



4-H Afterschool Resource Guide

4-H Youth Development Programming in Hard-to-Reach Communities



Reaching Out to and Meeting the Needs
of All Audiences

Credits

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Introduction:

What is 4-H?

The 4-H Youth Development organization nationwide is known for engaging youth as leaders and giving them the power to take action. 4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension, a network of over 100 public universities across the nation.

Through the Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities, 4-H mobilizes trained, experienced, and competent educators in more than 3,000 counties across the United States and 50 other countries throughout the world to support this community of young people who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

The 4-H mission is to teach youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The cooperation of more than six million youth; over 500,000 volunteers; 3,500 4-H professionals; 105 state land-grant universities; state and local governments; private-sector partners; state and local 4-H foundations; National 4-H Council; and National 4-H Headquarters at USDA makes 4-H happen. 4-H alumni now total about 60 million.

4-H stands for **Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.**

4-H PLEDGE

I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,

My **HEART** to greater loyalty,

My **HANDS** to larger service,

And my **HEALTH** to better living

For my club, my community,
my country, and my world.



This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals who wish to deliver programming in after-school programs. It draws from curricula, ideas, and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System.

The Issue of After-School Care

Care for school-age children is a concern for millions of American families, particularly those with a single parent or both parents employed. With over 75 million school-age children, the United States is experiencing a burgeoning need for out-of-school programs. In 2020, over 20% of elementary school children participated in an organized after-school program (Sparr et al., 2021).

Where young people spend their time, what they do and with whom they do it are important to their overall development. After-school hours represent either risk or opportunity. Youth who are unsupervised are much more likely to engage in activities that place them at risk.

Programs in the out-of-school hours give youth safe, supervised places to spend time, along with chances to learn new skills, develop interests and spend meaningful time with peers and adults.

“Afterschool programs are a promising avenue for supporting social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health during middle childhood” (Sparr et al., 2021). Participation in high-quality after-school programs is linked with a lower incidence of problem behaviors, such as decreased academic failure, substance use and delinquency. Furthermore, youth who attend these programs have demonstrated improved academic achievement (e.g., better school attendance and better grades) and improved social skills (e.g., positive relationships with adults, opportunity to make new friends, greater self-concept, and self-esteem).



However, the challenges in running effective after-school programs are well documented. Primary among these challenges are program quality, staff training, staff turnover and consistent funding.

A broad range of activities and organizations are described as after-school programs, creating ambiguous definitions (Gootman, 2000). After-school programs don't always share a common time period (i.e., immediately following the school day), because the term is used broadly to refer to any program outside of school hours. Additionally, programming in after-school hours is not solely the domain of any one group. The after-school landscape is populated by a myriad of program types, program locations and sponsoring organizations.

Gootman, J. A. (Ed.). (2000). *After-school programs to promote child and adolescent development: Summary of a workshop*. National Academy Press. Retrieved August 11, 2022, from <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9944/chapter/1>

Sparr, M., Morrison, C., Miller, K., Bartko, W. T., & Frazier, S. (2021). *Afterschool programs to improve social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health in middle childhood: A targeted review of the literature*. ASPE—Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved August 15, 2022, from https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/migrated_legacy_files/199566/4_MCASP_LiteratureReview.pdf

Why should 4-H be involved in after-school programs?

The current situation represents a tremendous opportunity to align existing youth development programs available through Extension/4-H with the need for after-school care, as well as an opportunity to create new program delivery models.

A young person's healthy development is Extension/4-H's goal, and we have the resources to provide after-school opportunities. Extension/4-H helps youth develop into confident, capable citizens who contribute to their communities.

It is unlikely that Extension/4-H youth development professionals alone could meet the great need for after-school programs in our communities. However, many communities have existing programs that would benefit from our expertise and resources and welcome our partnership.

AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS

• represent either risk or opportunity.

What is 4-H Afterschool?

4-H Afterschool is designed to combine the resources of Extension/4-H with community-based organizations that provide after-school programs that address community needs.

The 4-H Afterschool program helps increase the quality and availability of after-school programs by improving the ability of after-school program staff and volunteers (youth and adults) to offer high-quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth; increase the use of 4-H curricula in after-school programs; and organize 4-H clubs in after-school programs. 4-H Afterschool offers support and training materials, including this resource guide, to help professionals teach quality programs.

The 4-H club operates within the structure of the community-based organization that sponsors the after-school program. The 4-H Afterschool club approach works best when the goals of the two organizations are compatible and both have a shared sense of ownership.

The implementation of the after-school program's 4-H club component can take various forms. For example, 4-H may be offered on a particular day of the week, or selected projects may be offered. After-school educators may designate a specific time for club meetings, where youth say the 4-H pledge, officers lead and members make choices about activities to pursue. The person responsible for the 4-H club may be staff paid by Extension/4-H (e.g., a program assistant), staff of the organization running the program (e.g., the Boys and Girls Club), a volunteer (adult and/or youth), or some combination. Starting 4-H clubs is a familiar part of the 4-H professional's job. Establishing the 4-H club in the after-school program setting, however, may present some new challenges because the after-school landscape reveals many out-of-school program providers and considerable variation among existing programs despite common elements.



Thus, the approach cannot be “one size fits all.” Extension/4-H staff must be creative, flexible, and above all, able to listen when needs are expressed by sites. Despite these challenges, it’s well worth the effort because county 4-H programs and after-school programs both benefit from working with new partners and new audiences. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries are the children.

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4-H AFTERSCHOOL

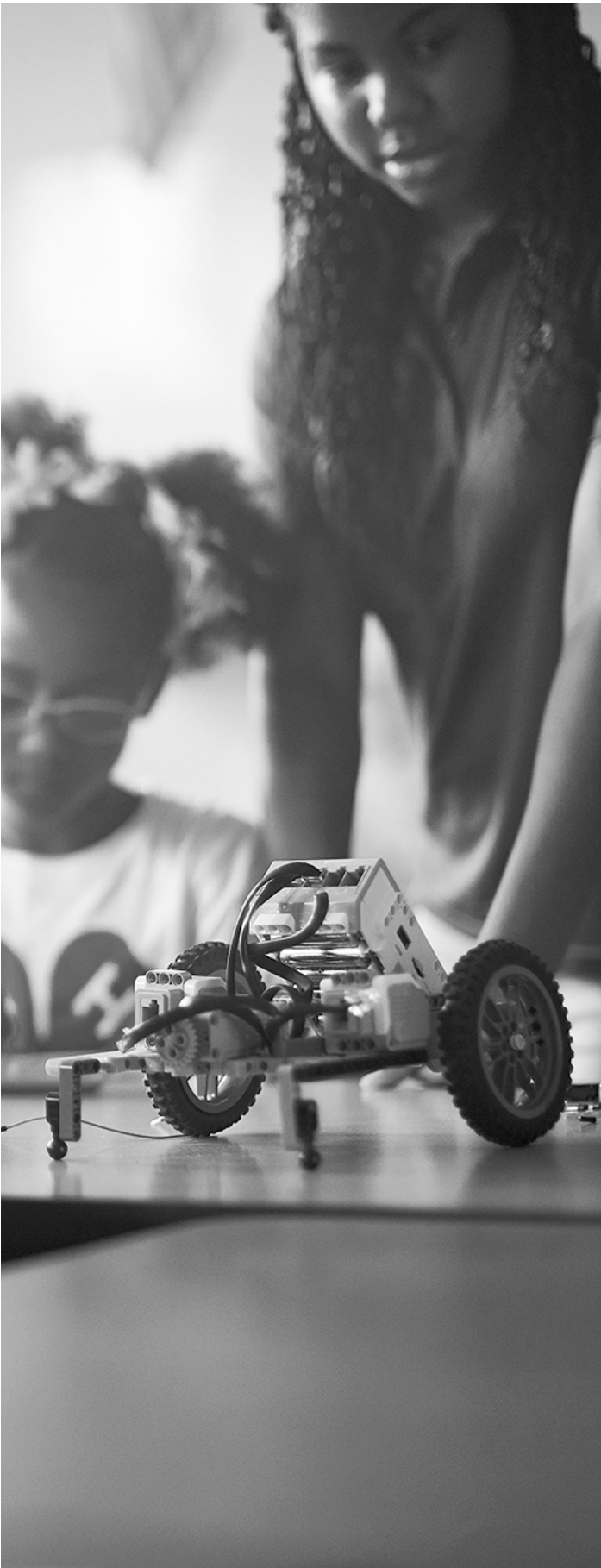
.....

trains after-school staff and volunteers, develops
• quality programs and creates after-school
• communities of young people across America who
• are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.
.....

Key Elements of 4-H Afterschool

Certain key elements need to be in place to ensure 4-H Afterschool program consistency, including:

1. Open and responsive communication between the local Extension/4-H office and the local 4-H club leadership.
2. Variety in 4-H club membership and leadership.
3. Shared leadership responsibilities among adults, youth, and children.
4. Youth-adult partnerships recognize individual interests, abilities and assets and balance strengths and weaknesses among and between members and leaders.
5. 4-H club leadership is willing and able to be flexible and adaptable to individual situations.
6. Rules contribute to positive youth development and focus on such fundamental issues as safety and mutual respect.
7. A healthy balance exists between cooperation and competition among the 4-H club’s members.
8. Active participation of 4-H club members is encouraged within and outside club boundaries.
9. Clear understanding of the 4-H club’s purpose, goals, and expectations is held by its members, parents, and volunteers.
10. Educational programs use an experiential learning model.
11. Volunteer and member accomplishments and contributions are recognized.



How to Use This Resource Guide

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals and after-school providers to deliver positive youth development programs in hard-to-reach areas or with hard-to-reach populations. It includes information on identifying hard-to-reach audiences and potential challenges to their participation in 4-H programming.

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of the guide and an introduction.
- Chapters 2 through 4 provide detailed information on understanding.
- Chapter 5 highlights the key elements of assessing community assets.
- Chapters 6 and 7 cover the essential elements of positive youth development programming and developing effective youth and adult partnerships.
- Chapter 8 covers planning for sustainability.
- Chapter 9 covers specific marketing strategies for targeting hard-to-reach audiences.

OTHER RESOURCE GUIDES

-
- in this series offer a more in-depth focus on helping
 - after-school sites start 4-H clubs within their
 - operations and providing activities and learning
 - experiences for day-to-day programming.
-

Other Materials in the 4-H Afterschool Series

4-H Afterschool offers several other resource guides (some of which will be updated and republished through the NAE4-HYDP Afterschool Working Group), including:

- **Starting 4-H Clubs in After-School Programs**, which helps afterschool sites start 4-H clubs.
- **Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs** to train after-school program staff, helping them increase their capacities to provide quality care for children.
- **Increasing the Quantity of After-School Programs: A Guide for Extension Professionals to Establish Community-Based After-School Programs** provides helpful hints and suggestions for analyzing the need for more after-school programs and the process for establishing new community-based after-school programs.

Each of these guides is designed to be used independently. Nevertheless, the guides also work well together during orientation and training of after-school staff and volunteers.



Chapter 1:

Introduction to Youth Programming

Why This Manual?

The trends are clear. America is increasingly different in terms of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and even language. This provides many opportunities for 4-H to expand its programming to new and/or hard-to-reach audiences. Extension has a rich history of, and strong commitment to, reaching various and broad cross-sections of youth with high-quality programming. Given the rapidly changing demographics, it's widely recognized that new programming strategies, approaches and training will be needed to reach different audiences.

This manual is specifically written to assist in establishing 4-H clubs in hard-to-reach areas with varied audiences,

especially in the after-school arena. Useful information on establishing and managing 4-H clubs with mainstream audiences is readily available in each state. However, experience shows that these materials may need modifications to make them more consumer-driven for hard-to-reach audiences. Just as each one of us is a unique individual, so are our communities. This guide provides tips on how to engage audiences, build capacities, and adapt materials and strategies to successfully establish 4-H clubs with hard-to-reach audiences.

Recognizing that in the space of this guide, all hard-to-reach audiences cannot be addressed, the focus is on different segments of the youth population.



These include youth from geographically isolated areas, low-income communities, and different groups.

Competence is an important trait for anyone working in multi-faceted communities and is a constant theme in this guide.

TIP

- Often it is easier to accept commonalities among different groups of people. It is much harder to appreciate the differences.

In working with hard-to-reach communities, many commonalities will be encountered. In addition, unique features will be encountered, which should be incorporated into the design and implementation of the programming. It is unrealistic to expect this guide to provide all the in-depth information needed to establish 4-H clubs in hard-to-reach communities or with hard-to-reach populations. However, this guide can offer an important overview of the issues and help direct Extension professionals to other valuable resources.

Who are the hard-to-reach audiences in 4-H programming?

A hard-to reach community is considered one that is not currently served by 4-H and has a hard-to-reach audience in areas such as race, ethnicity or geography; or one that is affected by limited resources such as income, transportation, employment, or educational service. Within communities, cities, counties, or states, there may be identifiable segments of parents and youth who do not have the knowledge or understanding needed to locate and access 4-H programs. In many areas there are segments that are hard to reach. Each local program should determine who specifically are hard to reach in their communities with 4-H programming.

In order to identify these communities, resources such as the American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>) can be referenced, as well as input from your local

stakeholders or advisory committee. Meeting with community members and performing a needs assessment can also determine what areas are not being serviced by your 4-H program.

Skills for Working With All Audiences

Understanding the personal and social characteristics of ourselves and other groups of people helps Extension professionals to better relate to and work with other individuals. Working with a full range of audiences effectively requires a commitment to expanding our knowledge and understanding differences. Many resources and training opportunities exist to help youth development personnel develop and expand their competence. Check with your university to see what they have to offer.

What are the challenges?

Identifying who is hard to reach in a community or programming unit is just the first step. Knowing that potential challenges may exist which have kept hard-to-reach youth from participating is also important. Start by identifying what these challenges might be. Recognize that often there are multiple challenges or reasons for nonparticipation.

Consider these potential challenges:

- Lack of awareness of Extension/4-H programs
- Unconnected community; few existing community relationships
- Lack of transportation
- Costs associated with participation
- Hours of programming that conflict with other activities
- Lack of understanding and practices
- Language
- Limited community resources
- Skepticism by parents and others about the program being offered
- Staff limitations in terms of skills and understanding of different audiences
- Others (specific to local communities)



Here are a few segments to consider:

- Ethnic groups
- Low-income youth and families
- Families that are geographically isolated (e.g., rural, inner-city)
- Others (specific to local communities)

The following chapters will provide greater discussion of hard-to-reach audiences.

Valuing Everyone

Connecting with hard-to-reach populations requires an understanding and appreciation of the various backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values, and beliefs. Understanding differences means recognizing that there are variances among people.

Where should you start?

A planning matrix is provided in the Appendix on page 45. The planning matrix provides an overview for guiding conversations and discussions in planning work with hard-to-reach audiences. Remember, planning should not be done in isolation. Interacting with community members and discussing the specifics of the community are essential to creating successful programs. At the end of each chapter, the *Reflective Thinking* prompts are to initiate inquiry and conversation necessary for completing the Planning Matrix sections as a team.

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all team members participate in completing the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Identify Your Target Audience

Chapter 1

Who are the hard to reach in your community? (*e.g., low-income groups, geographically isolated groups, others*)

What are their participation challenges?

How will you address these challenges?

What other information or resources are needed?



Chapter 2:

Key Elements to Programming in Hard-to-Reach Communities

The United States is more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically varied than ever (Fix et al., 2001). These dramatic demographic changes in our country's landscape can greatly influence the number of hard-to-reach youths in local communities. For positive youth development, it's important to recognize these changes and embrace the differences of traditions, norms, values, languages, and practices. Understanding and communicating with different audiences is a learned skill.

Understanding Your Own Views

Individually, and as a group, it is important for Extension and after-school professionals to explore their own beliefs, feelings, and views of people who have differences from them. This is a first step to learning how to effectively deliver appropriate and relevant youth programming in different communities.

Learning more about the values and needs of the different audience by forging personal relationships will allow for impactful, respectful programming (Valencia et al., 2019).

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Values

Shared values are common amongst different groups of people. Those who differ from the main culture are seen as being different with distinct cultural characteristics, values, and norms (Guion et al., 2003).

Recognizing and examining your own cultural values and exploring the differences amongst values of the

community can enhance your ability to foster more effective programming.

Below is a summary of some mainstream and varied or different American values (Guion et al., 2003). These differences exist and bring richness to the entire United States.

Some Dominant Mainstream American Values	Some Different American Values
Competition and individual achievement	Cooperation, teamwork, group achievement
To-the-point, direct communication	Nonverbal and indirect communication
Dominant over nature	In harmony with nature
Future oriented	Past oriented
Emphasis on nuclear family	Emphasis on extended family
Independence and individuality	Interdependence; putting the group first
Time management and punctuality	Time is generously shared
Eye contact (especially when listening)	May avoid eye contact as sign of respect
Adopt attitudes and beliefs from those in our social network	Utilize social media as a channel for nonverbal communication with family and friends

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Guion, L. A., Broadwater, G., Caldwell, C., Chattaraj, S. C., Goddard, H. W., & Lytle, S. S. (2003). *Strengthening programs to reach diverse audiences*. University of Florida, IFAS Extension. Staff Development Tool.

Insight Into Differences Among Groups of People

All individuals are unique. Just as children from a family can possess many similar and dissimilar traits, so can members of different groups. People are influenced by their backgrounds; however, they are not defined by them.

Generalizations can be a major challenge to working with diverse groups of people. Generalizing can create negative filters for viewing others who are different than us. Making statements or forming ideas on groups of people based on negative observations is generalizing.

General descriptions for different groups of people will not apply to every individual or situation but can give insight. There is currently a large body of knowledge

that documents similar attributes that can be useful in informing those interested in engaging these groups in 4-H programming.

Still, individuals within a group will differ considerably. They may have different educational levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, or religions. Also, an individual’s identity within a group can vary greatly. Keep in mind the goal for learning about different audiences should be insight, not generalization.

Making Connections Across Different Groups of People

To build connections across different groups of people, understand the values and norms for yourself, as well as for all the groups with which you work. Often, one does not recognize his or her own values. Being aware of your own perspective can help you be more sensitive to others. The following are key steps to consider in making connections across different groups.



Ten Essential Strategies for Making Connections Across Different Groups (Pearson, 1995)

1. Address real-life needs of the community. Talk to members of the community, including individuals, families, teachers, clergy, leaders, coaches, childcare services, community-based care agencies, volunteers, and others.
2. Offer programs in familiar surroundings, such as neighborhood churches, schools, community centers, etc.
3. Meet in a location serviced by public transportation.
4. Consider childcare needs. Provide childcare or activities for young children.
5. Offer appropriate door prizes or refreshments.
6. Consider holidays and celebrations when scheduling activities.
7. Dress appropriately, in a manner that represents professionalism according to the given activity and is respectful for the group.
8. Select visuals that reflect the identity of the group.
9. When possible, speak the language of the audience or use an interpreter. Use materials written at the appropriate level and in the appropriate language.
10. Identify commonalities and build on them. Be sensitive and informed about norms and values.

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Identify Your Target Audience

Chapter 2

What do you know about the values and norms of the hard-to-reach audiences with which you will be working? How can you learn more about the audience?

How might these affect programming?

What strategies in programming might you use to make connections across different groups of people?



Chapter 3:

Key Elements to Programming in Economically Varied (Low-Income) Communities

The economic variability in the United States is changing. Nearly one in five American youth live in poverty (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). Living in poverty, or near poverty, can isolate young people from youth programs and other community resources.

Reference

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2022). *2022 Kids Count Data Book*. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/2022-kids-count-data-book>

Poverty Defined (Payne, 1998)

Poverty is more than just an economic condition. It often means that the individual may be lacking other nonfinancial resources that can prevent him or her from escaping poverty. For people to live enriched and productive lives, they need a variety of essential resources.

- **Financial Resources.** Having enough money to purchase goods and services, save for emergencies and invest. Tangible resources are needed, such as a car or transportation, a safe home or living arrangement, and items such as clothes and personal belongings.
- **Emotional and Support Resources.** Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly in negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. Having friends, family, and backup resources available in times of need to help with emotional, financial, academic, or informational support.
- **Mental and Physical Health Resources.** Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life, along with education and training to compete in the workplace. Being physically healthy and having enough mobility to maintain self-sufficiency.



- Inner Strength and Spiritual Resources. Having energy and drive to prepare, plan and complete projects and jobs to achieve personal goals. Possessing guidance or belief in a divine being that gives purpose to living. Seeing oneself as capable and having worth and value.
- Role Model Resources. For children especially, having frequent access to caring adults who are attuned to their needs and model appropriate behaviors.

Something to keep in mind is that all individuals are unique. Although they are influenced by their economic situations, they are not fully defined by them.

Understanding Poverty

To be more sensitive to needs and to better understand individual actions, motivations, and decision making, it helps to understand the issues associated with poverty. Greater understanding can lead to more effective programming.

FACTS ABOUT POVERTY (Payne, 1998)

- Poverty is relative. Although governments have measures for public assistance programs, poverty is relative but generally has a component of being unable to meet basic needs. Poverty is identified by comparison. Person A may feel poor in comparison to Person B, yet may feel rich in comparison to Person C.
- Poverty occurs in all ethnic groups. Because poverty is relative, it can occur anywhere and to anyone.

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF POVERTY (Payne, 1998)

- Situational poverty. Changing circumstances, such as the loss of a job, experiencing a natural disaster, or divorce or death of a spouse, can cause poverty. Situational poverty is most often temporary.
- Generational poverty. It is more pervasive than situational poverty because the effects of poverty have been experienced over long periods of time and have become ingrained in behavior.

POVERTY INFLUENCES STYLES OF COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING

- Oral Culture—One style of learning and communicating through spoken communication. Typically, those living in poverty prefer oral methods of communication as a source of getting information.
- Print Culture—Style of learning where people read for their primary mode of gaining information. Print culture is often linked to those living as middle class.

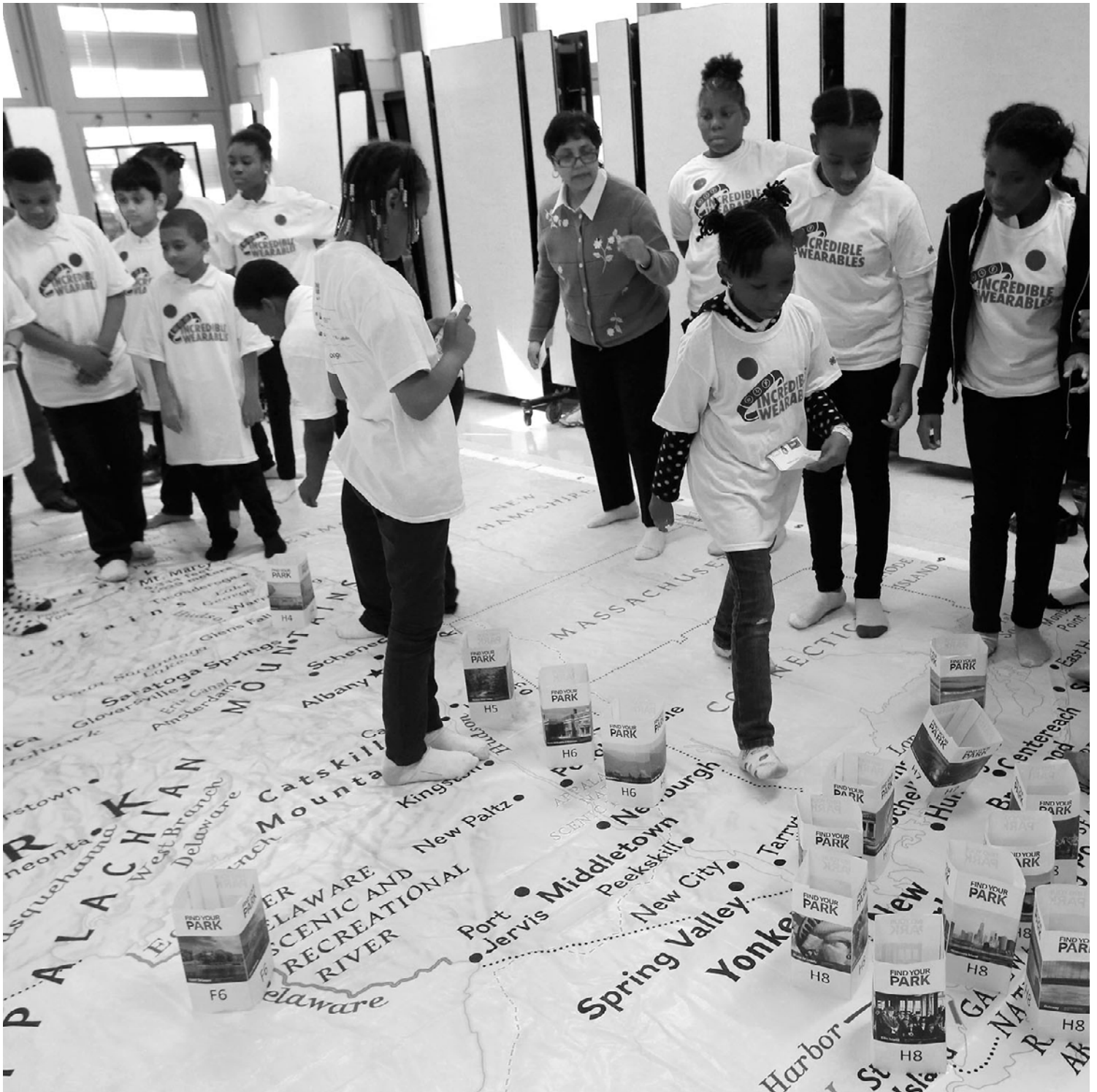
When planning to develop promotional/marketing pieces and content for the program, keep in mind the styles of communication and learning amongst the target audience. This will increase success in working with children and adults who are living in poverty.

Implications for Programming

The following are a few pointers for applying this information to youth programming:

- Study and create an understanding of poverty and its impact on communities and individuals.
- Recognize the social norms associated with poverty.
- Identify the resources of target audiences and build upon them.
- Approach youth and families as problem solvers, not victims.
- Emphasize and utilize the talents, skills, and knowledge of all participants.
- Build relationships of mutual respect.
- Consider situations based on timing and transportation and plan accordingly (e.g., Are youth hungry after school and need a snack? Will older youth bring younger siblings, creating larger groups with wider age ranges?).
- Create programs that emphasize relationships.
- As a group, agree on participation expectations.
- Anchor programming in the familiarity of the group's environment.
- Involve youth in setting the content of the programs.
- Emphasize skill building in the activities.
- Include conflict-resolution activities that build communication skills.
- Involve youth in future-oriented planning activities that include choice making.
- Recognize youth for their efforts.





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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Identify Your Target Audience

Chapter 3

What is the impact of poverty on your community and its residents?

How will these impacts affect your programming?

Which of these types of resources does your audience have?

- Financial
- Emotional and support
- Mental and physical health
- Inner strength and spirituality
- Role models
- Talents and skills

How can you capitalize on these resources to make change happen within the community?



Chapter 4:

Key Elements to Programming in Geographically Isolated Communities

Modern society is considerably more mobile than were earlier generations. Much of this movement has been wrought by an economic shift from industrial to service jobs, increased globalization, and increased technology.

These changes alter the context of communities in which youth reside. This in turn affects the connectedness of communities, often causing greater isolation for youth. This is especially true in rural and inner-city areas. Youth in these communities are increasingly underserved by youth organizations (Perkins, 2002).

The lack of connectedness and isolation have physical roots (e.g., isolated rural areas) but also technological and financial ones. For instance, increased reliance on the internet can increase isolation and a lack of connectedness for youth without the means (or infrastructure) to connect to the internet or acquire a smart device. Similarly, urban and rural areas may differ in challenges posed by transportation. Public transportation may not be available in rural areas, hindering access for youth to partake in programs. Conversely, traffic congestion may make program attendance a challenge in urban areas.

Issues Common to Isolated Communities

- Less access to community resources
- Fewer community gathering places
- Limited opportunities for interaction with people
- Transportation challenges—greater travel distances and/or limited access to transportation
- Fewer educational opportunities
- Limited access to internet service

Implications for Programming in Isolated Communities

- Create more opportunities for connecting the community.
- Consider developing intergenerational programming opportunities.
- Create projects that build on community resources.
- Invite speakers and involve other community members in meetings.
- Hold meetings in easily accessible locations.
- Consider transportation challenges when planning projects.
- Provide virtual program accessibility where internet is available.
- Focus on skill-building projects.
- Focus on the essential elements (see Chapter 6) when designing programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Identify Your Target Audience

Chapter 4

Who are the geographically isolated in your community? This may include people that have:

- Less access to community resources
- Fewer community gathering places
- Limited opportunities for interaction with people
- Limited access to transportation
- Fewer educational opportunities
- Limited access to internet service

How will you find out more about these populations?

How can you create opportunities to connect to the community?



Chapter 5:

Assessing Community Strengths and Resources

When starting 4-H programs in hard-to-reach areas, it's important to first identify the strengths and assets of the community and its citizens. An asset-based approach works best. Such a strategy starts by identifying the community's economic, social, and physical resources along with the talents, skills, and gifts of its individual members.

Asset-based assessments focus on strengths and effectiveness. They build community interdependence

and empower people. They build sustainability by encouraging people to invest in their community through use of their talents, skills, and gifts.

Potential Assets

Consider all of the following as potential assets of your target community.

Local Citizens (youth and adults)	Community Associations	Community Institutions	Physical Assets	Economic Assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills• Talents• Knowledge• Experience• Education• Capacities• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth organizations• Parent groups• Family support groups• Political organizations• Cultural organizations• Senior organizations• Athletic groups• Service clubs• Social groups• Neighborhood organizations• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools• Colleges and universities• Religious and faith-based groups• Police departments• Fire departments• Hospitals• Libraries• Museums• Social service agencies• Governmental agencies• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community centers• Youth centers• Schools• After-school programs• Childcare centers• Parks and recreation centers• Playgrounds• Transportation facilities• Public facilities• Private facilities• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses and merchants• Corporations• Factories• Distributors• Banks• Business associations• Chamber of Commerce• Other



Collecting Information

There are many ways to collect information on communities. Here are a few tips for gathering what you need to know for establishing new 4-H Youth Development programs.

- Utilize key informants who are knowledgeable individuals in the community who can give insight into community strengths, assets and needs. Such individuals may be teachers, school principals, youth workers, agency personnel, businesspeople, community leaders and other stakeholders.
- Target youth and their families. Use written, verbal, and observational methods.
- Consult written materials. Look for census data (e.g., American Communities Survey), school data, and participation levels in government or agency-sponsored programs, reports, etc.
- Become familiar with environmental sources, including natural features (such as rivers, hills, green spaces), air and water quality, and infrastructure (roads, bridges).
- Newspapers, radio, television, billboards, posters, flyers, community events, etc., are sources of information.



SURVEY TOOLS AND METHODS

To gain further information from the community, more direct methods such as surveys and interviews may be used. Based on the information obtained in the initial community assessment, specific individuals or groups can be selected as target audiences.

Consider factors such as cost, time, and audience when choosing a survey method. Regardless of which method is used, information should be given and collected in the language of the target audience, with attention given to appropriate reading levels and cultural formalities. Also ensure methods that allow anonymity of respondents whenever possible.

- **Mail surveys.** These are relatively low cost, but they do not yield high levels of participation (especially when the audience doesn't know the researcher). Mailing addresses of respondents must be acquired initially. Provide self-addressed stamped return envelopes.
- **Telephone interviews.** These work best if preceded by an introduction from someone in the community, so that the call is expected. Telephone numbers of respondents must be acquired initially. Keep the number of questions short.
- **Face-to-face interviews.** These work best if they are conducted in a familiar environment for the participant and if someone from the community has introduced the researcher and explained the purpose of the survey.
- **Focus group interviews.** These can be efficient and comfortable for collecting information. Look for existing agencies and groups to cosponsor the interview.
- **Drop-off and pick-up surveys.** These are convenient but may not yield high participation. Surveys can be distributed through schools, faith-based groups, after-school programs, or other places where youth congregate.

- **Community forums.** Community forums bring together a broad cross-section of community members, especially ones who would be potential participants in programs. The process requires considerable time and planning.
- **Electronic surveying/polling.** Electronic forms of polling and surveying participants are convenient and common. These allow for instantaneous or postsurvey collection. Consider formats that are user-friendly on varied electronic devices.

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Identify the Community's Assets

Chapter 5

Which types of assets does your community have? (*e.g., local citizens, community associations, community institutions, physical assets, economic assets*)

Describe these assets. (*Asset mapping is one way to present this information visually.*)

How will you find more information? (*e.g., focus groups, community forums, key informants, written materials, surveys, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews*)



Chapter 6:

Essential Elements in Youth Development Programs

Positive youth development builds on the assets and strengths of young people. It is a process that promotes positive outcomes by providing opportunities, choices, relationships, and support for youth.

The National 4-H program has adopted a list of eight critical elements that are often summarized into four

essential elements: **belonging**, **mastery**, **independence**, and **generosity**. These are considered necessary attributes of youth programs striving to create environments conducive to optimizing youth development.





Within the four essential elements, we can further identify eight essential elements.

1. Belonging
 - Positive relationship with a caring adult.
 - An inclusive environment.
 - A safe environment.
2. Mastery
 - Engagement in learning.
 - Opportunity for mastery.
3. Independence
 - Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future.
 - Opportunity for self-determination.
4. Generosity
 - Opportunity to value and practice service for others.

Reference

Samuel, J., & Rose, P. (2011). *Essential elements*. Fact Sheet. 4-H National Headquarters. <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Essential%20Elements%20of%204-H%20v.2011.pdf>

What does it mean?

The eight critical elements of youth development are drawn from research and practice. They provide the basis for planning experiences that result in positive youth outcomes. They are summarized here according to the four essential elements of 4-H Youth Development.

BELONGING

- Positive relationship with a caring adult. Youth need and benefit from long-term consistent relationships with caring adults, in addition to their parents. In 4-H, these adults can be mentors, guides, advisors, or friends. They help set boundaries and expectations for youth.
- An inclusive environment. A sense of belonging may be the single most powerful ingredient for positive youth development. Effective groups support individual differences and celebrate the collective success of the group. 4-H can help youth know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to the group.
- A safe environment. Youth need to feel both physically and emotionally safe. When participating in 4-H, youth should not fear harm from the environment, adults, or other participants. Additionally, youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition, but also as an ongoing element of participation.

MASTERY

- Engagement in learning. To develop self-confidence, youth need to feel and believe they are capable. They must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. When youth are engaged, they have greater self-motivation and capacity to learn and contribute. 4-H can provide opportunities for self-reflection and self-correction.



- Opportunity for mastery. Mastery is a process that develops over time. Youth need the opportunity to build knowledge, skills and attitudes and explore topics that meet their own interests. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive life and career choices.

INDEPENDENCE

- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future. When youth can positively see themselves in the future, they are more confident and optimistic. It is powerful to know they can influence people and events through decision making and action.
- Opportunity for self-determination. Youth need to know they can influence events and decision making, rather than passively submitting to the will of others. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.

GENEROSITY

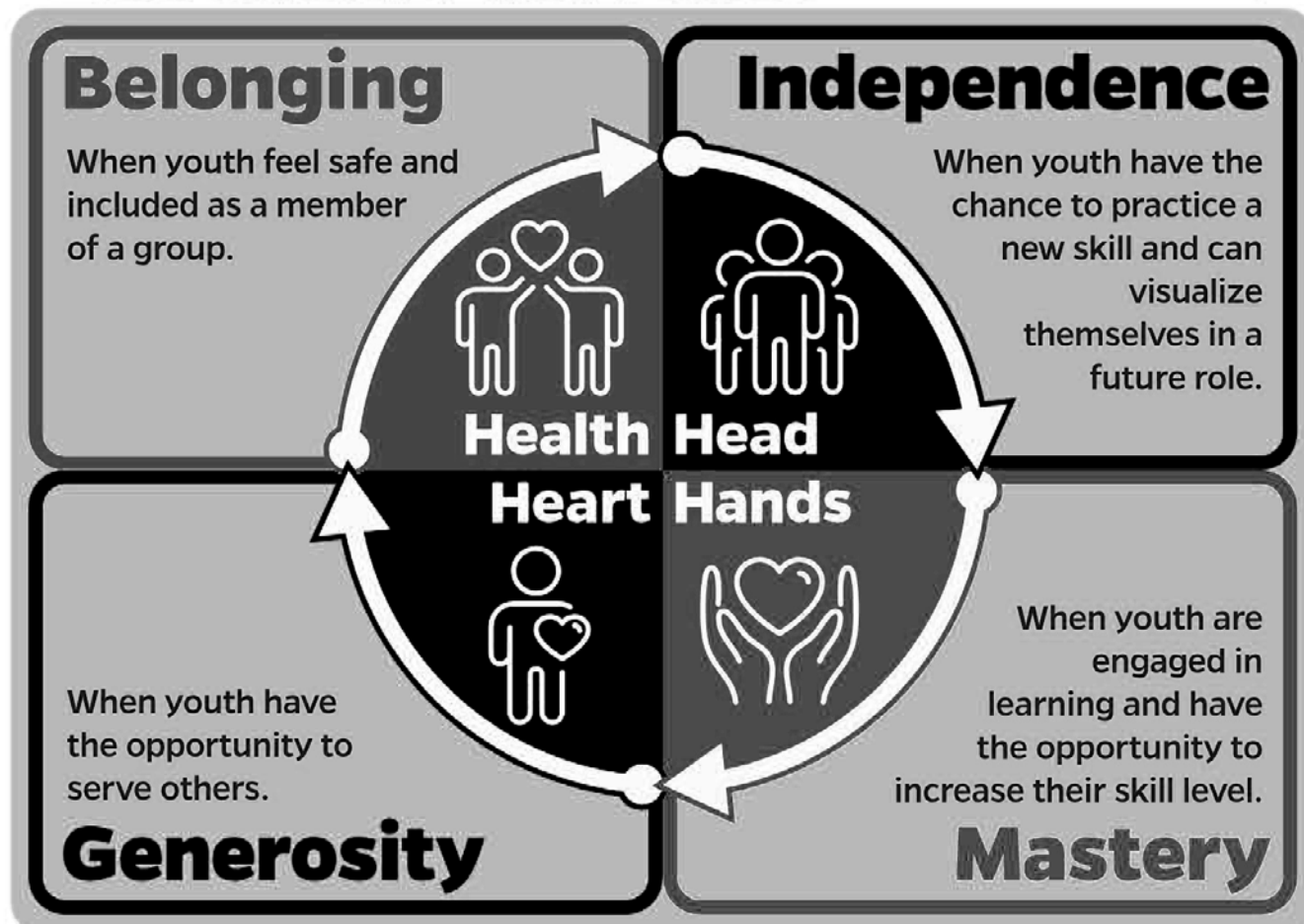
- Opportunity to value and practice service for others. Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. These positive experiences provide the foundation to find purpose and meaning in their life.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Samuel, J., & Rose, P. (2011). *Essential elements*. Fact Sheet. 4-H National Headquarters. <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Essential%20Elements%20of%204-H%20v.2011.pdf>

Essential Elements

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Kimber Sarver, UF/IFAS Extension Agent



REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Essential Elements of Youth Development

Chapter 6

If you were to take an inventory of your program, which of these elements would be present?

- Positive relationships with caring adults
- A safe environment
- An inclusive environment
- Engagement in learning
- Opportunities for mastery
- Opportunities to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Opportunities to value and practice service for others

How will you ensure that any missing elements will be incorporated into your program?

What is your plan for incorporating the elements?



Chapter 7:

Key Elements of Positive Youth-Adult Partnerships and Youth Empowerment

To establish 4-H clubs in hard-to-reach areas, consider youth and adults working together toward a common goal. The term “youth in governance” describes the intentional, meaningful engagement of youth in programs, organizations, and communities where they share a voice, influence, and decision-making authority with adults.

Youth in governance acknowledges and embraces the unique and powerful contributions that young people can make in their communities. It emphasizes the positive, rather than perceiving youth as using resources and needing services.

YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE

- Where young people work in equal partnership with adults on boards, committees, coalitions, or other governing structures.

Using youth in governance approaches and committing to youth and adult partnerships strengthens and promotes youth development, enhances organizations and communities, ensures future democracy, and guarantees social justice and youth representation. Here are some other, specific benefits.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH (Mantooth, 2005)

- Increase in self-esteem, sense of personal control and enhanced identity development.
- Development of life skills such as leadership, public speaking, dependability, and job responsibility.
- Decrease in loneliness, shyness, and hopelessness.

YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

- A cooperative effort between youth and adults, built on respect and communication, which usually begins with a mutual need.



- Less involvement in risky behaviors such as juvenile delinquency or drug or alcohol use.
- Better academic achievement.
- Increase in safety.
- Exposure to diverse people, ideas, and situations.
- Introduction to more resources, support, and role models.

BENEFITS FOR ADULTS (Zeldin et al., 2000)

- Experience the competence of youth and perceive them as critical to organizational improvement.
- Enhance their commitment to the organization.
- Feel more effective and competent in working with youth.
- Develop a stronger sense of community connectedness.
- Increase their understanding of young people.

BENEFITS FOR ORGANIZATION (Zeldin et al., 2000)

- Youth involvement becomes the organizational expectation.
- Young people clarify the organization's mission.
- Organization becomes more connected and responsive to youth in the community.
- Organization places greater value on inclusiveness and representation.
- Organization is more appealing to potential funders.
- Organization reaches out to the community.

References

- Mantooth, L. J. (2005). *Youth in governance: A guide for adults involving youth as decision makers on boards and committees*. University of Tennessee 4-H Youth Development. <https://www.scribd.com/document/6974444/Youth-in-Governance>
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Challenges to Bringing Hard-to-Reach Youth to the Table

Recognizing the benefits of developing a strong working relationship with youth is an important first step. However, there may be challenges that prevent it from happening. The following is a list of challenges that may be encountered.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES (Zeldin et al., 2000)

- Lack of knowledge. Many youths have not previously been involved in decision making, so they need training on procedures and programming.
- Unwillingness to get involved. Left out in other situations, many youths are skeptical that their voice and vote will be heard.
- Unwillingness to share power. Not all adults and youth like to share their existing power.
- Lack of network support. Simply bringing youth to the table is not enough. A plan for success needs to be in place to support growth.
- Unclear roles. Clearly identifying the structure, roles and limitations is essential.
- Unique needs. Youth and adults may have distinct scheduling, transportation, and financial constraints that can limit their participation.

Reference

- Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A. K., Topitzes, D., & Calvert, M. (2000). *Youth in decision-making: A study on the impacts of youth on adults and organizations*. University of Wisconsin-Madison: Innovation Center/Tides Center, University of Wisconsin Extension. https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/youthadulthoodpartnership/files/2012/12/Youth_in_Decision_Making.pdf

Conditions Needed to Promote Youth Empowerment

Positive youth and adult partnerships and opportunities for youth empowerment don't just happen. They need to be supported by the culture of the organization. Intentional efforts must be made to fully engage youth and adults in this process.

Here are some conditions that will support this development.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS (Zeldin et al., 2000)

- The board of directors or other governing entity is committed to youth empowerment and entrepreneurial decision making.
- Adult leaders strongly advocate for including youth in decision-making roles.
- Youth provide pressure and support for increasing youth participation in governance.
- Adults have a variety of experiences with youth.
- Organizations provide support for youth to advance through a variety of decision-making opportunities.
- Organizations involve older youth in governance positions early in the organizational process.



Reference

Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A. K., Topitzes, D., & Calvert, M. (2000).

Youth in decision-making: A study on the impacts of youth on adults and organizations. University of Wisconsin-Madison: Innovation Center/Tides Center, University of Wisconsin Extension. https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2012/12/Youth_in_Decision_Making.pdf

Tips for Engaging Youth Leaders

Here are some tips to consider in engaging youth in leadership and program governance activities.

- Identify areas for partnership, such as boards, committees, coalitions or other governing structures or decision-making opportunities.
- Involve youth in the beginning planning and implementation stages.
- Continue to support the active involvement of youth in all aspects of program delivery.
- Share the responsibility of leadership. Adult guidance, rather than control, is necessary.
- Be clear about the levels of authority for youth and back their decisions when they fall within the agreed-upon guidelines.
- Provide opportunities for listening and talking with youth. Learn each other's perspectives.
- Identify areas in which youth may need training and together plan how it may be offered.
- Consider giving youth materials with which to construct portfolios. The portfolios act as tangible records of their successes which can be shared with future employers or colleges.
- Involve all youth, not just high achievers. Create a mechanism for increasing responsibility along with readiness and willingness to participate.

- Treat young people as equals and develop a partnership relationship that values their assets.
- Keep youth informed about activities, even when problems occur.
- Be energetic and excited about activities. Have a positive, open attitude.
- Make activities fun and challenging.
- Serve as a role model for youth and be fair and consistent in your actions.
- Help youth see the impact of the work they are doing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

4-H Afterschool Leadership Team. (2003). *Starting 4-H clubs in after-school programs.* <https://nc4h.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Clubs-in-AS.pdf?fwd=no>

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Creating Positive Youth and Adult Partnerships

Chapter 7

Which of these potential challenges stand in the way of incorporating positive youth and adult partnerships into your programs?

- Lack of knowledge
- Unwillingness to get involved
- Unwillingness to share power
- Lack of network support
- Unclear roles
- Unique needs
- Lack of awareness of benefits

How will you overcome these challenges?

What resources do you need?



Chapter 8:

Planning for Sustainability

When developing 4-H programs in hard-to-reach communities, program sustainability should be foremost in planning. Building sustainability ensures that efforts will continue over time. Sustainability includes elements of program competence, capacity, and continuity.

Successful and sustained 4-H Youth Development programs are most often community based. They have built the capacity of participants to assume day-to-day leadership and responsibility for the program and targeted the needs and interests of the community.

Key Elements of Sustainability

The following seven factors have been identified as being necessary for program sustainability (Mancini et al., 2004):

1. Competent leadership
2. Effective collaboration
3. Understanding the community
4. Project adaptability
5. Adequate funding
6. Staff quality and involvement
7. Demonstrated program impact

Reference

Mancini, J. A., & Marek, L. (2004). Sustaining community-based programs: Examination of relationships between sustainability factors and program results. *Proceedings of the 20th Annual Conference of the Association for International Agriculture and Extension Education*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228497373_Sustaining_community-based_programs_examination_of_relationships_between_sustainability_factors_and_program_results

Implications for Building Sustainable 4-H Programs

Consider the following when planning your program.

- Plan for sustainability from the beginning.
- Create a clear vision with meaningful outcomes that are shared by everyone.
- Use multiple strategies to achieve your plan.
- Actively involve multiple community partners.
- Identify community assets and build on these strengths.
- Build flexibility into your planning.
- Determine the funding and resources that will be needed to maintain the program before you start building it.
- Recruit and train competent youth and adult volunteers who have a commitment and vision for the program.
- Measure and share the results of your efforts with the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mancini, J. A., & Marek, L. (2004). Sustaining community-based programs: Examination of relationships between sustainability factors and program results. *Proceedings of the 20th Annual Conference of the Association for International Agriculture and Extension Education*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228497373_Sustaining_community-based_programs_examination_of_relationships_between_sustainability_factors_and_program_results

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Sustaining Your Program

Chapter 8

Which of these key elements do your programs possess?

- Competent leadership
- Effective collaboration
- Understanding of the community
- Project adaptability
- Adequate funding
- Staff quality and involvement
- Demonstrated program impact

How will you provide the elements of sustainability that are missing?

What other resources do you need to ensure your program is sustainable?



Chapter 9:

Marketing Your Program

Marketing is important to spread the word about your after-school program and increase interest and participation. Marketing reaches youth and parents who might benefit from your program, helping them get involved.

Marketing is simply a means of publicizing your program's name and services. Its purpose is to help your target audiences understand the value of the program so they can participate. It can also have other benefits such as increasing funding and community support.

Marketing to hard-to-reach audiences is especially important. Such audiences may not have had a prior history with Extension or may not be familiar with the program name or the services offered. The task of building relationships and trust with new audiences can be enhanced with a targeted, thoughtful marketing program.

It's critical to understand social and cultural differences when designing a marketing plan. Messages need to appeal to the specific culture, norms, values, and interests of your target audience.





The Ps of Marketing (Guion et al., 2003)

Traditionally, marketing plans include the four Ps: product, place, promotion, and price. However, when marketing to different and hard-to-reach audiences, consider two more Ps—people and partnership.

- **Product.** Your program is the product. When marketing, explain exactly what your product (program) will do for your target audience. If possible, include cultural components.
- **Place.** The geographic location of your program is your place. Focus your marketing efforts where your target audience congregates and socializes.
- **Promotion.** Promotion is the way your product is presented. Your messages should have meaning and significance to your target audience and align with their values and beliefs.

- **Price.** The cost of program participation is the price. Price includes things such as money, time and effort. The benefits of the program should outweigh the price.
- **People.** Identify the people who will benefit from your product. Be specific. A different message will be needed for each specific group based on their needs, culture, and values.
- **Partnership.** Partner with other community-based programs to more successfully sell your program. They can give your program credibility, authenticity, and greater visibility.

Reference

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Community Marketing

Impersonal marketing strategies won't help reach diverse audiences. Marketing techniques that consider the target audiences' value systems are usually more effective.

Here are some tips for creating a community marketing campaign geared to diverse audiences:

- Understand your audience and personalize your marketing message. Know and value:
 - Cultural uniqueness of your target audience.
 - Cultural beliefs, symbols, and practices.
 - Differences in languages, accents, practices, and social conduct.
- Keep your mission or purpose practical and simple.
- Tell and show how the program is beneficial to your target audience.
- Share specifics about the program's goals.
- Use word-of-mouth and interpersonal communication to spread your message.
- Provide easy-to-share marketing materials, especially for use in social media.

- Promote communication and cooperation with community leaders.
- Attend and participate in community events and activities.
- Be flexible and adapt your messages as needed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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REFLECTIVE THINKING

Individually and as a team, use these prompts to guide your planning and implementation efforts. It will be necessary that all members of your team participate when you complete the corresponding section for this chapter in the Planning Matrix on page 45.

Marketing Your Program

Chapter 9

The Six Ps of Marketing

- Product
- Place
- Promotion
- Price
- People
- Partnership

Describe each for the Ps in your marketing program.



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Appendix

The following planning matrix provides an overview for guiding conversations and discussions in planning work with hard-to-reach audiences. Remember, planning should not be done in isolation. Interacting with community

members and discussing the specifics of the community are essential to creating successful programs. (The *Reflective Thinking* prompts for each section are found at the end of each chapter.)

PLANNING MATRIX

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Chapter 1

Who are the hard-to-reach in your community? (e.g., *ethnic groups, low-income groups, geographically isolated groups, others*)

What are the challenges to their participation?
How will you address these challenges?

What other information or resources are needed?

Chapter 2

What do you know about the cultural values and norms of the hard-to-reach audiences with which you will be working?

How might these affect programming?

What strategies in programming might you use to make connections across cultures?

Chapter 3

What is the impact of poverty on your community and its residents?

How will these impacts affect your programming?

Which of these types of resources does your audience have?

- Financial
- Emotional and support
- Mental and physical health
- Inner strength and spirituality
- Role models
- Talents and skills

How can you capitalize on these resources to make change happen within the community?

Chapter 4

Who are the geographically isolated in your community? This may include people that have:

- Less access to community resources
- Fewer community gathering places
- Limited opportunities for interaction with people
- Limited access to transportation
- Fewer educational opportunities
- Limited access to internet service

How will you find out more about these populations?

How can you create opportunities to connect to the community?

IDENTIFY THE COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

Chapter 5

Which types of assets does your community have? (e.g., *local citizens, community associations, community institutions, physical assets, economic assets*)

Describe these assets.

How will you find more information? (e.g., *focus groups, community forums, key informants, written materials, surveys, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews*)



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 6

If you were to take an inventory of your program, which of these elements would be present?

- Positive relationships with caring adults
- A safe environment
- An inclusive environment
- Engagement in learning
- Opportunities for mastery
- Opportunities to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Opportunities to value and practice service for others

How will you ensure that any missing elements will be incorporated into your program?

What is your plan for incorporating the elements?

CREATING POSITIVE YOUTH AND ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Chapter 7

Which of these potential challenges stand in the way of incorporating positive youth and adult partnerships into your programs?

- Lack of knowledge
- Unwillingness to get involved
- Unwillingness to share power
- Lack of network support
- Unclear roles
- Unique needs
- Lack of awareness of benefits

How will you overcome these challenges?

What resources do you need?

SUSTAINING YOUR PROGRAM

Chapter 8

Which of these key elements do your programs possess?

- Competent leadership
- Effective collaboration
- Understanding of the community
- Project adaptability
- Adequate funding
- Staff quality and involvement
- Demonstrated program impact

How will you provide the elements of sustainability that are missing?

What other resources do you need to ensure your program is sustainable?

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

Chapter 9

The Six Ps of Marketing

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Describe each for the Ps in your marketing program.





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