

## Program Evaluation Journal Publications List 2007

### Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont

- Schmidt, M.C. and J. Kolodinsky. (2007). **Microenterprise Development Program Success: A path analysis of factors that lead to and mediate client success.** *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 12(1). 47-69.

Through a path regression analysis of data from the Vermont Micro Business Development Program, this study examined the relationships between client characteristics, program activities, interim outcomes, and impacts. Statistics demonstrated excellent model fit to the data. The model showed that being female and not receiving food stamps were significantly related to course completion. Improved personal well-being was related to more sources of capital, course completion, being partnered and being younger. Business start was related to not receiving food stamps, having more sources of capital, and mediated by improved well-being. Clients who experienced an increase in income had previous business experience and experienced an increase in assets. Increased income was mediated by improved well-being and business start. Reduction in public assistance was related to course completion, more sources of capital, not being in poverty, and increased assets. Increased assets were related to more education, not being in poverty, and more sources of capital. Being older, having more sources of capital, a larger family, and mediated by improved well-being led to job creation. Overall, access to more financial resources enabled clients to meet personal and business goals and work towards self-sufficiency. The results suggest implications for public policy regarding business training and access to capital.

- Cranwell, M., J. Kolodinsky, G. Carsten, F. Schmidt, M. Larson, and C. MacLachlan. (2007). **Short term change in attitude and motivating factors to change abusive behavior of male batterers after participating in a group intervention program based on the pro-feminist and cognitive-behavioral approach.** *Journal of Family Violence*, 22(2), 91-100.

The Domestic Abuse Education Project (DAEP), in Burlington, Middlebury, and St. Albans, Vermont, is a group based domestic abuse intervention program, based in a pro-feminist and cognitive-behavioral approach for domestic violence intervention and prevention. A pre and post-test instrument was developed and implemented to determine short-term change in attitude of participants and motivating factors to change behavior, after completing the twenty-seven session program. After the program, participants reported a positive change in attitudes regarding their abusive behavior and stereotypical beliefs about women. Participants were also more motivated to change their behavior by the effect abuse has on their family relationships. However, many participants continued to agree that insecurity, jealousy, and alcohol and drug use can cause violence. The positive changes in attitude and motivational factors show that this is an effective model in changing underlying batterer attitudes that provide rationale for abusive behavior.

- Schmidt, M.C., Jewiss, J, Koliba, C, and J. Kolodinsky. (2006). **Perspectives on self-employment as a viable option for Vermont TANF recipients.** Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Vermont.

Microenterprise development (MED) in the United States is a holistic approach that embraces poverty alleviation, human development, and economic development strategies. This study gathered staff perspectives from welfare and MED agencies in Vermont on self-employment as an option for welfare recipients to meet their work requirements and move off of public assistance. Interviews were conducted with Vermont Reach-Up Financial Assistance district managers and coordinators of the Vermont Micro Business Development Program (MBDP). Findings show that client characteristics influence self-employment viability, including strengths, barriers, length of time on Reach-Up, and location. District managers are supportive of self-employment for clients yet support can be inhibited by the need to get clients off of the welfare system as quickly as possible. MBDP staff noted receiving various levels of support for self-employment from Reach-Up staff, with support level and frequency of client referral related to interagency relationships established. District managers are possibly more supportive of self-employment than case managers. Vermont legislation is supportive of self-employment, however work phase time limits pose a barrier. In addition, the federal "work first" philosophy and use of federal minimum wage to determine benefit amount have negative impacts on self-employment. Suggestions for improving agency relationships, communication, and education, and recommendations to simplify and change legislation to further support self-employment are discussed.

- Schmidt, M.C., J. Kolodinsky, C. Flint, and B. Whitney. (2006). **The Impact of Microenterprise Development Training on Low-Income Clients.** *Journal of Extension*, 44(2). Article number 2FEA1. Available online at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2006april/a1.shtml>

This study examined the impact of microenterprise development (MED) programs on low-income individuals using a case study of 140 clients of the Vermont Micro Business Development Program who participated in a statewide telephone survey. This study also examined variables that are associated with change in client reliance on public assistance. Outcomes achieved include: access to capital, positive attitude changes, business start up and growth, job creation, increased household income, decreased reliance on public assistance, and satisfaction with services. Significant relationships were found between certain client characteristics and outcomes and decreased reliance on public assistance.

- Cranwell, M., J. Kolodinsky, C. Donnelly, and O. Padilla Zakour. (2005). **A Model Food Entrepreneur Assistance and Education Program: The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship.** *Journal of Food Science Education*, 4(4): 56-65.

The Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE) is a collaborative effort between Cornell Univ. and the Univ. of Vermont. NECFE uses a multi-institutional and regional collaboration approach, with specific expertise and necessary facilities and resources, to provide technical assistance and education for businesses in the food industry. The overall goals of NECFE are to support and sustain rural businesses and promote sustainable economic development of rural communities. Through process evaluation techniques, the evaluators of NECFE identified 5 essential components of a model food entrepreneurship assistance and education center, based on NECFE's experience: (1) multi-institutional and regional collaboration, (2) expertise, (3) facilities and resources, (4) services, and (5) evaluation of the center. These components build on each other and enable NECFE to provide clients with access to current food processing technology, technical information, and education that are directly applicable to a real business. Through replication of this model, other organizations and academic institutions may establish a regional food entrepreneurship assistance and education center.

- Cranwell, M.R., Kolodinsky, J., Anderson, K., and F. Schmidt. (2004). **Evaluating a Domestic violence task force: methods to strengthen a community collaboration.** *Journal of Extension*, 24(6). Available online at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004december/a8.shtml>

A domestic violence collaborative was surveyed to evaluate and make recommendations for strengthening membership, structure, and cohesiveness. This study presents the evaluation methods, key findings, recommendations, and the outcome of their implementation. Areas identified for improvement include: membership diversification, membership-driven agenda, improved sub-committees, and increased community involvement through outreach. A revised meeting format, agenda setting strategy, sub-committee parameters, and the addition of quarterly meetings were recommended and implemented. This model received positive feedback as a method to strengthen collaboratives. This case study demonstrates how evaluation research can be linked to practice to make real improvements to a community collaborative.

- Kolodinsky, J., M. Cranwell, and E. Rowe. (2002). **Teens Teaching Internet Skills: Bridging the Generation Gap Across the Digital Divide.** *Journal of Extension*, 40(3). Available online at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2002june/rb2.html>

With the intent of closing the digital divide, the Teens Teaching Internet Skills Pilot Project engaged youth from 4-H Technology Teams in six states in training senior citizens to navigate and obtain information from the Medicare website. The teens perceived an improvement in working with seniors, project management, teaching, public speaking, and leadership. The workshops had a positive effect on seniors' comfort and skill levels towards technology. This intergenerational experience in leadership and technology training provided learning and skill development for both groups, and led to positive changes in attitudes towards the other generation.