The decision makers present a proposal for a project or a program and listen to citizen concerns, complaints, suggestions, and seek approval. The presumption is that if the process includes more citizen involvement, the resulting decisions will be more responsive to citizen needs (Berry, 1984). Some thoughts were that this has a high impact for improved services through improved flow of information (Yin and Yates, 1974). Others view such participation as having only a small effect on the decision making processes (Gittell, 1980). The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) in its 1979 survey of citizen participation in federal grant programs reports that one third of the grant programs had used public hearings as a mechanisms for citizen input into program decisions. Cole (1984) found that when the affected citizens testified, perceptions were that they had only been concerned about the equal distribution of funds in solving problems and that the promises were kept by

those who had promised. The objective of such a mechanism was viewed as to change the public administration organizational behavior so that organizations will better respond to citizens (Kasperson, 1974; Berry, 1984).

In addition to the advisory councils and public hearing, some organizations have used techniques such as voting for referenda, neighborhood or county councils, public information programs, neighborhood city calls, petitioning, and hot lines (Finster-Busch, 1980; Kweit, 1981). However, different people viewed citizen participation differently. Many seem to have considered the involvement of citizens in their decisions as a way to legitimize programs that organizations are expected to implement. Marshall (1971) reported that citizen participation appeared to facilitate an interplay of power and exchange between citizens and public organizations.

Clientele input into decision making underlies an idea of a particular organizational orientation and behavior. Goldschalk (1966) stressed that "Conceive participation not as an alternative to conventional decision making, but as a decision forming partnership, which is a genuine interchange between citizens and decision makers." This implies an organizational orientation for mutual response to its clients. It also recognizes the potential for clientele input for their program decision making. This incorporates the idea of planning programs in collaboration with those

clients who wish to bring about changes.

The change itself is a decision to be made by those who are subject to it. It is through change that citizens become empowered to move beyond the situation in which they find themselves (Levine, 1989). Goldstein (1981) believes that the leverage for change is the client's own construction and the image he has in making that a reality. Organizations are expected to enable people to implement their decisions and engage them in a process which makes them move. People have the opportunity to change or to be affected by it. An individual working alone cannot initiate or sustain change. With a little help from others, people can move (Christenson, 1989).

Organizations are believed to be central actors who are expected to initiate this process, invite citizens in, and offer information pertinent to its plans and program decisions (Grant, 1989). This explains organizational responsiveness for clients in making decisions about programs that are designed to bring about changes. But, in the absence of such an organizational orientation, the practice of citizen participation becomes an interplay between organizational power and citizens' influence versus the mutual interaction between organizational participants and citizens (Warren et al, 1974).

The observed interplay between power and citizen influence was discussed in three different dimensions: (1)

the influence of citizens, (2) the maintenance of a public agency, and (3) field theory of balanced exchange (MacNair, 1981). Using the balanced exchange theory Warren et al.(1974) cites another three dimensions of organizational responsiveness for citizen participation. He uses the terms structural, primary, and secondary to name the three. Structural responsiveness is used for mechanisms that exist for participation of citizens in organizational decisions. His argument behind federal requirements for citizen participation is to initiate a transactive contract between organizations and citizens.

Creighton (1979) observed that decision making in public organizations is located many layers away from the public contact. He said that;

Decisions in the organization are made in such a way that the information provided by the public is either ignored by the management, or so filtered as it passes through the bureaucratic layers that it reaches the management in a watered-down form that has little impact (p 217).

### **Levels of Citizen Participation**

Arnstein (1969) has put citizen participation into a typology of eight levels. These include citizen control, delegated power, partnership, placation, consultation, informing, therapy, and manipulation. MacNair et al.(1983) put these into a six-tier partnership scale, in which one of the six includes citizen input into decision making. The partnership scale is comprised of:

1. citizens' authority over decisions,

2. negotiated decisions,
3. a shared partnership in decision making,
4. opportunity to offer advice,
5. opportunity to develop self-confidence, and
6. channel for citizen support of programs already planned or manipulation of citizen participation.

This scale includes at its highest point a very active role of citizens in organizational decisions to the bottom with no role (MacNair, 1983) or co-optation. But the continuum has indeed included phases which underlie the organizational commitment for citizen input into the organizational decision making process. In fact, it gives the notion of clientele to the people who are involved and are affected by the decisions rather than calling them citizens. This scale, however, implies that the responsiveness of organizations to their clients is not consistent as the concept suggests and mechanisms used depend on the concerns of those who are in charge (MacNair, 1983).

Since input from those affected by organizational decisions became mandatory, it seems that organizations tend to care about their domain and have adopted some procedures or follow some common practices. Extremes of such practices may turn into co-optation. As Selznick (1972) describes co-optation it is "the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an



organization as a means of averting threats to its stability".

If the orientation of an organization is to consider people served as private citizens, they only react to the problems that are brought forward. Often the most active or influential people in a community, or those who have a stake in an organizational decision, tend to come forward and make some impact on the organizational decision making processes. But, the people who deserve to be heard may not have an opportunity to give their input. The input may naturally flow in only if there is no competition. At the same time, organizations are viewed by people served as helping organizations (Berger, 1977).

### **Clientele**

#### **Conceptual Implications**

It was suggested that planners interact with voluntary organizations, private sector enterprises, and political parties that have useful contacts with clientele and local government authorities (Esman, 1972). This interaction appears to underlie the idea of helping organizations channel and deliver their services more effectively with the prime motive of influencing the attitudes of their clients. Such motives may orient organizational participants to be more concerned about effectively meeting organizational goals rather than aspirations of those who are served. Such

a motive cannot be considered strange. Perhaps organizations are stimulated by different advocacies to be more concerned about organizational development. Wildavsky (1975) argued that the best "ubiquitous" strategy of an organization to maximize its allocation in budget battles is to find and cultivate a clientele. Involvement of citizen in this process appears to an attractive technique to help build supportive clientele for many such advocacies (Wildavsky, 1975). About four decades back, Selznick (1949) said that a good way to develop a clientele is to co-opt citizens by involving them in the organizational decision making process. Organizational history inherits such thinking. Obviously the advocacy for such deliberate strategies only help keep organizational performance and maintain program "success" in order to fulfil what the organizational agenda requires. However, this way of thinking appears to have shaped "the clientele" into being more political and business like.

The term human service organization is often used to identify organizations that are engaged in helping people meet their needs and solving problems (Kotler, 1969). Also, the terms "client" and "consumer" have been used interchangeably in naming the people who are served or affected by the organizational programs. Kotler argues that as consumers actively participate in decision making processes, organizations become accountable for those they

serve. The basis for the argument appears to be their belief in clients' rights in making input into the organizational decision making process.

The literature contains repeated expressions about the organizational commitment for clientele input, but only modest progress has so far been made in that direction (Fawcett et al., 1982). One apparent reason could be the political dimension which includes the concept in its initial stages. Arguments for advocating the importance of clientele input into the decision making process were particularly aimed at those institutions serving the poor, the disadvantaged, and the powerless where decisions are believed to rest with a few who are not immediately affected (Chambers, 1983).

By examining how participation has actually been practiced, Pollak (1985) has tried to develop a theoretical base for the concept. She argued that if the decision making process is assumed to be open, then the idea of citizen participation is to alter, augment or provide additional perspectives for the decisions that are made. She also finds that citizen participation mechanisms provide an organizational basis for articulation of interests, which enables a group potentially excluded from the planning of decision making to participate.

## **The Community**

### **Community Organizations**

Stokes (1981) believes that "human problems require solutions on human scale. It is at the personal and community level that consequences of problems are most obvious, the motivation to solve them is most direct, benefits from the actions are most immediate". Berger (1977) suggests using mediating structures for the realization of social purposes by human organizations and human associations. Stokes (1981) believes that organization dominance causes dependency that undermines the peoples' capacity to be active and informed. He names public organizations as mega-structures while mediating structures are those that stand between the individual and large institutions of public life. To him mediating structures are the value generating and value maintaining agencies in a society (Berger, 1977). He believes that these mediating structures are principle expressions of real values and real needs of the society. They are for the most part people-sized institutions. He values giving recognition and respect to these institutions and appeals to empower them. Hunter et al. (1979) names such organizations as third-sector parallels because they work parallel to the public sponsored organizations. He believes that these institutions rely more on voluntaristic mechanisms and appeal to peoples' sense of interest and values. Those organizations that are engaged in

public interest can seek cooperation with such third-sector parallels through a process of bargaining, discussion, persuasion and accommodation. They enable discussions with both individual and group interests. The benefit of this approach as Esman et al. (1984) argue is that they would solve problems through collective rather than individual action.

Wharton (1966) and Mosher (1978) identify and name cooperative societies, 4H clubs and farmer organizations as a few of the organizations that can act particularly for accelerating agriculture development. They found the advantage of such groups is that they can get tasks accomplished which individual farmers operating alone can not achieve.

Frank Smith (1982) gives a broader perspective to this. He states that active participation by lay citizens nurtured by a supportive community goal-setting team can lead to direct reinforcement for contributing acts and for increasing self-awareness and self-esteem. He asserts that participation is more likely to be effective when the initiative for actions stem from a group that already has an identifiable membership, interpersonal familiarity, and roots in the community at large. His belief is that if viable and representative community groups are already functioning, they will link citizens and community agencies. Voluntary associations, neighborhood groups, clubs, and

youth leagues are some of the linkage groups that Smith (1982) has identified.

Organizations such as extension services and parent-teacher associations are the ones that should establish proposed linkage with organized community groups according to him and he believes that both types of organizations are a familiar part of the American society.

#### **The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and 4H**

The Cooperative Extension Service as a whole is an organization which was created for cultivating clientele with people who are going to be served. Its mission is to help people through an educational process to find solutions for problems and to receive help for accomplishing their needs (Rasmussen, 1989). The principle of cooperation is the hallmark of its relationship to the clients. This means to work within a cooperative framework in order to develop knowledge to impart to those for whom it was meant.

Rasmussen (1989) found four fundamental elements that contributed to the strength of the CES, ie., providing a perspective on local development issues; increasing of the knowledge-base for individual and community decision making; developing skills necessary for achieving individual and community goals; and helping to strengthen the environment for decision making.

Several studies assess the impact of educational programs conducted by the CES and its cooperative framework

in implementing programs. This included a recent study of perceptions of clients who are supposed to be helped by this organization. But, on several occasions, attention was focused on the aspects of help and knowledge that were imparted. A major objective of the CES is to help people make decisions and enhance leadership skills. This is accomplished by having clients actively participate in the process.

4H is a well established youth organization in the United States that for decades has been assisting youths in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directed, productive, and contributing members of the society (Wessel, 1982). More than four million volunteer leaders have been assisted in extending programs under training and direction of the professional staff of the Cooperative Extension Service (Rasmussen, 1989). This group creates a national networking of clientele which has attracted the CES throughout decades of long history and represent highly diverse communities. 4H volunteers are specifically known for cooperation with fellow youths in taking part in programs provided as the result of action planned and facilitated by county CES extension personnel.

4H volunteers are involved in programs in almost every county and help people achieve economic, environmental, social, health, and educational benefits irrespective of

demographic diversities that may exist. People who benefit include youth, adults, farm and non-farm families, disadvantaged and advantaged (IVE, March, 1987).

4H volunteer activities are grouped into five major types, i.e., content experts, community groups, special events, projects, and cooperation among agencies. They help CES operate professionally in their teaching roles. In teaching roles they (1) frequently share information learned from and developed by the CES, (2) make presentations to their clubs, community groups, or in workshops conducted by the Extension personnel, and (3) take continuous responsibility for carrying out programs and for disseminating information with regard to specific content areas in a variety of ways in different groups and or in the community at large.

In the community they serve as (1) local project leaders, (2) project leaders for homemakers, (3) individual farmers who play demonstration farmer roles, (4) expanded food and nutrition volunteers and (5) master 4H volunteers. Master volunteers are those who possess special skills and experiences and who play roles in providing information needed by clients.

4H volunteers are usually belonged to commodity groups, farm organizations, Extension homemakers, and local 4H club members. They help and guide individual 4H clubs which are formed with children and youth between the ages of nine and



nineteen. They work closely with other community groups such as church groups, parent-teacher associations, recreational groups, and other interest groups.

In addition they are involved in several county events where large numbers of the public are drawn and people seek various information about meeting their needs. They endeavor to help people become better citizens, to become strong partners in the organizations, foster fellowship, and be more informed citizens (IVE, March, 1987). This has been expressed as "volunteers provide a 'glue' which makes people more aware of their neighbors and that others care" (IVE, March, 1987).

The relationship between 4H volunteers and the CES is described as follows:

1. 4H volunteers and CES co-sponsor programs,
2. 4H volunteers support programs that are conducted by the CES,
3. 4H volunteers secure help from the CES personnel for a project or a program,
4. members of a community become 4H volunteers and take part in programs conducted by the CES,
5. the CES serves as a resource to 4H volunteer programs,
6. 4H volunteers raise funds, make donations in terms of money, materials and other resources, and
7. some 4H volunteers rely on the guidance of CES

resource staff; they participate in programs sponsored by 4H volunteers.

### **The Cooperative Extension Service and the Idea of Partnership**

The idea of cooperation underlies the partnership with its clients. How this partnership was built is a subject which received major attention of a five-year national survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin, Madison, beginning in 1983. This series of surveys was named "Implications of Volunteerism in Extension" (IVE), in which extension agents, 4H volunteers, and other community members were considered equal partners in action. The study was designed to learn the perceptions of all three parties regarding the impact and implications of this relationship process for implementing extension programs.

The study was apparently carried out on the assumption that volunteers are getting help for themselves while helping extension agents help others. In learning of volunteer views, this study focused its attention on assessing the extent of benefits which volunteers have gained by participating in extension programs. Those benefits included the enhancing of skills in problem solving, leadership, and decision making.

The opportunities that volunteers have for their input into the decision making process is considered to be an experience through which they enhance their skills. The

Wisconsin survey included questions about the experience of volunteers in participating in advisory groups, committees, etc,. The philosophy of partnership was specifically described in terms of sharing the creation of programs, evaluating programs, and sharing the success more than the dissemination of information. The study also posed a question for volunteers asking the extent to which extension agents pay attention to their advice. This information seems to have been used for evaluating the skills of extension agents to work with volunteers. In fact, the idea of sharing the creation of programs implies more than their physical participation or participation in program implementation. But the cognitive contribution of 4H volunteers for creating programs and program decisions are much more important for creating effective programs which have meaning for participants.

Although this series of studies did not make an effort to learn about the perceptions of clients regarding their involvement in program decisions, it is interesting that the survey report contains a list of client concerns in its appendix. This seems to be an inventory of clientele perceptions with regard to their relationship with the CES 4H programs. These comments include some of the 4H volunteer concerns about the organizational negligence to treat them as clients some times. Their concerns included taking volunteer commitment and readiness for helping for granted

and without enough regard for their ability to make input into programs. Some volunteers indicated the inadequacy of their input for the decisions that are made. Others believed they should have had more opportunity for it. Some wished that their ideas were more respected, that opinions and suggestions could be negotiated, and that agents paid more attention or listened to people more carefully. They expressed the belief that "people have much information to give extension and vice-versa to have an open mind." (IVE: Oct, 1987). As Berger (1977) has said more can be learned from the society and we need to learn from the existing societal knowledge. But, it cannot be asserted by this study how far this can be the general pattern of thinking for 4H volunteers, as it was not one of the key objectives.

The study made several important conclusions. Most importantly, it concluded that extension programs are much stronger when extension agents work closely with influential volunteers through structures where volunteers represent others. The need of developing efficient mechanisms for working together as decision making partners was one recommendation that was particularly stressed. One mechanism suggested was to position them in advisory and planning committees.

The Wisconsin survey also sought information on effective ways that extension agents communicate with 4H volunteers. (IVE, June, 1985) 4H agents' most generally

mentioned methods were personal contacts, person-to-person talk through office visits, telephone calls, regular meetings, and newsletters. However, whether or not these methods were used in obtaining their input into the decision making process was not particularly clear. Different extension agents had different concepts about their relationship with 4H volunteers. Some extension agents felt they were really working with clients while others felt they were working with a group of volunteers.

This study also included the views of clients who were helped both by extension personnel and by volunteers. These clients were of the opinion that input from the community and volunteers is important for the success of programs. Clients mentioned that if extension can get volunteers more involved in program decision making, programs overall, tended to improve (IVE, Dec, 1987). Based on the views expressed, the study recommended to explore ways for increasing clientele contact and alert volunteers to opportunities that they have for their input. The recommendations emphasized that those volunteers with ideas need to informally contact extension agents, and that agents need to find time for seeking out potential ideas.

The philosophy of partnership as an objective was mentioned often. There was also mention of the existence of a mechanism in Extension for hard decisions and responsibility for sharing decisions with representatives of

the community (IVE, June, 1987), but it was not highlighted. Both independent observers and 4H volunteers indicated the existence of a communication gap between them and the individual county CES office personnel. On the basis of the organizational goals and some of the feelings expressed by some 4H volunteers and clients, there is a need of re-examining the existing organization mechanisms.

This study also reports general satisfaction with the relationship that exists between Extension agents and the 4H volunteers. These feelings imply the existence of positive linkages between Extension staff and their clientele. The concept of clientele input into program decision making in this study has been interpreted only in terms of advice and ideas of clients. Both volunteers and their fellow community members seem to have expected much more than that.

However, it cannot be concluded that there is an absence of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making in the CES or an existence of a negative clientele perception with the mechanisms that exist. This study obviously implies a need to pay closer attention to the perceptions of clients. The phase of surveying volunteer views in this national study was limited to a total of 1200 4H volunteers spread over a geographical area of 288 counties. Thus, its limitation for learning of clientele perceptions regarding the specific mechanisms for their input into decision making can be understood. Among

the good things mentioned were the volunteer views and feelings about benefits they have received through their involvement in the CES. They have mentioned their satisfaction about self-growth, self-recovery and self recognition. These feelings were congruent with the goals of the CES and 4H volunteers. The learning of clientele perceptions about the organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making may thus help further and develop sound methods for building partnership with clientele in accomplishing the mission of helping people.

#### **Models of Organizational Mechanisms for Clientele**

##### **Input into Decision-Making Processes**

Two decades ago, in his description of four different management styles, Ponsen (Rothwell, 1972) introduced a "participative model." He wanted to emphasize clientele input into organizational decision making. He suggested formulating programs by organizational participants, and to solicit public and private reactions. Accordingly, these reactions are to be taken into account when decisions are made. This model allows people who are going to be affected by decisions to be informed well in advance, to use their knowledge, to accept their suggestions, and to commit organizations to look for clientele input into their decision making. Planning in this model becomes largely an instrument in societal decision making (Rothwell, 1972).

This interactive model for decision making has been further developed into a four-step process: (a) to identify creative individuals on all levels of an organization, (b) to make these individuals communicate among themselves, (c) to develop ideas received from clients and pour them into the decision making process, and (d) to have decision making taken within the framework of proposed communication linkage. Such a description makes a very positive and a dynamic picture of the whole decision making process. It also visualizes the organizational commitment for clientele input into decision making. But obviously many such models are often designed to cope with the needs of modern business enterprises. Thus, these models conceal a fair measure of social control so that an organization can have considerable power in regulating its own groups and clients. This helps secure their concern for continuation of the status of the organization (Rothwell, 1972).

Fawcett, et al. propose a Method of Concerns Report (CRM), a systematic data-based process for clientele input into decision making preceded by a pre-decisional process. The method suggested gives a specific procedure to be followed in ten specific steps. Of the ten steps, the most important ones include starting from forming a small working group from among the representatives of the clientele. This group initially attempts to diagnose the problems and issues that are likely to be important for the community according



to their perception. Then administer a survey to inquire about community views about adherence to each issue and problem identified. This can be administered through several means such as direct mailing, a drop box in service agencies, and a door-to-door survey. This is, in fact, the preliminary step in allowing clientele input into the whole process. Next, hold a public meeting as a "problem-solving discussion" during which concerned citizens are invited to discuss the dimensions of each issue. The meeting will be followed by preparation of a "concern report." This will be passed on to each party that was involved for re-examination and, finally, the reports are passed on to planners. The decisions regarding the context and the content of programs, the allocation of funds and other resources, the adoption of policies and procedures will be made on the basis of such reports (Fawcett, 1982).

This method seems to be a practice for obtaining clientele input for the setting of organizational agenda than for frequent decisions. The objective of the procedure is to preserve citizen rights and at the same time obtain a mandate for organizations to execute a certain agenda during a given period of time. In most situations, it is evident that organizations were more concerned about improving their organizational agendas by having clientele input into decision making.

Delbeque's (1985) Nominal Group Technique is another

method suggested for obtaining citizen input to define problems for determination of problem priorities. With this method the organization tries to get lists of problems from citizens and to aggregate those and to set priorities.

To aid decision makers in obtaining quality and usable information from clients, the Delphi technique has been suggested (Strauss and Zeigler, 1982). Questionnaires are used to ascertain the views of various groups of citizen representatives. The responses are tabulated and referred back to the groups that were involved. This allows individuals to make changes and alterations. However, decision makers can limit this process as they wish until a sound basis for a decision is achieved. This approach appears to be more effective in arriving at consensus. Glass (1979) suggested, however, that using Delbeque's nominal group process, the Delphi technique, and citizen surveys will achieve a "decision making supplement" or "representational input" (MacNair, 1981).

Sanoff (1978) suggests engaging decision makers in a learning process by holding workshops and having them interact with people. He suggests conducting design workshops that bring together citizens in many fields of interest through the use of games and group decision sessions. He believes this method will enable decision makers to update their knowledge by sharing information that they ought to know.

Donald Michael (1973) has suggested a different view, a process in which both clients and organizational participants learn through interaction and both benefit by enhancing their capacities. This, Michael said, is a long-range learning process more than a social engineering process.

Organizational negligence of clients' views with regard to program implementation has often been a subject for criticism (Boyte, 1982; Rothman, 1974). Even the legitimacy of growing human organizations in the absence of input from those who expected to be served was questioned at times. It was argued that the information used to justify human services will be credible only if it reflects the perceptions of those who are served (McKinlay, 1978).

It appears, however, that many procedures that were proposed for public decision making could be effectively adopted in a project or in a specific issue that is sensitive for political concerns. But such a procedure perhaps may affect the social behavior of a particular community as it may cause the occurrence of several implications during its process.

Relationships between an organization and its clientele can be described as a continuous communication linkage. There should be a continuous inflow and flow out of information between clients and the organization if the decisions are to be shaped by clientele input. Cohen (1980)

describes clientele input into decision making as client participation in decision making. The objective is to generate ideas, formulate and assess opinions, and to make choices about programs to be implemented. The decisions are classified into three types: (1) initial decisions, (2) ongoing decisions, and (3) operational decisions. Initial decisions include identification of programs or projects. Ongoing decisions describe decisions that are taken in the process for emerging needs and problems. Operational decisions describe specifically the involving of organizations such as voluntary groups, cooperatives, traditional associations, and youth and women's groups for continuing the process in which decisions are made by those groups who are involved.

Clientele input into the decision-making process is, therefore, a continuous act in a dynamic process which cannot be considered a one stage practice or an end. Thus, organizations need to have more dynamic mechanisms to make it work throughout.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Method**

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making processes in relation to programs and to explore the clientele perceptions with regard to those perceived mechanisms. A descriptive exploratory research was conducted by a survey of a target population. Survey research is considered most appropriate for collecting original data from a population which is too large to observe directly. In measuring attitudes and orientations in a broader population, survey research is also considered effective and appropriate (Babbie, 1989, p. 237).

The survey was administered by an instrument (see Appendix) in the form of a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was responded to by 68 percent of the sample population.

#### **Research Unit**

This research is focused on the decision making processes of 4H programs in the county extension offices in the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. County extension offices implement different educational programs for helping their clients to meet different needs and solve problems. These programs include, agriculture, home economics, natural

resources and public policy, and 4H. Through its educational programs, county extension service offices involve extensive clientele groups in individual and group action (Rasmussen, 1989). For surveying of clientele perceptions, this organization was considered appropriate because it has more opportunity to involve clientele in its decisions and to have clientele input into its several programs that are implemented.

The survey was administered in two adjoining counties, Ingham and Clinton counties. Taking two counties as unit of research was based on two reasons. First, the survey needed to be broadened beyond a single case. Second, the location was convenient for the inquiry. Identifying commonalities helps build a more visible network of organizational mechanisms.

Although differences may exist in the types of strategies used by different county extension offices, depending upon types of clients and types of the needs and programs, grasping the whole series of mechanisms was not considered important for the purpose of the study. Instead, it was assumed that some commonalities and linkages exist among different county extension offices. This does not imply that the study ignored differences. An attempt was made to identify differences for learning of specific perceptions toward individual organizations.

Typically an individual county extension office has

local links in a network of peer organizations, that are unique, having grown over the years with a common mission of helping people. This historical growth tends to cause tremendous sharing of knowledge among different county extension offices in relation to programs that are conducted. This was assumed to be true for how business is conducted in different county offices.

Studying different clientele perceptions was considered more useful than studying differences among different organizations. This matching of objectives helps build a typology of mechanisms through the study of their general pattern of identification and their acceptance.

### **Target Population**

The survey was administered to a random sample of 4H volunteers in Ingham and Clinton counties. 4H is one of four major CES program areas, planned and implemented with the participation of their clients. This program is coordinated by one or several 4H agents, staff members and by several supervisors.

Almost each county extension office has an advisory council, consisting of representatives from various program areas, including 4H volunteer representatives. In the county Extension office, this is the highest decision making level. As far as 4H is concerned, the county 4H council is the highest decision-making level which include 4H volunteers

who are project and program leaders in different 4H youth clubs. Clinton county has 54 individual 4H clubs. Members of this county 4H council is represented in the county CES advisory council.

In addition, a network of committees coordinate and monitor different programs and projects. These include 4H volunteer representatives and 4H leaders. Collaboration in programs and their participation in such representative areas are assumed to strengthen linkages between 4H volunteers and the county extension offices.

#### **Sampling Procedure**

The updated lists of 4H volunteers of Clinton and Ingham counties were obtained for research purposes in consultation with the 4H agents of both counties. The list of Clinton county included 327 names and Ingham county included 591 names. These two lists made up the sampling frame. Names on one list had been arranged alphabetically while the other followed a different pattern.

In order to draw the sample population that avoided the inconsistency of this original sampling frame and to avoid bias, it was assumed that the use of a systematic sampling procedure would not be logical. Thus, using STAT-PAC computer software a table of 269 random numbers was developed. The table of random numbers was used to develop a proportionate sample, 122 from Clinton county and 147



numbers from Ingham county. The sample size was determined at a 95 percent confidence level. This procedure yielded a total sample of 269 research subjects from the original sampling frame.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey was administered by an instrument in the form of a questionnaire. Two basic factors were considered imperative in developing this instrument. First, the success of obtaining appropriate and adequate information from respondents through a self-administered questionnaire depends upon how willing the respondents are to volunteer to answer the questions. Second, how well the responses related to the study's objectives.

Studying clients perceptions toward an organization is an exercise that may be seen as intruding upon the attitudes, values, and beliefs of potential respondents. This makes it a difficult task to assess since it isn't as simple as asking people to recall specific information. Instead, the respondents must reflect and share their views and ideas. The survey was designed so that questions might motivate and guide respondents in expressing their views and ideas.

In response to this concern, a two-stage procedure was followed in the development of the instrument. First, two county staff members, 4H agents of Ingham and Clinton

counties, were interviewed to learn about their relationships with the proposed respondent group and to learn about the organizational mechanisms used to obtain input into the decision making processes pertaining to 4H programs. From this input a preliminary instrument was developed.

At the second stage, two resource groups, each consisting of four 4H volunteers from both Ingham and Clinton counties, were selected by going through the county lists of 4H volunteers. These two groups were independently interviewed to obtain their input in the process of questionnaire building. With the comparison of information obtained from these two groups and the 4H agents, a series of close-ended questions were created. This was particularly helpful in designing questions regarding typical organizational mechanisms and communication methods. The preliminary instrument was revised due to the input of these two resource groups.

The final questionnaire included seventeen Likert-type, five- point scaled items to obtain data regarding respondents opinion and evaluation for attitudinal questions such as satisfaction, interest, awareness, and importance. Adequate provision was made for respondents to offer their independent views and additional comments wherever applicable.

The instrument was pre-tested with a few respondents

selected from the original sampling-frame in order to determine its reliability. This has helped refine the instrument before it was finally mailed.

### **Data Analysis**

Completed and returned survey instruments were coded with letters "ING" to indicate data pertaining to those respondents from Ingham county and letters "CL" for Clinton county. This grouping was maintained throughout for the purpose of comparative analysis of data. It was assumed that emerging commonalities and differences among data pertaining to the two groups would help build more valid conclusions. The separation of the two counties allowed careful observation of each unit, the pattern of responses in relation to individual organizations and then to establish a general pattern applicable to both organizations.

Data were analyzed using STAT-PAC computer software. Descriptive statistical techniques of range, frequency counts, percentage distributions, and measures of central tendencies, mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and variance were used in analyzing demographic data, and other scaled items. The instrument included seventeen Likert type, five-point scaled items.

In comparing the similarities and differences of attitudinal information such as level of satisfaction and

level of interest, the T-test was used with the original two-county grouping and additional subsequent grouping according to gender, education and so on. In determining client opinion levels about having input into important decisions related to county 4H programs, respondents were re-grouped according to those who meet with 4H staff and those who never meet with the 4H staff. The assumption was that level of opinion depends on the amount of interaction that exists between 4H staff and clients. This can be determined only on the basis of the indications for past and possible future opportunities they create for such interaction.

The correlation and linear regression test were used to determine the relationship between data, specially of client attitudinal information in relation to other clientele characteristics.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter includes two sections and in the first section data in relation to main items were analyzed. In the additional analysis of the next section data were further analyzed re-grouping some of the categories. Chapter concludes with analyzing some of the basic comments in relation to main items in the instrument.

#### Pattern of Response

A questionnaire was mailed to a sample of 269 4H volunteers in Ingham and Clinton counties. From this number, a total of 183 research subjects responded. Table 1 below represents data about the research population, sample size, number, and percentages of those who responded.

Table 1. Sample size, and the rate of response

County	Population	Sample	N	( % )
Ingham	591	149	96	(65.3)
Clinton	327	122	87	(71.3)
Total	918	269	183	(68.0)

Seventy-one percent from Ingham county and 65 percent from Clinton county responded for a total respondent rate of 68 percent.

### **Procedure of the Data Analysis**

Completed surveys were coded with "ING" for Ingham county and with "CL" for Clinton county. An assumption of this study was that there are differences between counties. Therefore, the county was used throughout to group data. This grouping was maintained in the analysis for the purpose of comparatively analyzing the data so that emerging commonalities and differences could be evaluated. The idea was to observe the specific pattern of responses in relation to each organization and then to establish a general pattern applicable to both organizations. The data were comparatively analyzed to find differences between groups, particularly in relation to any variable which may have a bearing on some other variable.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

To indicate demographic characteristics of the respondents five tables were developed. These tables represent age, gender, marital status, education, employment, length of time of their residence in their present county, length of time respondents were 4H volunteers and/or 4H leaders, and if the respondents were parents with children who were above or below 18 years of age.

Table 2 represents information about age, gender, and marital status. Age is given by means.

Table 2. Age, gender, and marital status

County	N	Mean age yrs	Gender				Marital status*	
			m	( % )	f	( % )	m	s ( % )
Ingham	96	40.8	18	(18.8)	78	(81.3)	85	(90)
Clinton	87	43.4	28	(32.2)	59	(67.8)	77	(90)

\* In some cases numbers do not equal the N due to missing data.

Mean age of respondents in Ingham county was 41 years and respondents in Clinton county was 43 years. Respondents of Clinton county were older than Ingham county respondents. In Ingham county 81 percent of the respondents were female and 19 percent were male. In Clinton county there were 68 percent female respondents and 32 percent male respondents. Among those who responded, there were more males in the Clinton county sample than in the Ingham county sample. In both counties 90 percent of the respondents were married; 10 percent were single.

Table 3 represents the educational levels of respondents.

Table 3. Educational level

Group	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a)University / college graduates	57	(60 )
	(b)High school graduates	35	(37 )
	(c)Less than high school	04	(04 )
	Total	96	(100)
Clinton	(a)University / college graduates	40	(46 )
	(b)High school graduates	46	(53 )
	(c)Less than high school	01	(01 )
	Total	87	(100)

Among those who responded in Ingham county, 60 percent were university or college graduates, 37 were high school graduates and only three percent had less than the high school level.

In Clinton county, among those who responded, 53 were high school graduates, 46 percent were university or high school graduates and only one percent had less than the high school level.

Table 4 represents the information regarding employment of the respondents.



Table 4. Respondent employment

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Full time employee	41	(42.7)
	(b) Engage in own business or work	22	(22.9)
	(c) Homemaker	15	(15.6)
	(d) Part time employee	13	(13.5)
	(e) Retired	03	(03.1)
	(f) Student	02	(02.1)
	Total	96	(100.0)
Clinton	(a) Full time employee	40	(46.0)
	(b) Engage in own business or work	17	(19.5)
	(c) Homemaker	09	(10.3)
	(d) Part time employee	17	(19.5)
	(e) Retired	02	(02.3)
	(f) Student	02	(02.3)
	Total	87	(100.0)

In Ingham county, 43 percent of the respondents were full-time employees and 23 percent indicated that they were engaged in their own businesses or work. Sixteen percent were homemakers and 14 percent were part-time employees. Three percent were retired and two percent were students.

In Clinton county, 46 percent of the respondents were full time employees and 20 percent have indicated that they were engaged in their own businesses or work. Another 20 percent were part-time employees and 10 percent homemakers. Two percent were retired and another two percent were students.

**Respondent Residence, 4H Volunteer  
and 4H Leader Experience**

Table 5 represents (a) the length of time that respondents were residents in the present county; (b) length of time involved as a 4H volunteer; and (c) length of time they were 4H leaders. Numbers are given as means.

Table 5. Length of time respondent residence in present county, experience as 4H volunteers, and 4H leaders

County	Category	yrs
Ingham	(a) Years of residence	21.2*
	(b) Years of 4H volunteering	7.4*
	(c) Years of 4H leader	5.9*
Clinton	(a) Years of residence	26.1
	(b) Years of 4H volunteering	9.9
	(c) Years of 4H leader	8.8

\*p = <.05

In Ingham county, the mean length of time that respondents were residents in the existing county was 21 years and in Clinton county, 26 years. The mean length of time for being 4H volunteers in Ingham county was seven years, in Clinton county it was 10 years. Ingham county respondents were 4H leaders for a mean of six years, and Clinton county respondents, were 4H leaders for nine years.

The T-test indicates a significant difference between the two respondent groups in terms of their length of time

in which they were residents in their present county, length of time they were 4H volunteers, and 4H leaders. The Clinton County respondents have resided for a longer period of time than their counterparts in Ingham county and have more experience as 4H volunteers and 4H leaders.

Table 6 represents those (a) respondents who indicated they are parents with children above 18 years and (b) those parents with children below 18 years.

Table 6. Parents with children above 18 years and below 18 yrs

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Parents with children at the age 18 and above	39	(44.8)
	(b) Parents with those below 18	37	(40.6)
Clinton	(a) Parents with children at the age 18 and above	41	(47.1)
	(b) Parents with those below 18	33	(37.9)

Forty five percent of the Ingham county respondents and 47 percent of the respondents of Clinton county are parents with children above 18 years. Forty one percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 38 percent of the respondents in Clinton county have children below 18 years. However, among those parents with children above 18 years were included parents with children in both age categories.

**Reasons to Become 4H Volunteers; the Importance of  
Respondent Volunteering; Respondent Awareness about the Own  
Community, and the Involvement in Decision Making in 4H  
Clubs and Different Community Organizations**

Five tables were developed to indicate (a) primary reasons for respondents to become 4H volunteers, (b) how did respondents first find out about the possibility of becoming 4H volunteers, (c) their opinion about the importance of volunteering for the overall mission of 4H, (d) respondent awareness about their own communities, and (e) level of respondent involvement in 4H clubs and other community organizations. Table 7 represents the primary reasons that respondents indicated for becoming 4H volunteers. The figures indicate their reasons in relation to the total number of respondents in each of the two county groups.

**Table 7. Primary reasons for becoming 4H volunteers**

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) To help children & youth	86	(89.6)
	(b) To be involved in community	22	(22.9)
	(c) To enhance own skills	17	(17.7)
	(d) To participate in CES	17	(17.7)
	(e) For other reasons	24	(25.0)
Clinton	(a) To help children & youth	82	(94.3)
	(b) To be involved in community	28	(32.2)
	(c) To enhance skills	13	(14.9)
	(d) To participate in CES	07	(08.0)
	(e) For other reasons	12	(13.8)

The major reason for respondents to become 4H volunteers in both counties was to help children and youth. This was indicated by 90 percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 94 percent in Clinton county. In addition, 23 percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 32 percent in Clinton county indicated that they became 4H volunteers to involved in the community. Eighteen percent in Ingham county became involved as a 4H volunteer to enhance their own skills. The same reason held true for 28 percent of the 4H volunteers in Clinton county. In Ingham county 18 percent of the respondents indicated that they became 4H volunteers to participate in the CES, and only seven percent in Clinton county gave that reason. Twenty five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 14 percent in Clinton county indicated they became 4H volunteers for other reasons. Some of those reasons included, help those who have helped, share skills with those who are interested, help organize, share responsibility, and to be involved in a meaningful activity.

Table 8 represents how respondents first found out about the possibility of being a 4H volunteer.

Table 8. How did respondents first find out about the possibility of being a 4-H volunteer

County	category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Became 4-H as a child	51	(53.1)
	(b) Known from children	28	(29.2)
	(c) Known from friends	24	(25.0)
	(d) Known from the 4-H agent	11	(11.5)
	(e) Known from the CES	01	(01.0)
	(f) Known from other sources	11	(11.5)
Clinton	(a) Became 4-H as a child	43	(49.4)
	(b) Known from children	30	(34.5)
	(c) Known from friends	21	(24.1)
	(d) Known from the 4-H agent	15	(17.2)
	(e) Known from the CES	06	(06.9)
	(f) Known from other sources	11	(12.6)

Fifty-three percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 49 percent in Clinton became 4-H volunteers from their childhood. Twenty nine percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 34 percent in Clinton county came to know about the possibility of being 4-H volunteers from their children. Twenty-five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 24 percent in Clinton county indicated they came to know about the possibility of becoming 4-H volunteers from friends. A few from both counties mentioned they came to know about the possibility of becoming 4-H volunteers from the 4-H agent or the CES.

Table 9 represents the importance respondents place on their volunteering for the overall mission of 4H. A Likert-type, five point scale was provided to indicate respondent

feelings about the importance. Level 5 indicates very important. Levels 1 and 2 indicate not important or less important. Levels above 3 indicate important or more important. Means are given in the table.

Table 9. How important respondents feel about their volunteering for the overall mission of the 4H

County	Level of importance		
	Mean	S. D.	Variance
Ingham	4.17	1.06	1.12
Clinton	4.13	0.96	0.83

Scale: 5= very important  
1= not important

Respondents in both Ingham and Clinton counties feel that their volunteering is more important for the overall mission of 4H. The T-test was used to examine the difference in means. The difference was not shown to be significant.

Table 10 represents how aware respondents feel about their own community. A Likert type, 5 point scale was provided for indicating respondent level of awareness. Level 5 indicates very aware and levels 1 and 2 indicate not aware or less aware. Levels 3 and 4 indicate aware or more aware. The level of awareness is given in means.

Table 10. Respondent awareness of their community

County	Level of awareness		
	Mean	S. D.	Variance
Ingham	3.51	1.08	1.17
Clinton	3.64	1.03	1.07

Scale: 5= Very aware  
1= Not aware

Respondents in both Ingham and Clinton counties equally feel that they are informed about their own community. But, this feeling has a high variance. The T-test was used to examine the difference in means. The difference was not shown to be significant.

Table 11 represents the involvement of respondents in decision making in 4H clubs, and different community organizations. A Likert type, 5 point scale was provided to rate the respondent level of involvement.

Level 5 indicates very involved and levels 1 and 2 not involved or less involved. Levels 3 and 4 show involved and more involved. Means are given in the table.



**Table 11. Level of respondent Involvement in 4H clubs and different community organizations**

County	Community group	Level of involvement Mean
Ingham	(a) Other civic groups	4.1
	(b) 4H club	3.4
	(c) Church group	2.8
	(d) Parent teacher association	2.5
	(e) Other youth groups	1.8
Clinton	(a) Other civic groups	4.4
	(b) 4H club	3.5
	(c) Church group	2.5
	(d) Parent teacher association	2.5
	(e) Other youth groups	2.3

Scale: 5= very involved  
1= not involved

Means in the table were computed with data from only those who indicated their involvement in decision making in identified organizations. However, in both counties responses were very similar. This indicates that respondents are fairly involved in decision making in 4H clubs. Both groups are equally involved in decision making in other civic organizations.

Other civic groups mentioned by a few of respondents included Farm Bureau, horse association, FFA gardener Clubs, and Township office.

### **4H Volunteer Relationship and Their Input into Decision-making in 4H Programs/CES**

Ten tables were developed to represent perceptions of respondents regarding (a) their relationship to CES; (b) ways in which they make their input into decision making in CES programs; (c) how 4H agent/other CES staff make decisions about programs; (d) purposes for which 4H agent/other CES staff discuss program plans with 4H volunteers; (e) how often 4H agent/other CES staff discuss program plans with 4H volunteers; (f) how often 4H volunteers meet with 4H agent/staff, (g) typical organizational strategies that exist for 4H volunteer input into decision making in CES programs CES; (h) the level of satisfaction with regard to existing strategies for 4H volunteer input into the program decision-making process; (i) the extent to which they have input in decisions that are made by 4H agent/other staff; and (j) the 4H agent/staff interest in learning of their views and opinions.

Table 12 represents how respondents perceive their relationship to the 4H program in CES. Relationships were indicated in terms of how 4H the program benefits CES and vice versa. The numbers indicate the percentage in each category mentioned.

Table 12. How respondents describe their relationship to 4H program

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a)Both the program and volunteer benefit	74	(77.9)
	(b)Program benefits more than volunteer does	12	(12.6)
	(c)Volunteer benefits more than program does	09	(09.5)
	(d)Neither volunteer nor the program benefit	00	(00.0)
Clinton	(a)Both the program and volunteer benefit	61	(70.9)
	(b)Program benefits more than volunteer does	16	(18.6)
	(c)Volunteer benefits more than program does	05	(05.8)
	(d)Neither volunteer nor the program benefit	04	(04.7)

Seventy eight percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 71 percent of the respondents in Clinton county feel that both the program and individual 4H volunteer benefit from their relationship with the 4H program in CES. Thirteen percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 19 percent of the respondents in Clinton county feel that the program benefits more than an individual 4H volunteer does. Ten percent of the respondents in Ingham county and six percent of the respondents in Clinton county believe that the individual volunteer benefits more than the program does. Only five percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that neither the program nor does the volunteer benefits.

Table 13 represents the way in which respondents believe that they make input into the 4H programs in CES. Number and percentage correspond to the times that each

category was mentioned.

Table 13. How do 4H volunteers believe that they make input into 4H programs

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) By just being a 4H volunteer	77	(80.2)
	(b) By responding to 4H agent/staff questions	46	(47.9)
	(c) By participating in committees	43	(44.8)
	(d) By meeting with other 4H volunteers	41	(42.7)
	(e) By meeting with 4H agent/staff	40	(41.7)
	(f) By meeting with people in community	34	(35.4)
	(g) By other ways	07	(07.3)
Clinton	(a) By just being a volunteer	72	(82.8)
	(b) By responding to 4H agent/staff questions	46	(47.1)
	(c) By participating in committees	38	(43.7)
	(d) By meeting with other 4H volunteers	38	(43.7)
	(e) By meeting with 4H agent/staff	36	(41.4)
	(f) By meeting with people in community	19	(21.8)
	(g) By other ways	09	(10.9)

Eighty percent of the respondents of Ingham county and 83 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that by their just being 4H volunteers they make input into the 4H programs in CES. Forty eight percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 48 percent of the respondents in Clinton county believe that they make input into the programs by responding to questions of the 4H agent and other 4H staff.

Forty five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 41 percent of the respondents in Ingham county indicated that they make input into 4H programs by participating in committees. Forty three percent of the respondents in Ingham

county and 44 percent of the respondents in Clinton county believe that they make input into programs by meeting with other 4H volunteers. Forty two percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 41 percent of the respondents in Clinton county believe that by meeting with the 4H agent or other 4H staff in CES, they make input into the 4H program.

Thirty five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 22 percent of the respondents in Clinton county believe that they make input into programs by meeting with people in the community. Only a small number of respondents mentioned other ways that input is given into programs.

Table 14 represents how respondents perceive the ways in which the 4H agent/other staff make decisions. Number and percentage correspond to times each category was mentioned.

Table 14. How respondents believe that the 4H agent/staff make decisions when they need

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Asks input from 4H volunteers	58	(60.4)
	(b) Asks other staff	43	(44.8)
	(c) Asks input from children in 4H clubs	33	(34.4)
	(d) No idea	24	(25.0)
	(e) Asks input from community	17	(17.7)
	(d) 4H agent makes decisions	11	(11.5)
	(f) By other ways	01	(01.1)
Clinton	(a) Asks input from 4H volunteers	55	(63.2)
	(b) Asks other staff	42	(51.7)
	(c) Asks input from children in 4H clubs	37	(42.5)
	(d) No idea	24	(27.5)
	(e) Asks input from community	21	(24.1)
	(f) 4H agent makes decisions	10	(11.5)
	(g) By other ways	01	(01.1)

Sixty percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 63 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that when the 4H agent/other staff need to make a decision on programs, they ask for input from 4H volunteers. Forty five percent of the respondents of Ingham county and 52 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that 4H agent or staff ask input from other staff when they need to make a decision.

Thirty four percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 43 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent or staff member asks for input from the children and youth in the 4H clubs when they need to make a decision about programs. Twenty five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 28 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that they have no idea or they have remained unresponsive to the question of how the 4H agent/staff make decisions.

Eighteen percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 24 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent/staff ask input from people in the community when they need to make a decision. Twelve percent of the respondents in both Ingham and clinton counties indicated that the 4H agent makes decisions when he/she needs. Only one respondent from each county identified another way that the 4H agent/staff makes decisions when needed.

Table 15 represents the perceived purposes for which 4H agents or other CES staff discuss program plans with 4H volunteers. The number and percentage correspond with the times each category was mentioned.

Table 15. Perceived purposes for which 4H agent/staff discuss program plans with 4H volunteers

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) To assess needs	64	(66.6)
	(b) To recruit for a program	40	(47.9)
	(c) To modify a program	44	(45.8)
	(d) For creating a new program	38	(39.6)
	(e) To drop a program	15	(15.6)
	(f) For other reasons	05	(05.2)
Clinton	(a) To assess needs	43	(49.4)
	(b) To recruit for a program	41	(47.1)
	(c) To modify a program	45	(51.7)
	(d) For creating a new program	26	(29.9)
	(e) To drop a program	09	(10.3)
	(f) For other reasons	02	(02.3)

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 49 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent or other staff probably discusses program plans with them to assess needs. Forty eight percent of the respondents of Ingham county and 47 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent or staff probably discusses program plans with them to recruit for a program. Fifty two percent of the respondents in Clinton county and 46 percent of the

respondents in Ingham county indicated that the 4H agent or other staff members probably discuss program plans with them to modify a program. Forty percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 30 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent or staff probably discuss program plans with them to create a new program.

Sixteen percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 10 percent of the respondents in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent/staff probably discuss program plans with them to drop a program. Only five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and two percent of the respondents in Clinton county mentioned that the 4H agent/staff discuss program plans with them probably for other reasons such as raising funds.

Table 16 represents responses regarding how frequently 4H agents or other staff share and discuss program ideas and plans with respondents. A Likert type, 5 point scale was provided to rate how frequently the 4H agent/staff share or discuss program ideas and plans with respondents. Level 5 indicates the frequency of very often and levels 1 and 2 indicate never or rarely. Levels 3 to 4 indicate often or more often. Computed levels are given by means.



Table 16. 4H agent/staff frequency of discussing program plans with 4H volunteers

County	N	( % )	Frequency of discussion		
			Mean	S.D.	Variance
Ingham	90	(93.7)	2.9	1.27	1.36
Clinton	80	(91.9)	2.7	1.28	1.12

Scale: 5= Very often  
1= Never

Respondents in both counties indicated that the 4H agent or other staff discuss program plans with them frequently.

Table 17 indicates how frequently respondents meet with the 4H agent or other CES staff. The number and percentage correspond with times each category was mentioned. The T-test was used to examine the difference in means. The difference was not shown to be significant.

Table 17. How often 4H volunteers meet with the 4H agent or other CES staff

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Never	18	(19.4)
	(b) Regularly-every month	22	(23.7)
	(c) Regularly-in two weeks	03	(03.2)
	(d) Regularly-once a week	01	(01.0)
	(e) Occasionally	49	(52.7)
	Total of b,c,d,and e	75	(80.6)
Clinton	(a) Never	20	(23.8)
	(b) Regularly-every month	13	(15.5)
	(c) Regularly-in two weeks	07	(08.3)
	(d) Regularly- once a week	01	(01.2)
	(e) Occasionally	43	(51.2)
	Total of b,c,d,and e	64	(76.2)

Nineteen percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 24 percent of the respondents of Clinton county indicated that they never meet with 4H agents or other staff. Only one percent of the respondents from Ingham and Clinton county indicated that they meet with the 4H agent/staff regularly every week. Another three percent of the respondents from Ingham county and eight percent from Clinton county indicated that they meet with the 4H agent/staff regularly every two weeks.

Twenty four percent of the respondents of Ingham county and 16 percent of the respondents of Clinton county indicated that they meet with the 4H agent and staff once a every month.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents in Ingham county

and 51 percent from Clinton county indicated that they occasionally meet with the 4H agent or other staff. As shown in Table 17 a total of 81 percent of the respondents in Ingham county indicated that they either occasionally or regularly meet with the 4H agent/staff. A total of 76 percent of the respondents in Clinton county also indicated that they either occasionally or regularly meet with the 4H agent/staff.

**Perceived Organizational Mechanisms for  
Clientele Input into Decision Making**

Table 18 represents the county strategies that the 4H program/CES use to get 4H volunteer input into decision making as perceived by respondents.

Table 18. Perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) By circulating community letters	78	(81.3)
	(b) Inviting attendance at meetings	74	(77.1)
	(c) Through work shop sessions	56	(58.3)
	(d) By encouraging informal contact	49	(51.0)
	(e) 4H representation at CES advisory council	44	(45.8)
	(f) Liaison system	43	(44.8)
	(g) by sending out questionnaires	41	(42.7)
	(h) By maintaining suggestion boxes at fairs	26	(27.1)
Clinton	(a) By circulating community letters	61	(70.1)
	(b) Inviting attendance at meetings	67	(77.0)
	(c) Through workshop sessions	51	(58.6)
	(d) By encouraging informal contact	44	(51.7)
	(e) 4H representation in CES advisory council	43	(49.4)
	(f) Liaison system	39	(44.8)
	(g) By sending out questionnaires	47	(54.0)
	(h) By maintaining suggestion boxes in fairs	27	(31.0)

Table 18 indicates that a considerable number of respondents in both Ingham and Clinton counties have identified all eight categories as typical strategies that the 4H program/CES uses to get the input of 4H volunteers for decision making pertaining to youth needs and programs.

In particular, 81 percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 70 percent in Clinton county indicated that circulating community letters among 4H volunteers is the way that the county extension office gets their input in the decision-making process. Seventy seven percent of the respondents in Ingham and Clinton counties indicated that by inviting 4H volunteer attendance at meetings that the county extension service personnel get their input in decision making.

Fifty eight percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 59 percent in Clinton county indicated that the county Extension office gets their input into decision making at workshops or through special sessions conducted at workshops. Fifty one percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 52 percent in Clinton county indicated that by encouraging informal contact with 4H agent and staff the county extension office gets their input in decision making.

Forty six percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 49 percent in Clinton county indicated that through the 4H volunteer representation on the CES advisory council, the county extension office gets their input into decision

making. Forty five percent of the respondents in the two counties indicated that through the liaison system, the county extension office gets 4H volunteer input into the decision making process.

Forty-three percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 54 percent in Clinton county indicated that by sending out questionnaires the county extension office gets their input into decision making. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 31 percent in Clinton county indicated that by maintaining suggestion boxes at county fairs and other county events, county extension offices obtain their input into the decision making process.

According to the function that each of the organizational mechanism performs, the eight categories which evolved can be re-grouped into four functional levels. Namely, formalization, stimulation, nurturing, and recognition.

The liaison system would then appear as the lowest level of mechanism which any organization can use in order to maintain a routine relationship with clients. This can be done with or without any deliberate attempt to have clientele input into organizational decisions. It can be maintained as a formality. The liaison system would be categorized as formalization.

The advisory council is also a formal structure but its function is more than a mere formality. This is because

representation allows clients to actively participate in the decision making process and provides clients with a specific channel for making their input into decision making. This is clearly a form of "recognition" and therefore can be considered at the highest level of this functional continuum.

Maintenance of suggestion boxes is a way for clients to volunteer their ideas and to make individual input. As such, it can be considered functionally at the "stimulation" level. This mechanism exhibits the organizational willingness to encourage clientele innovativeness for new ideas. By circulating community letters, organizations can have more client-centered efforts to articulate clientele input. Sending out questionnaires is another mechanism that can serve to stimulate clientele for their input. This is a strategy that is often used to obtain input for a decision pertaining to a specific problem, program, or needs assessment.

Meetings and workshops provide forums for both the organizational participants and clients to discuss and share ideas face to face and to meet with each other for generating new input. This kind of involvement can be classified as "nurturing". Nurturing mechanisms allow clientele and organizational staff open discussions to identify alternatives and to better understand all sides of a decision that is to be made. These mechanisms demonstrate

a more committed effort by organizations to nurture clientele to increase their input in making sensible decisions.

**Respondent Level of Satisfaction with Regard to Perceived  
Organizational Mechanisms for Clientele Input into Decision  
Making Pertaining to Youth Needs and Programs in 4H  
Program/CES**

Table 19 represents level of respondent satisfaction with regard to each strategy that was identified. In order to assess the individual level of satisfaction with each strategy, Likert type, five point scale was provided. Level 5 indicates high satisfaction with the identified strategy and levels 1 and 2 indicate no satisfaction or less satisfaction. Levels from 3 to 4 indicates respondents are satisfied or more satisfied with the identified strategy. Computed levels are given in means.

**Table 19. Respondent level of satisfaction with regard to perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making**

County Category	Level of satisfaction		
	Mean	S.D.	Variance
Ingham (a)By circulating community letters	4.36	0.78	0.61
(b)Inviting attendance at meetings	4.21	0.89	0.80
(c)Through workshop sessions	4.18	0.90	0.81
(d)By encouraging informal contact	4.18	0.98	0.97
(e)4H rep. at CES ad. council	3.59	1.07	1.15
(f)Liaison system	3.95	1.09	1.18
(g)By sending out questionnaires	3.98	1.12	1.26
(h)By maintaining suggestion boxes	3.50	1.34	1.79
Clinton(a)By circulating community letters	4.08	1.02	1.04
(b)Inviting attendance at meetings	3.96	1.01	1.03
(c)Through workshop sessions	3.86	0.98	0.96
(d)By encouraging informal contact	4.05	1.13	1.24
(e)4H rep. at CES ad. council	3.56	1.04	1.08
(f)Liaison system	3.83	0.97	0.94
(g)By sending out questionnaires	3.76	1.07	1.14
(h)By maintaining suggestion boxes	3.30	1.15	1.32

Scale: 5=Highly satisfied  
1=Not satisfied

Respondents who identified each strategy are generally satisfied with each of the eight mechanisms. In Ingham county the mean level of satisfaction was above level 4 for four strategies: circulation of community letters, invitation for 4H volunteer attendance at meetings, workshops, and encouragement of informal contact with 4H program staff. This indicates they are more satisfied with those strategies. In Clinton county only two mechanisms of circulating community letters and encouragement of informal contact had the respondent satisfaction at level 4. However,



the level of respondent satisfaction for inviting attendance at meetings and workshops remained close to the earlier two mechanisms. As shown in the table satisfaction among Ingham county respondents for the liaison system and sending out questionnaires was at the level of 3.9. In Clinton county it was at level of 3.8. Satisfaction for the 4H representation at CES advisory council was at the level of 3.6 among respondents in both counties.

However, maintenance of suggestion boxes in county fairs and other events as a county strategy for clientele input ranks the last. Table 19 also indicates that the level of satisfaction differs as the variance around means are less than 1.0. for some strategies and higher than 1.0 for other strategies.

Table 20 represents the opinion of respondents regarding their having input into important decisions that are made by the 4H agent or other staff which have an impact on their community. A Likert type, five point scale was provided to indicate the rated opinion. The table shows the means.

Table 20. Respondent opinion about their input in important decisions that are made by 4H agent/staff

County	N	( % )	Level of opinion Mean	S.D.	Variance
Ingham	93	(96.8)	2.98	1.34	1.78
Clinton	79	(90.8)	3.16	1.38	1.91

Scale: 5= Yes  
1= No

Table 20 indicates that respondents in both Ingham and Clinton counties held only a moderate opinion about their input in important decisions made by the 4H agent/staff that has an impact on their community. But, this opinion is varied as seen from the variance around means. The T-test was used to examine the difference in means which was not shown to be significant.

Table 21 represents how respondents believe that the 4H agent or other staff is interested in learning about their views and opinions. A Likert type, five point scale was provided to indicate rate of interest as perceived by the respondents. Level 5 indicates highly interested and levels 1, and 2 indicate no interest or less interested. Level above 3 to 4 indicates interested or more interested. The number represents those who responded and the level is given by means.

**Table 21. Perceived level of interest of 4H agent/staff for learning of views and opinions of respondents**

County	N	( % )	Level of interest Mean	Variance
Ingham	89	(92.7)	4.02	1.03
Clinton	80	(91.9)	3.85	1.48

Scale: 5=very interested  
1=not interested

The T-test indicated no significant difference in the opinion between the two groups of respondents with regard to learning about respondent views by the 4H agent/staff. The mean is above the level 4 in Ingham county and around the level 4 in Clinton county, both groups are about equally of the opinion that the 4H agent or other staff is more interested in learning about views and opinions of 4H volunteers. As the table indicates, this opinion is varied.

#### **Communication and Methods of Communication**

Table 22 represents the indicated ways by which respondents communicate with the 4H agent or other staff. The number and the percentage correspond to the times each category was mentioned.

Table 22. Methods of Communication

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Telephone	79	(82.3)
	(b) In person at office	53	(55.2)
	(c) Mail	50	(52.1)
	(d) In person at meetings	46	(47.9)
	(e) In person at home	08	(08.3)
	(f) Other ways	08	(08.3)
Clinton	(a) Telephone	72	(82.8)
	(b) In person at office	57	(65.5)
	(c) Mail	38	(43.7)
	(d) In person at meetings	52	(59.8)
	(e) In person at home	07	(08.0)
	(f) Other ways	04	(04.6)

Eighty-two percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 83 percent in Clinton county indicated that they communicate by telephone with the 4H agent/staff. Fifty-five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 66 percent of the respondents in Clinton county communicate with the 4H agent/staff in person at the CES office. Fifty two percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 44 percent in Clinton county mentioned the mail as another communication method. Another 48 percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 60 percent in Clinton county indicated that they communicate in person at meetings with the 4H agent/staff. Very few respondents in both counties indicated that they communicate in person in homes. Other methods such as meeting at barns were mentioned by only eight percent of the

respondents from Ingham county and five percent from Clinton county.

Table 23 presents how the communication is initiated between respondents and the 4H agent/staff. The number and percentage correspond with the times each category was mentioned.

Table 23. Who initiates the communication between 4H agent/staff and 4H volunteers

County	Category	N	( % )
Ingham	(a) Both 4H agent/staff and 4H volunteer initiate communication	54	(57.4)
	(b) 4H agent/staff initiate communication	24	(25.4)
	(c) Individual 4H volunteer initiates communication	16	(17.0)
Clinton	(a) Both 4H agent/staff and 4H volunteer initiate communication	42	(55.3)
	(b) 4H agent/staff initiate communication	20	(26.3)
	(c) Individual 4H volunteer initiates communication	14	(18.4)

Fifty seven percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 55 percent in Clinton county indicated that both the 4H agent/staff and 4H volunteers equally initiate the communication. Twenty five percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 26 percent in Clinton county indicated that the 4H agent/staff initiate communication. Only 17 percent of the respondents in Ingham county and 18 percent

from Clinton county indicated that individual 4H volunteers initiate communication.

### Additional Analysis

The data were re-grouped according to gender, and educational level, and seventeen scaled items on the questionnaire were analyzed for differences in the means. None of the items showed significant differences.

Then the data were re-grouped according to respondents who indicated that they never meet with the 4H agent/4H staff and those who either occasionally or regularly meet with the 4H agent/4H staff. No difference was shown for the item of how important respondents think their volunteering is for the overall mission of 4H. However, the following six tables represent items that showed a significant difference when re-grouped.

Table 24. Respondent awareness of their community when grouped by agent/client interaction

Group	N	( % )	Level of awareness	
			Mean	S. D.
Respondents never meet with 4H agent/staff	39	(22.0)	3.15	1.10
Respondents meet 4H agent/staff occasionally/regularly	138	(78.0)	3.73	0.97

Scale: 5=Highly aware  
1=Not aware

p = <.05

Table 25. Respondent level of involvement with 4H clubs when grouped by agent/client interaction

Group	N ( % )	Level of involvement Mean S. D.	
Respondents never meet 4H agent/staff	37 (21.5)	2.35	1.17
Respondents meet 4H agent/staff occasionally/regularly	135 (78.5)	3.73	1.19
Scale: 5= Very involved 1= Not involved		p = < .05	

Table 26. How respondents feel that 4H agent/staff is interested in learning about their ideas

Group	N ( % )	Level of interest Mean S. D.	
Respondents never meet 4H agent/staff	30 (18.1)	3.13	1.33
Respondents meet 4H agent/staff occasionally/regularly	136 (81.9)	4.14	0.95
Scale: 5= Very interested 1= Not interested		p = < .05	

Table 27. Perceived frequency of discussing program plans with 4H volunteers when grouped by agent/staff interaction

Group	N ( % )	Frequency of program plan discussion Mean S. D.	
Respondents never meet 4H agent/staff	32 (19.2)	2.07	1.30
Respondents meet 4H agent/staff occasionally/regularly	135 (80.8)	2.65	1.25
Scale: 5= Very often 1= never		p = <.05	

The T-test was used to examine the differences in means according to this new grouping. A significant difference became apparent in the level of satisfaction with each strategy according to this grouping.

Accordingly, Table 28 represents the mean level of satisfaction with regard to each county strategy that respondents identified for clientele input into decision making pertaining to youth problems and programs. Labels of those eight strategies shown in the Table 18 in the preceding analysis were shortened in the Table 28 for the convenience of tabulation but remain in the same order.

Table 28. Respondent level of satisfaction with county strategies that exist for clientele input into decision making processes when grouped by agent/staff interaction

Strategy	Respondents never meet 4H agent/staff				Respondents occasionally/ regularly meet 4H agent/staff			
	N	( % )	Mean	S. D	N	( % )	Mean	S.D
(a)Community letter	25	(18.2)	3.64*	1.13	112	(81.8)	4.38*	0.79
(b)Meetings	23	(16.3)	3.39*	1.13	118	(83.7)	4.24*	0.86
(c)Work shops	15	(14.2)	3.07*	1.29	91	(85.8)	4.19*	0.78
(d)Informal contact	10	(10.9)	3.30*	1.35	82	(89.1)	4.22*	0.98
(e)Advisory council	15	(17.2)	2.75*	1.29	72	(82.8)	3.75*	0.91
(f)Liaison system	09	(11.0)	3.00*	1.15	73	(89.0)	4.01*	0.97
(g)Questionnaire	12	(14.0)	3.25*	1.16	74	(86.0)	3.97*	1.07
(h)Suggestion boxes	07	(13.2)	2.86*	1.36	46	(86.8)	3.48*	1.21

Scale: 5= Highly satisfied  
1= Not satisfied

p = <.05



Table 28 shows that those respondents who either occasionally or regularly meet with the 4H agent/staff are more satisfied with all eight county strategies for their input into decision making than those respondents who indicated that they never meet with the 4H agent/staff.

Table 29. Respondent opinion about their input in important decisions that are made by the 4H agent/staff when grouped by agent/staff interaction

Group	N	( % )	Level of opinion Mean S.D.	
Those respondents never meet 4H agent/staff	35	(20.5)	1.94*	1.19
Respondent meet 4H agent/staff occasionally/regularly	136	(79.5)	3.36*	1.25

Scale: 5= Yes  
1= No

\*p = <.05

Table 29 shows that those respondents who either occasionally or regularly meet with 4H agent/staff have a better opinion about their having input into decisions that are made by the 4H agent/staff which have an impact on the community. Those who never meet with 4H agent/staff have a poorer opinion about their having input into important decisions that are made by the 4H agent/staff.

Data were analyzed by Correlation & Linear Regression-tests to determine the level of opinion that respondents held for their input in important decisions in relation to

the following three items:

- (a) the respondent level of awareness of the community,
- (b) their level of involvement in 4H clubs, and
- (c) how often respondents meet with 4H agent/staff.

Table 30 represents the correlation and coefficient levels shown by the Test of Correlation & Linear regression for these variables.

Table 30. Correlation and coefficient levels of significant differences

Variable	Corr. Coef.	Level of significance
(a) Level of awareness	0.300	0.000
(b) Involvement in 4H club	0.334	0.002
(c) Frequency of meeting	0.343	0.002

$p = <.05$

Table shows no significant relationship with the clientele opinion in relation to the variables tested.

#### Additional Comments

The questionnaire provided space for respondents to write comments following some of the items. The highlights of those comments are presented in this section by four tables with analysis where applicable.

Nearly 82 percent of the respondents made a total of 151 positive comments to the question of how they knew that the 4H agent/staff was interested in learning about their ideas,

views and opinions. These comments are presented in the Table 31. The numbers following each item indicate the number of respondents who made similar comments in each county. N represents total comments made under the each item.

Table 31. How respondents knew that 4H agent/staff is interested in learning of their views and ideas

Comment	County Ingham	Clinton	N
(a) Ask input constantly	13	16	29
(b) Listen and express what they were exactly felt	07	12	19
(c) Uses and involves	07	04	11
(d) Follow up and feedback	06	04	10
(e) Return contacts	07	03	10
(f) Openness to ideas	04	04	08
(g) Discuss	05	03	08
(h) Can see the implications	05	03	08
(i) Lets you know where you stand	04	03	07
(j) Positive attitude	02	05	07
(k) Verbal acceptance	04	02	06
(l) Sharing ideas and views	03	03	06
(m) Interest shown	02	04	06
(n) Response to suggestions	03	02	05
(o) Direct communication	03	02	05
(p) Response is made where needed	-	03	03
(q) Changes asked were made	02	01	03

77(80.2) 74(85.0) 151(82.4)

When all comments included in table 31 are examined, a particular pattern of organizational response seems to emerge. Thus, the data shown in this table were further analyzed re-grouping categories that emerged from the data. These categories are response by listening, articulating, sharing, and reinforcing. The Table 32 represents this re-grouping according to those four categories. N and

percentages correspond to the total comments for each category.

Table 32. Pattern of response

Category	Comment	N ( % )
(1) Listening	Openness to ideas (08) Positive attitude (07) Verbal acceptance (06) Interest shown (06) Response to suggestions (05) Response is made where needed (03)	35 (19.1)
(2) Articulation	Ask input constantly (29) Direct communication (05)	34 (18.6)
(3) Sharing	Listen and express what was exactly felt (19) Discuss (08) Sharing ideas and views (06)	33 (18.0)
(4) Reinforcing	Uses and involves (11) Return contacts (10) Follow up and feedback (10) Can see the implications (08) Lets you know where you stand (07) Changes asked were made (03)	49 (26.7)
Total comments		151 (82.4)

In this grouping, listening means positively responding to clients who express needs and present ideas but with no deliberate attempt to seek ideas or suggestions.

Articulation means looking forward for client ideas,

views, and input by directly asking or communicating with clients. This is seen as a deliberate attempt for seeking ideas, and views.

Sharing implies a more specific attempt to discuss and share ideas so that more sensible input can be nurtured through the interaction. This is an empathetic approach that leads client and the organizational participant to become mutually understood.

Reinforcement means that the client is made convinced his or her idea, view or suggestion is well recognized and implemented.

Table 33 represents respondent reflections to the question of how they changed, developed, or what accomplishments they have made because of their involvement with the 4H program. The numbers in parentheses following each item indicate the number of respondents who made similar comments.

Table 33. How respondents feel they have changed, developed, or what accomplishments have been made by involvement with the 4H program

- 
- (a) Involvement with youth (18)
  - (b) Became self-directed (14)
  - (c) Grown closer to kids (12)
  - (d) Enhanced skills in organization, public, and administrative decision making (11)
  - (e) Children became drug free, constructive, and active in the society (09)
  - (f) Loved to watch kids light up (09)
  - (g) Became involved and shared with others (06)
  - (h) Self-esteem and accomplishment (06)
  - (i) Enhanced leadership skills (06)
  - (j) Came to know own limitations (05)
  - (k) Learned to incorporate more ideas (04)
  - (l) Learned to research own knowledge and ideas (03)
  - (m) Grown attitude to accept change (03)
  - (n) Learning about decision making and problem solving (03)
  - (o) Became skilled as resource people (03)
  - (p) Felt part of the system (03)
  - (q) Family unity (01)
- 

As shown in the table 33, all comments can be grouped into two specific categories of achievements:

- (a) respondent feelings of accomplishment through the development of own children, youth and the opportunity gained by being involved with others,
- (b) respondents' change through the development of skills in areas such as leadership, decision-making, knowledge; the achievements in self-esteem and self-direction.

How respondents expressed their views about the decision making in the CES 4H program is represented in Table 34.

Table 34. How respondents express their views about decision-making in the CES 4H programs

- 
- (a) Youth involvement in decision making is not enough (09)
  - (b) Without volunteer input no program works (09)
  - (c) They do a pretty good job (06)
  - (d) More involvement with concerned parties are needed (05)
  - (e) Decision making in county and state level is done by a few for the benefit of a few (05)
  - (f) I like being asked for my opinion and being included at least at certain points of decision making (05)
  - (g) Every one in all levels listens to ideas with an open mind with no attitude of "I know it all" (04)
  - (h) If you are really involved you can have input (04)
  - (i) Decision input by own choice and initiative (03)
  - (j) People must get involved (03)
  - (k) Disappointed (03)
  - (l) Input depends on the role you play (03)
  - (m) I prefer others making decisions (03)
  - (n) 4H is an agent/leader participant seen program (03)
  - (o) CES is heading more towards urban from rural (02)
- 

As seen from the Table 34, with the total of 67 comments, the emphasis seems to have focused on both the organization and clients. These call attention for organizations to open more opportunities for clientele input. It also focuses attention to the client's choice to make use of opportunities that exist for them to make input into the decision-making process.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter summarizes the findings of preceding analyses and draws conclusions from them. The first part summarizes (a) demographic and social characteristics of the respondents, and (b) fundamental reasons for which respondents became 4H volunteers and their perceived relationship to the 4H program.

The second part summarizes the findings as they relate to the objectives of the study. These objectives were: (1) perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making, (2) how clients indicate that they make input into the decision making process, (3) clientele level of satisfaction with perceived organizational mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making process, (4) clientele opinion regarding their input in important decisions that are made by the 4H agent or staff which impact their community, (5) clientele perceptions about organizational responses to them, and (6) typology of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making process. The chapter concludes with recommendations.

#### **Demographic and Social Information Findings**

Research subjects who responded to the questionnaire in this study had an average age of 40 to 43 years. Respondents



from Clinton county were older than their counterparts in Ingham county. Three fourths of the respondents in Clinton county were female. There were more females among the Ingham county respondents. In both counties, ninety percent of the responding 4H volunteers were married. The majority of Ingham county respondents were university or college graduates. In Clinton county the majority consisted of high school graduates. However, the difference in educational level in terms of their numbers was negligible.

Most respondents from both counties were full time employees. Those engaged in their own work or business ranked next. A considerable number were part-time employees and a few were retirees and students.

Most respondents had resided in their present counties for more than twenty years. However, respondents in Clinton county had longer periods of residency in their county than those in Ingham county. On the average, Ingham county respondents had been involved as 4H volunteers for seven years. However, their counterparts in Clinton county had more experience as 4H volunteers. Ninety percent of the respondents were married and most were parents with children either above 18 years or below 18 years of age.

#### **Reasons for Becoming 4H Volunteers and Their Perceived Relationship to the CES 4H Program Findings**

Many respondents indicated that they became 4H volunteers basically to help children and youth. This held equally true for respondents in both counties. Some

respondents became 4H volunteers for involvement in communities and to enhance their own skills. A few indicated that they became 4H volunteers for other reasons, such as engaging in meaningful work.

Almost every respondent believed that his or her volunteering was very important for the overall mission of 4H and considered themselves to be fairly well informed about their own community. As indicated, many respondents were involved in decision making in 4H clubs and other local community organizations like FFA.

Generally, respondents indicated both the program and the individual 4H volunteer mutually benefitted through their involvement as 4H volunteers. However, a few believed that the program benefitted more than the individual.

### **Specific Study Objectives Findings**

#### **1. Perceived Organizational Mechanisms for Clientele Input into the Decision-Making Process**

Both respondent groups of Ingham and Clinton counties identified the following eight strategies as typical county mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making processes of 4H programs in the county extension office:

- (a) circulating of community newsletters;
- (b) Inviting 4H-volunteer attendance for meetings;
- (c) conducting workshops or including sessions in other workshops;
- (d) encouraging informal contact between program staff

- and 4H volunteers;
- (e) maintaining the formal liaison system between program staff and 4H volunteers;
- (f) sending out questionnaires;
- (g) having 4H volunteer representation on the CES Advisory Council; and,
- (h) maintaining suggestion boxes at county fairs or at other county events.

From forty to eighty-one percent of the respondents in both counties identified the first seven strategies as typical county mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making process. About one third of the respondents in both counties identified the last one as a typical county mechanism for their input into decision making.

It is noteworthy to mention that the existing organizational communication process was found to be important in effecting these organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making. The study revealed that both the 4H agent or staff and 4H volunteers themselves equally initiate communication. This was generally expressed by both respondent groups. About one fourth of the respondents indicated that a 4H agent or staff member generally initiated the communication.

Communication often takes place over the telephone, but, communication also occurs in person at the office and at meetings. In addition, they communicate by the mail. On a

few occasion, they communicate by meeting in person in homes.

## **2. How Clientele Indicate That They Make Input into the Decision Making Process**

More than seventy percent of the respondents believe that by their just being 4H volunteers and participating in programs, they make input into 4H program decision making. This is held true in both counties. Many indicated that through the same process, by responding to inquiries and questions of 4H program staff, they make input into the decision making process of 4H programs. When clients become partners of programs they not only interact with program staff they also interact with their fellow participants and communities. They tend to believe that through this interaction, association, and sharing overall, they make input into decision-making.

When the 4H agent/staff make a decision, they usually ask input from 4H volunteers. This idea was generally held by most of the respondents. Respondents even indicated that the 4H agent or staff members contacted children in the 4H clubs for input when they needed to make a decision. The respondents also believed that the 4H agent and/or staff members interacted with other staff members in making decisions.

However, there were some differences in the way respondents viewed the purposes for which the 4H agent or other staff discuss program plans with them. For instance,

in Ingham county the 4H agent and staff members are seen by the respondents as discussing program plan with them primarily for the purpose of assessing needs. However, in Clinton county program plans were discussed primarily for the purpose of making program modifications.

Respondents held no strong opinion about the amount of input they have in the decisions for creating and dropping programs. In fact, for dropping programs, clients believe that they have only marginal input.

The study found that about 80 percent of the respondents met with the 4H agent or staff members regularly or occasionally. The study findings further indicate that 4H volunteer perceptions about their interaction with the 4H program staff is significantly different according to whether or not they meet with the 4H agent or program staff. In particular, those who never meet with 4H agent or program staff indicated that 4H program staff never discuss program plans with them. In contrast, those who either regularly or occasionally meet with the 4H agent or the staff indicated that 4H agent or staff often discuss program plans with them.

### **3. Clientele Level of Satisfaction Regarding the Perceived Organizational Mechanisms for Their Input into the Decision Making Process**

The respondents are generally satisfied with each of the strategies that they identified as open to their input. The respondent level of satisfaction does not differ

according to the characteristics of age, education, gender or even the length of time of their being residents of the county and 4H volunteers. Those who never meet with the 4H agent or program staff were also satisfied with these strategies. However, it became apparent that those who regularly or occasionally met with the 4H agent or program staff show a higher satisfaction with all the strategies than those who never meet with the program staff.

Both 4H volunteer groups in Ingham and Clinton counties generally felt that the 4H agent or program staff were interested in learning about their views, opinions, and suggestions. But, those who meet with the 4H program staff believe the 4H program staff is very interested in learning of their views and opinions more than those who never meet with the staff.

#### **4. Clientele Opinion Regarding Their Input in Important Decisions That are Made by the 4H Agent/Staff Which Impact Their Community**

In general, 4H volunteers reported having input into important decisions that have impact on their communities. This opinion, held by both respondent groups in Ingham and Clinton counties, differed some. Those who were more aware of their own communities, those more involved in 4H clubs and who met with the 4H agent or staff members had a more positive opinion in this regard. Those who were less aware of their own communities, less involved with 4H clubs and who had never met with the 4H agent or program staff had a

negative opinion about having input in important decisions made by the 4H agent and program staff.

### **5.Clientele Perceptions About the Organizational Responsiveness and Response-Scale**

It was interesting to find clients have a positive image of the 4H agent and program staff because of their positive responses to the client concerns. A total of 151 comments belonged to a group comprising 82 percent of the respondents. These comments show the positive image that respondents have for 4H agent or program staff in terms of the enthusiasm and responsiveness shown by the 4H agent or staff for listening to 4H volunteer views, ideas, and suggestions. When these expressions were grouped, a particular pattern of organizational response emerged. This can be built into a scale of positive responses shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Re-inforcement	<div>High</div> <div>↑</div> <div>↓</div> <div>Low</div>
Sharing	
Articulation	
Listening	

### **Response-Scale**

In this scale, Type 1, listening, implies the positive organizational response shown to needs, ideas, and views expressed by clients. Mere listening usually includes no

deliberate attempt to seek out ideas or suggestions. Type 2, articulation, implies looking forward to hearing client ideas, views, and suggestions through direct communication with clients. This indicates a deliberate attempt to seek ideas, or suggestions.

Type 3, sharing, implies a more committed response which attempts to discuss and share ideas and views for nurturing more sensible input through the process of interaction. Type 4, reinforcement, implies that the client is convinced that attention is focussed on his or her ideas, or suggestions. When clients' ideas are directly used they tend to become more convinced. This type of response specifically demonstrates to clients that the organization is confident about client views, ideas, and suggestions.

#### **6. Typology of Organizational Mechanisms for Clientele Input into the Decision-Making Process**

Identified mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making process as perceived by clients can be classified into four functional groups according to the purposes and objectives that emerged. These four groups are formalization, stimulation, nurturing, and recognition.

Formalization implies the use of strategies for organizations to open and establish formal linkages with clients or client groups. The liaison system is the typical strategy that an organization can have for maintaining formal contact with its clientele. This, in fact, is a



formal network of contacts used to convey and exchange messages between the clientele and decision makers. But, this usually involves a third party or a liaison staff. The idea of liaison is always a method used to coordinate activities between the parties that are involved. This basically helps to maintain a more formal structural relationship between clients and organizations.

The second level, stimulation, includes the strategies that are used to stimulate clients for articulating ideas. Calling or inviting ideas about an individual program or a series of programs through a suggestion box is one such mechanisms. In fact, Guetzkov (1965) believes that people can be made innovative by stimulating them through mechanisms like suggestion boxes so that these will eventually bring ideas where needed, which benefits both the idea creator and user. Community newsletters and questionnaires are also two such mechanisms. These two mechanisms are more specific and client-directed in exchanging messages between clients and organizations than suggestion boxes. The community newsletter usually keeps clients informed of what is happening and provokes ideas in relation to issues, needs, and problems. It can be a regular feature and also a contingency feature depending on emerging needs. This allows input into the organizational decision-making process. A questionnaire is more specific in this respect because it is usually centered on a decision or a

series of decisions in studying client needs or an evaluation of a completed or an ongoing program.

The third level, nurturing, indicates direct interaction with clients for generating and nurturing ideas for clientele input. Meetings and workshops provide forums for organizational participants and clients to have a direct dialogue. This can be considered more effective because the client and organizational participants get an open forum to express themselves to get feed-back, and to be reflective. This usually motivates both parties to be innovative. These can be called dynamic organizational strategies for harnessing clientele input into organizational decisions through group processes or on an individual basis.


Informal contact allows an organization to view client ideas more on a person-to-person basis. It allows both partners to go more deeply into the concern at hand. Flexible and adequate communication methods are imperative in effecting this strategy.

At the fourth level, recognition, clients are given direct recognition as partners of the decision-making process. One strategy is to accommodate client representation in different program committees to monitor and process programs while making functional decisions. The other is to have clientele representation on advisory councils or other organizational structures that guide organizational decision-making processes. This type of

recognition demonstrates organizational readiness to share responsibility of the decision-making processes with clients and to provide fellow clients opportunities for input. This form of client representation provides a specific channel for fellow clients to make their input into the decisions made.

The series of purposes and objectives emerged in relation to each category of those organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making and provides a basis to develop the typology that is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2

CATEGORIES	MECHANISMS	LEVEL
Recognition	Representation on advisory councils/committees	High  Low
Nurturing	Informal contact Inviting for meetings Workshops	
Stimulation	Sending out questionnaires Community newsletters Suggestion boxes	
Formalization	Formal liaison system	

Typology of organizational mechanisms for clientele input into the decision making processes

The leverage for clientele input into decision making is a question of nurturing client innovativeness for making input into the decision making process and the perceived

commitment and the enthusiasm of organizations in responding to client needs, problems, ideas, and concerns. The typology demonstrates how organizations can be equipped with strategies to articulate, nurture and have clientele input into their decision making.

### **Conclusions**

This section presents four major conclusions of the study.

#### **Conclusion #1**

It is possible and beneficial to learn organizational mechanisms for clientele input into decision making through the perspectives of clients. There has been considerable research that explores organizational strategies through the perspective of staff and administration of an organization. This is considered a convenient approach. But, it limits the ability of understanding actual clientele awareness and their perceptions regarding the mechanisms that exist for them to be involved in programs. This study shows that exploring organizational strategies through clientele perspectives help eliminate such limits and allows organizations to re-examine and assess the strength and use of the existing mechanisms.

#### **Conclusion #2**

When the clientele become involved in organizational programs, they tend to believe that their contributions are

an input to organizational decisions. Clientele not only participate in programs, but they also interact with organizational staff, fellow participants, peers, and community. These are avenues that clientele tend to believe where they make input into programs and are considered integrated elements in a single process. This also implies that clients are concerned about what they contribute. It is in the best interest of organizations to recognize and nurture these contributions into a more qualitative input for making effective decisions with appropriate and adequate mechanisms.

#### **Conclusion #3**

Organizations need to develop mechanisms to learn about the people who are not involved in the programs. All too often organizations only focus on the needs of those people who are most involved. This sets up a situation where the needs of those least involved are not dealt with. In an attempt to stop this downward spiral it is important that organizations search for ways to listen to those less involved. This study shows that those less involved also have views and needs that are worthy of being listened to by organizations.

#### **Conclusion #4**

This study showed areas of clientele homogeneity and organizations should be sensitive to these and be prepared to make clear and positive response. In areas, however,

where clientele views are in conflict with each other, organizations should not be sensitive to what is said, but instead move ahead with their own organizational plans and allow ample opportunities in the future for continued searching of clientele views. It is assumed that clientele views will grow, change, and develop over time and there will come a time when the clientele appear homogeneous and these are the times when organizations can then make strong plans.

### **Recommendations**

This section presents four major recommendations.

#### **Recommendation #1 - Open access for client**

Organizations that are engaged in helping people must have a deliberate commitment for responding to clientele needs and concerns. This should also be perceived by the clientele. In fact, organizations maintain credibility by responding to client concerns. When clients perceive organizational commitment and credibility they tend to turn to such organizations to express needs, problems, concerns, and expectations. These accesses should be clear, communicable, and horizontally reachable. The term horizontally used here implies two interrelated aspects of the organizational behavior. One is the orientation toward non-hierarchical accessibility and the other is the orientation of organizational participants to treat those

who are helped, served, and guided by organizations as clientele.

Clients tend to make their input into organizational decision making if they feel that their concerns are well responded to and taken care of. The organizational responsiveness must be demonstrative and organizational participants must be attuned to keep close interaction with their clients. Responsiveness usually moves on a response-scale and is more dependent on personal listening skills. Organizational participants can develop their listening skills from the bottom of the scale, positive listening, to the top, the re-enforcement that is really a learning process.

**Recommendation #2 - Keep clientele informed and nurture clientele input for decision making**

Organizations need to nurture clientele input for decision making through mechanisms that keep clientele up to date informed and help clientele generate ideas, views, and knowledge. This should be done through processes which engage clientele and organizational staff in interactive ways. Strengthening client linkages with fellow clients and organizational staff is imperative in such an approach. The facilitation of informal contact is important in affecting the desired linkages upon which effective communication methods depend.

**Recommendation #3 - Do not hunt for "off-the shelf" formats for clientele input**

Organization staff have to be oriented toward clientele input rather than looking for a pre-designed organizational format for participation. If pre-designed methods do not match objectives, they tend to become only formal organizational structures. This often precludes the emergence of innovative mechanisms for attracting client participation, their articulation of ideas, and their suggestions. This prevents organizations from benefitting from client knowledge. This idea, however, contradicts what Berry et al. (1984) have emphasized for finding the optimal format for client participation. But, organizations can still follow the Response-Scale in developing an appropriate format. The typology and the Response-Scale can be used to prepare objectives for clientele input into the decision-making process. Organizations should define their objectives in terms of what is expected of clients. For instance, the objective can be just to become open to clientele input or to have optimal clientele input by helping clients to generate input, to mutually benefit, or to recognize clientele input at a partnership level.

**Recommendation #4 - Keep formal structures at a low profile within organizational goals**

If organizations are committed to having optimal clientele input, they cannot be heavily dependent on formal structures such as a liaison staff. It is sometimes helpful



to use formal structures and then moving into more effective strategies, less formal structures. Such structures help open access for exchange messages. But, organizations need to understand the limitations of formal structures. Through formal structures clientele input flows into the decision-making process. Of course, it may depend on the attitudes and values of those willing to use such formal structures. If the response and feedback is prompt, the structures tend to work, but in the long run it is imperative that such a process be stimulating. By concentrating on other less formal mechanisms for clientele input into decision making, organizations can become innovative rather than depending on formal structures. This enables organizations to respond to concerns of clients and to have quality and timely input into the decision-making processes throughout and to earn credibility. When both the organizational participants and clients become aware of each other's situation, the desired trust between clients and organizations can emerge so that decisions of organizations become more sensible.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

#### **Assess Organizational Perspectives**

This study recommends for future research an assessment of the organizational perspectives regarding the clientele perceptions that emerged in this study. This would help in re-examining existing organizational mechanisms for

clientele input into decision making in order to make them more effective. It may also help refine the concepts of clientele input into decision making and client participation in the decision-making processes.

### **Methodology**

Selecting two similar counties wasn't helpful in attempting to differentiate organizational mechanisms for clientele input into the decision-making process that exist in different counties but helpful because it increased the size of the respondent group. However, further research may not be as focussed as this research on examining differences based on county.

### **Reflections**

Developing effective mechanisms for involving people who are served by organizational mechanisms is most urgent in situations where people have only limited access for seeking help and who mostly depend on organizational guidance. Ample situations can be found where people by themselves can not come forward to express their needs and wishes and to share opportunities with those who are already mobilized. This is particularly critical in many Third World situations in which gaps in human needs and achievements are wider than the rest of the society.

Tasks which organizations perform in these situations

can be made sensible if the decisions made are improved to reflect the problems, needs, and wishes of those who are affected. It is crucial that mechanisms are needed to eliminate communication gaps that are prevalent between organizations and the people that are served. Organizational mechanisms and perceptions explored through this study are most beneficial for those situations to improve knowledge gaps of both the organizational administration and the people that are served. This is, in particular, helpful for organizations to learn actual needs and problems of those served while helping people aware the available opportunities for them to involve in programs that helps accomplish needs and resolve their problems.

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**APPENDIX**

**Survey Instrument**

4-H VOLUNTEER  
QUESTIONNAIRE

Would you please share some information about you and your work as a 4-H volunteer.

1. What are the primary reasons why you volunteer to work with 4-H ? (check one or more)

☐ To help children and youth.  
☐ To get more involved in my community.  
☐ To enhance my own skills.  
☐ To participate with the Cooperative Extension Service.  
☐ Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How did you first find out about the possibility of being a 4-H volunteer ? (please check one or more)

☐ I was a 4-H member as a child.  
☐ From my children.  
☐ From my friends.  
☐ From the 4-H agent/4-H staff.  
☐ From the County Cooperative Extension Service Office.  
☐ Other (Please state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How important do you feel that your volunteering is to the over-all 4-H mission ? (Please circle the appropriate number)

Very important    5   4   3   2   1   Not important

Comments:

4. How informed do you feel you are about youth needs in your community? (Please circle the appropriate number)

Highly informed    5   4   3   2   1   Not informed



5. For each of the following organizations that you may belong to, rate them in terms of how involved you are in their decision making. (Please circle the appropriate #)

	Very involved in decision making					Not involved in decision making				
	5	4	3	2	1					
Church group	5	4	3	2	1					
Parent/Teacher association	5	4	3	2	1					
4-H club	5	4	3	2	1					
Other youth groups (ie., Scouts, YMCA, YWCA etc.)	5	4	3	2	1					
Other (please state) _____	5	4	3	2	1					

6. How would you describe your relationship with the 4-H program ?

- ☐ Both the program and I equally benefit.  
☐ The program benefits more than I do.  
☐ I benefit more than the program does.  
☐ Neither the program nor I benefit.

Comments:

7. How do you make input into the 4-H program ?  
(check all that apply)

- ☐ By just being a volunteer.  
☐ By participating in 4-H committees.  
☐ By meeting with the 4-H agent or other Cooperative Extension Service staff.  
☐ By meeting with people in the community.  
☐ By meeting with other 4-H volunteers.  
☐ By responding to questions from the 4-H agent/4-H staff.  
☐ Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

8. When the 4-H agent/4-H staff needs to make a decision, he/she: (Check one or more that apply)

☐ does it by him/herself.  
☐ asks other 4-H agents/4-H staff  
☐ asks for input from the 4-H volunteers  
☐ asks for input from the children  
☐ asks for input from others in the community

Comments:

9. How often do you meet with the 4-H agent or other Cooperative Extension service staff ? (check only one)

☐ Never  
☐ Occasionally  
☐ Regularly - about once a month  
☐ Regularly - about twice a month  
☐ Regularly - about once a week

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. What 4-H programs for volunteers have you attended in the last year ? (ie., County workshops, Kettunen Center workshops etc.,) (please state)

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11. Usually who initiates the communication between you and the 4-H agent/4-H staff ?

☐ 4-H agent/4-H staff    ☐ Myself    ☐ Both

12. What are the ways that you communicate with the 4-H agent/4-H staff ? (check all that apply)

☐ Telephone ☐ In-person at office  
☐ In-person in my home ☐ Mail  
☐ In-person at meetings. ☐ Other (Please state)

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13. How interested is the 4-H agent/4-H staff in learning your views/opinions? (Please circle the appropriate #)

Very interested    5   4   3   2   1   Not interested

Comments:

14. When you feel that the 4-H agent/4-H staff is interested in your ideas, how do you know that he/she is interested ?

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15. How often does the 4-H agent/4-H staff share/discuss program ideas and plans with you ? (Please circle the appropriate #)

Very often    5   4   3   2   1   Never

Comments:

16. If the 4-H agent/4-H staff was to discuss a program plan with you, it would probably be to: (Please check one or more)

☐ Assess needs  
☐ Drop a program  
☐ Create a new program  
☐ Modify a program  
☐ Recruit for a program  
☐ Other: (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Listed below are some of the county strategies that Cooperative Extension Service (CES)/4-H use to get your input about youth needs and programs. Please check in Column A the strategies that are used in your county. (Please check all that apply):

<u>Column A</u>	<u>Column B</u>				
	Very Satisfied			Not Satisfied	
	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Through 4-H representation on the CES advisory council	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Inviting your attendance at meetings	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> During workshops	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Circulating community letters	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Sending out questionnaires,	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining liaison system between 4-H staff and community leaders	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining suggestion boxes	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> By encouraging informal contact	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Please state)					
_____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1

18. Please rate, in Column B above, how satisfied you are with each of the strategies you have checked. (Please circle the appropriate # for each item that you have checked.)

19. In your opinion, do you feel that you have input in the important decisions that are made by the 4-H agent & staff which have an impact on your community ? (Please circle the appropriate #)

Yes 5 4 3 2 1 No

20. In what ways have you changed/grown/developed because of your involvement as a 4-H volunteer ?

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21. What additional comments do you have about decision making and the 4-H program?

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Would you please provide some basic information about yourself.

22. Your age \_\_\_ yrs                      23. \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female
24. \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Single    25. Ages of children \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_
26. Employment.    \_\_\_ Engage in own business    \_\_\_ Homemaker/At home  
                             \_\_\_ Working full time                      \_\_\_ Student  
                             \_\_\_ Part time employee                      \_\_\_ Retired
27. Education.       \_\_\_ University/College graduate  
                             \_\_\_ High school graduate  
                             \_\_\_ Less than high school
28. How long have you been a 4-H volunteer ? \_\_\_ yrs.
29. How long have you been a 4-H leader ? \_\_\_ yrs.
30. How long have you been a resident in the community where you presently live ? \_\_\_
31. Have you ever been involved in 4-H in another county ?

\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No

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Thank You !

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