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Citizenship Programs for 4-H
in South Dakota

by

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Introduction

Citizenship programming for 4-H was the topic for two workshops held at the annual convention of the 4-H Leaders Association in Mitchell, South Dakota on February 13, 1981. This paper describes insights and plans offered by the fifty-seven 4-H leaders and Cooperative Extension Service field and state staff members who participated in the workshops. A list of participants and their addresses is included as an appendix.

Reasons for Citizenship Projects

Participants offered several reasons for additional efforts to develop citizenship projects in 4-H. One primary reason involves the fact that many 4-H members in South Dakota will undoubtedly become community, state, and national leaders in the future. Citizenship projects offer opportunities for youngsters to become involved in and knowledgeable about public affairs and to develop leadership skills.

Several participants also mentioned the contemporary problem of citizen alienation from our own public institutions. Many citizens, it was said, are both unhappy with and uninvolved in their own government. Citizenship programming for 4-H was considered a way to teach youngsters the importance of seeing themselves as members of communities with responsibilities to be involved in improving those communities.

Finally, it was recognized by participants that because South Dakotans are becoming ever more interdependent with an ever more complex world, the importance of high quality public services is increasing. Among local public services, for example, the importance of a high-quality education for South

Dakotans is increasing. Citizenship 4-H projects were viewed as providing opportunities for young people to understand the financing, organization, and delivery of public services, including public education.

Materials Available

Several packages of materials to support 4-H citizenship projects were described and one set was examined in the workshop. "Involvement Unlimited" is the title of one package of materials written by Cecilia A. Winiecki, a 4-H Community Development Specialist at North Carolina State University. This set of materials was written to guide group efforts by older 4-H members. The orientation is to solving local community problems.

Another North Carolina package of materials is entitled "4-H Economics in Action." This set emphasizes learning about private businesses as well as public policy. The method involves gatherings of 4-H members with business and government leaders.

A third set of materials, developed by the Southern Regional 4-H Citizenship Literature Committee, is entitled "Exploring Citizenship." This package was examined briefly in the workshop. It contains seven units, written for different age groups. Two units seemed especially relevant to our felt needs for citizenship programming in South Dakota--Unit IV (My Community) and Unit VI (My Government).

Favorable comments were made by workshop participants about this package. Participants were pleased with the variety of practical projects suggested, with the multi-age level orientation and with the possibility of using the materials for both group projects and individual efforts such as "Projects Why" and "Self-Determined Projects." The "Exploring Citizenship" set of materials is available to South Dakota 4-H leaders through their local County Extension Office. The set is priced at \$2.80.

Action Plans Goals

Several goals were identified as appropriate for 4-H citizenship projects. These were:

- (1) increased understanding of the structure and function of government--especially local government;
- (2) identification of opportunities and requirements for work in the public sector;
- (3) appreciation of the financing, organization, and delivery of public services such as education;
- (4) participation in the resolution of specific community problems;
- (5) creation of an increased sense of community and a reduction of alienation of the young from community institutions.

Resource People

When designing citizenship programs, 4-H leaders can draw upon a variety of resource people--both traditional and new. Traditional people include 4-H Youth Specialists (especially Mary Ellen Aamot at Brookings) and Extension Public Affairs Specialists (especially Galen Kelsey from the Economics Department at South Dakota State University). Some 4-H leaders have already had experience in designing citizenship programs. Another traditional group of resource people is, of course, 4-H members themselves, especially older more experienced members.

New resource people include, most prominently, public officials at all levels of government. Organizations which represent public officials could also be contacted. Examples are the South Dakota Association of County Commissioners and the South Dakota Municipal League. If as a project, a comparative study of education was begun, foreign students now living in the U.S. could be approached.

Methods

Both 4-H leaders and Extension staff members offered a number of suggestions

for designing citizenship programs. These suggestions are listed below:

- (1) One problem with programming for citizenship projects is knowing what to exclude. Perhaps a way to focus the effort for a citizenship program on local government would be to concentrate projects for one year on a single public body, e.g. the school board or on a single office, e.g. the County Auditor;
- (2) Projects may often involve a two-step process. For example, a 4-H group of mixed ages could observe a Circuit Court trial. Then older members could proceed more in depth with individual projects on South Dakota's legal system;
- (3) Local officials are likely to welcome visits by 4-H groups. Some preparation time to consider what to look for and what to ask is useful;
- (4) Age differences among 4-H members create differences in the range of citizenship interests. That set of materials entitled "Exploring Citizenship" was written for different age groups;
- (5) Motivation among 4-H members also differs. No common agreement on motivation was expressed in the workshops. Perhaps a case-by-case approach is most appropriate. While learning can be a reward in itself, it may be necessary, especially for the oldest and youngest 4-H members, to provide additional rewards such as trips or honors.

Action Agenda

4-H leaders in the workshops suggested that planning could begin soon to develop a citizenship program for October, 1981. The process would involve developing a local goal or set of goals, identifying what changes in 4-H member behavior are desired, devising a project or projects, identifying and drawing on the insights of resource people, and considering how you will know if the program was successful and how it can be improved the following year.

Conclusion

Many participants in the workshops and afterwards expressed the strong feelings that further programming for citizenship in 4-H was very important. Resource materials and people are available and the appropriate time to begin is now.

APPENDIX
Workshop Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Aasland, Sara	Yankton, SD
Alden, Susanne	Brookings, SD
Anderson, Mary Anne	Plankinton, SD
Anderson, Sharon	Dell Rapids, SD
Apland, Kathleen	Howard, SD
Banick, Roger	Alexandria, SD
Benson, DeLores	Hurley, SD
Bietz, Carol	Tripp, SD
Blanchard, David	Howard, SD
Christensen, Chris	Wessington Springs, SD
Chicoine, Kathy	Elk Point, SD
Clement, Barbara	Vermillion, SD
Deneke, Darrell	Olivet, SD
Duffel, Beverly	Mt. Vernon, SD
Eichacker, William	Salem, SD
Fehn, Bob	Highmore, SD
Flaming, Martha	Tyndall, SD
Fredericksen, Katherine	Murdo, SD
Fuerst, Clinton	Tripp, SD
Goens, Joan	Clear Lake, SD
Gunn, Vince	Bison, SD
Hall, Mary	Fulton, SD
Henderson, Jeanette	Faulkton, SD
Johnson, Dennis	Parker, SD
Johnson, Ruth	Watertown, SD
Kasten, Arlene	Parker, SD
King, Rosemary	Colome, SD
Kisch, Ester	Wagner, SD
Kittelson, Gail	Henry, SD
Koerner, Donna	Madison, SD
Koopal, Gloria	Platte, SD
Koopal, John	Platte, SD
Leiferman, Patricia	Bridgewater, SD
Maag, Ruggy	Tripp, SD
Mansheim, Vera	Dallas, SD
Mayes, Charles	Ideal, SD
McDaniel, Brenda	Flandreau, SD
McManus, Chester	Fulton, SD
Meutzer, Blanche	Gann Valley, SD
Meyer, Mrs. Gilbert	Tripp, SD
Mitchell, Ann	Mitchell, SD
Moe, Norma	Alexandria, SD
Nugteren, Bonnie	Turner, SD
Park, Daniel	Lake Andes, SD
Rayman, Maxine	Vermillion, SD
Rist, Dianne	Turner, SD
Rosenburg, Craig	Armour, SD
Rozell, Dallas	Aurora, SD
Schnose, D. M.	Davis, SD
Shubeck, Mrs. Fred	Centerville, SD
Stastny, Donna	Wagner, SD
Sweeter, Carole	Ipswich, SD
Uecker, Beryle	Wagner, SD
Wangberg, John	Woonsocket, SD
Wolf, Eleanor	Woonsocket, SD
Wriedl, Lavoy	Jefferson, SD