Informational Paper

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Abstract

The Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT) was developed to bring 4-H youth in grades 8-12 from throughout the Southern District together to provide opportunities for older members to identify 4-H needs in the district and practice leadership skills. Through SDLT, youth have identified district needs, developed teaching materials related to these needs, and developed and practiced leadership skills.

This informational paper will provide an overview of SDLT, highlight the activities members have participated in and document evaluation results. The principles of SDLT can be easily replicated in other districts.
**Situation Statement**

In 1999, Southern District Youth Development faculty and staff discussed existing youth leadership opportunities for older 4-H members at county and district levels. A Southern District Leader’s Council comprised of youth and adult leaders from each county existed, however, an informal evaluation of the council determined it was not effective in providing leadership experiences for older 4-H members. Further, the discussions indicated that the group was likely to be disbanded in the near future.

Southern District Youth Development faculty determined counties had common needs related to youth leadership. They recognized that similar programs existed in most counties, such as officer training and youth leadership development projects. These educational activities provided opportunities to bring young people together to identify common issues in their county and work together to develop programs and educational materials.

It was decided that developing a district youth leadership team would provide 4-H members in grades 8 - 12 opportunities to identify 4-H needs in the district and practice leadership skills. Involvement by youth development faculty in the district as advisors would provide supportive environments for Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT) members to serve in leadership roles in the district and in their own counties.

In the fall of 1999 the Southern District Leadership Team was formed. Three youth development faculty members in the district —two from Dane County and one from Columbia County—agreed to serve as advisors. In 2000-2001 there was a change in advisors. The current advisors are from Columbia County, Iowa County, and Sauk County.

SDLT advisors wrote and received a $300 grant from the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation in 1999, 2000 and 2002. County 4-H Leaders’ Associations/Federations/Councils also provided $25.00 per participant. Financial support was used to fund retreat costs, promotional materials such as t-shirts and supplies for SDLT sponsored activities.

**Program Objectives**

- Youth will participate in expanded leadership opportunities in the district and in their counties.
- Youth will identify needs related to 4-H in the district.
- Youth will work together as a team to develop teaching plans and resources for use in the district.
- Team participants will report increased life skill development and leadership roles.
Methods

Participants
Faculty and staff in the thirteen Southern District counties annually publicized this leadership opportunity and recruited up to four individuals per county to participate in the Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT). SDLT advisors sent announcements about meetings to all Southern District 4-H Youth Development staff. These were included in monthly newsletters and some counties sent information to specific age groups, junior leader members, Ambassadors or other identified youth leader groups.

Each county selected participants individually—some had county applications and some counties included all who were interested. Participants included youth in grades 8 – 12 and were identified as active 4-H members within their selected county. In 1999-2000 SDLT membership included fifteen youth from seven counties, in 2000-2001 there were eleven youth from six counties and in 2001-2002 SDLT included twenty-five youth from eight counties. One youth has been a part of SDLT since 1999 and ten have participated since 2001.

Implementation
Three Southern District faculty advisors volunteered to identify specific methods for helping district youth plan, facilitate, and teach workshops and activities to youth. The initial delivery plan was to bring youth together in a retreat setting, creating a team that would utilize resources and share ideas. The SDLT components focused on the following frameworks: creating youth and adult partnerships, building life skills, and practicing the experiential learning model.

Since 1999, members have participated in a variety of overnight retreats and day-long training and planning sessions. (See Appendix A: Retreat Schedule)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retreat, Fall 1999</td>
<td>Team building activities; Developed officer training materials; Lecture and hands-on activities to develop presentation skills and lesson writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual schedules</td>
<td>Taught officer training in Southern District counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 1999-2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-long meetings</td>
<td>Team building activities; Needs assessment; Revised officer training materials; Developed Action Center packets. (Action Centers are set up in public places and offer a variety of hands-on activities for people to try. Information about 4-H is usually available.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February and April, 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual schedules Winter and Fall, 2001</td>
<td>Led Action Center activities at County Fairs and promotion events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Retreat, Fall 2001
Team building activities, Lecture and hands-on activities to develop presentation skills, Revised officer training materials, Revised Action Center packet; Developed parliamentary procedure materials; Developed SDLT recruitment brochure

Spring and Summer, 2002
Led Action Center activities at Children’s Fair and at Farm Progress Days; Planned Fall 2002 Retreat

As this schedule shows, SDLT members took an active role in action planning, curriculum development, program implementation and presentations in the district and in counties.

Training
The Southern District Youth Development advisor team utilized and modeled the following materials in working with the SDLT members.

1) Public Adventures (4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, 1999) – This curriculum was used to help members identify needs within their counties. The public citizenship curricula helped the thirteen 4-H teens from five counties identify issues, goals, group mission, stakeholders, and develop a plan of action at the February 2001 meeting. Members participated in team building activities and used the Public Adventures curriculum to identify common issues within county 4-H programs throughout the Southern District and highlighted two they felt they had the resources to address. The two areas were 4-H promotion and running effective 4-H meetings.

Promotion
- Action Center information for use at 4-H events.
- SDLT brochure for group promotion.
- Identify places where members could promote 4-H.

Running effective 4-H meetings
- Revise officer training lesson plans.
- Develop a packet with parliamentary procedure teaching ideas.

SDLT members also developed specific action steps and a time line to complete their projects.

The third issue area identified was developing leadership skills in older youth in the district. A future project included planning retreats for 4-H teens from throughout the district to learn and practice leadership skills.

2) Training Trainers to Teach(T3) (National 4-H Council)– This curriculum is built on the experiential learning model. Sections used for SDLT include Presentation Skills, Basic Facilitating Skills, Teaching Others and Designing a Lesson.

3) Team Building – Faculty advisors introduced team building concepts and activities. Returning members played an integral role in building a team atmosphere and provided leadership to fellow SDLT members. Returning member leadership roles included describing the purpose and past roles of the team to new members, presenting action center ideas and leading teambuilding activities.
4) Experiential Learning Model – The experiential learning model, including the five steps: Experience, Share, Process, Generalize, and Apply, was an integral component of all the SDLT activities. After SDLT members developed activities, they presented the lesson or activity to other members. Thoughts and observations were shared and ideas were incorporated into later demonstrations or presentations. The new and revised activity was then presented or demonstrated at the next program.

Material Development
Southern District Leadership Teams consisting of four to six youth developed the following teaching packets and materials at the various retreats and training programs:

“Officer Training – President”, Developed in November 1999 and revised October 2001
“Officer Training – Vice President”, Developed in November 1999 and revised October 2001
“Officer Training – Secretary”, Developed in November 1999 and revised October 2001
“Officer Training – Treasurer”, Developed in November 1999 and revised October 2001
“Officer Training – Reporter”, Developed in November 1999 and revised October 2001
Each teaching plan includes learner objectives, materials needed, and an easy to follow format for the presenter.

“4-H Action Demos”, Developed in Spring 2001 and revised October 2001
The Action Demo packet includes information about action demos and suggested activities that can be presented.

“Quick and Easy Guide To Parliamentary Procedure”, Developed in October 2001
The Parliamentary Procedure guide includes sample meeting formats and skits and programs to teach parliamentary procedure.

“Southern District Leadership Team” Promotional Brochure, Developed in October 2001
The brochure includes information about participating in SDLT.

As part of the retreat program, youth evaluated the effectiveness of the materials that they have used. Youth then revised those materials to reflect their needs. Further information about evaluation can be found in the evaluation section of this paper.

Application
4-H teens, representing eight counties from the Southern District have participated in the SDLT retreats, training programs, and promotional events. Teens have utilized the materials that they have developed and the skills practiced to impact youth and adults at the county and district levels.

- Train the Trainer – SDLT participants presented the material that was created within their group to fellow SDLT members so everyone was familiar with the materials. They also trained other youth leaders in their county to present the materials.
• Officer Training – SDLT members presented Officer Training Workshops in eight counties that utilized the teaching materials created by the members. They also trained other youth leaders in their county to lead officer training programs.

• 4-H Action Demos – Members used the information in the packets to lead Action Centers in their counties and to encourage counties to develop Action Centers at county fairs and other locations. SDLT members conducted action center activities at district events such as Farm Progress Days and the Sauk, Richland, and Iowa Counties’ Children’s Fair.

• Parliamentary Procedure – SDLT members observed a presentation designed to teach basic Parliamentary Procedure practices. This teaching method, titled “Trail Mix” has participants use Parliamentary Procedure techniques to add ingredients to make a trail mix. Possible ingredients include M&M’s, peanuts, marshmallows, raisins, and others as identified by the presenter. Members presented this demonstration in eight counties and trained other youth leaders in their counties to present this demonstration.

EVALUATION

A written evaluation was completed in 1999 and in 2001 by agents in the Southern District and by SDLT members. (Appendix B, C, D) Participants in the 1999-2000 Officer Training programs also completed evaluations.

Objective 1--Youth will participate in expanded leadership opportunities in the district and in their counties.

Direct observation documented consistent attendance and active participation in the creation of materials to support local 4-H programs and provide leadership opportunities for older 4-H members.

Nine (9) of fifteen (15) SDLT participants completed a written evaluation conducted in 1999. One hundred percent (100%) of the SDLT members returning the survey reported that participation in SDLT was valuable to them as 4-H leaders. Open-ended responses to the question “How do you think you improved your leadership skills through this experience?” included:

“I have improved my leadership skills by being able to approach people I don’t know and have also been able to help people with their questions.”

“I have gained knowledge on proper instructional skills and educational techniques.”

“It has helped me to be more assertive and less nervous about doing activities in front of groups of people.”

“It has helped me improvise my teaching plan for any age group.”

“It has helped me to teach and interact with the younger and older members.”
The written agent evaluation conducted in 2001 and completed by youth development staff in ten (10) of thirteen (13) counties documents these results. Six (6) counties used action center materials in thirteen (13) settings. They estimate that seventy-four (74) members exhibited leadership skills through these efforts and sixteen hundred and twenty (1620) 4-H and non 4-H members were reached. Agents report that one hundred (100) families received 4-H information as a result of action center participation. Southern District faculty/staff report that fifteen (15) SDLT members taught revised officer training sessions. The materials were used in seven (7) counties.

Six (6) counties have incorporated SDLT members into leadership teams within their counties to create family night action centers, develop an SDLT county group, create summer parks and recreation programs, teach county workshops and teach officer training programs.

Objective 2-- Youth will identify needs related to 4-H in the district.

The SDLT members identified the following needs related to 4-H in the district at a retreat in February of 2000.

A. Promotion
   - Action Center information for use at 4-H events.
   - SDLT brochure for group promotion.
   - Identify places where members could promote 4-H.

B. Running effective 4-H meetings
   - Revise officer training lesson plans.
   - Develop a packet with parliamentary procedure teaching ideas.

C. District-wide Youth Leadership Training
   - Plan a retreat for 2003 to teach leadership skills to district youth

Objective 3— Youth will work together as a team to develop teaching plans and resources for use in the district.

Through oral and written feedback, SDLT members report that team participation is valuable. They report better teamwork and communication skills and are more confident in organizing and leading groups following SDLT participation. Participants verbally express a feeling of empowerment as a result of their participation and a feeling they can make a difference to the 4-H program in their county and on a district level.

In 1999 nine (9) of fifteen (15) participants responded to a written survey. All nine (9) “felt they were part of a team through this experience” and report they “had an opportunity to be a responsible team member.”
The following statement was made by a participant in 2000 after the team building and visioning session, “This has been a wonderful experience and one of the first times our opinions have been listened to. I feel that my participation here will really make a difference.”

The 2001 evaluation of the materials developed by the SDLT members demonstrates the value and usefulness of the materials. Youth development staff in ten (10) of thirteen (13) counties responded to a written survey. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the agents report using the officer training materials, 75% used the action center activities, and 50% used the parliamentary procedure materials developed by SDLT in their counties. One-hundred percent (100%) of the agents rate the materials as above average or excellent.

**Objective 4-- Team participants will report increased life skill development and leadership roles.**

In the 2001 written agent evaluation, faculty/staff report that teens involved in the team all show increased speaking and teamwork skills, as well as an increased ability to plan, organize, and lead an activity. They also report SDLT members better able to promote 4-H.

This chart shows a comparison of SDLT member responses to the following questions from the written evaluations used in 1999 and 2001:

*As a member of the SDLT, I had an opportunity to:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1999 (15 participants: 9 responses)</th>
<th>2001 (11 participants: 5 responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn new things</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to be more effective when</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giving presentations</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>80% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present programs to others</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>60% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a responsible leader</td>
<td>88% (8)</td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help others learn new things</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute as a member of a team</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a responsible team member</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to a question in the 2001 written survey completed by youth development staff in ten (10) of thirteen (13) counties concerning life skills of SDLT members are illustrated below.

*Considering the skills your county youth had before participation in SDLT, rate the youth from your county on the following skills after participation in SDLT:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills in public speaking increased</td>
<td>86% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased ability to lead groups</td>
<td>100% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased understanding of teamwork</td>
<td>100% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased ability to plan, organize and lead a group</td>
<td>100% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increased ability to promote 4-H 86% (6)
Increased ability to demonstrate activities or teach lessons to others 100% (7)
Is a more responsible leader 86% (6)

Implications

1. Developing a district-wide youth leadership group is an effective method to encourage 4-H teens to work beyond their county 4-H program. Through involvement in this program, youth exhibit increased leadership in counties and in the district as a result of material development, support, training and varied opportunities.

2. 4-H teens informally report a need for opportunities to meet, gather and work with other teens across county lines to keep 4-H interesting and exciting. The Southern District Leadership Team meets this need by providing another avenue for communication and gathering while also giving youth educational opportunities that contribute to increased skill development.

3. The Southern District Leadership team program models “Best Practices for Positive Youth Development” (Zeldin, Day and Matysik, 1999) by providing youth opportunities for Expression and Creativity, Group Membership, Exploration and Reflection, High Expectations and Strategic Support and Access to Resources. Research suggests that participating in programs with opportunities and supports like these will lead to positive outcomes for youth.

4. This program is easily replicated and promotes collaborative efforts between district youth development agents and 4-H members from counties within the district. SDLT members benefit from participating in a process to determine program goals as well as the end results achieved. Youth participate as a team member, make decisions, provide leadership to a variety of groups and communicate with others about the SDLT program. In addition, 4-H youth are given an opportunity to serve in teaching capacities in a variety of arenas.

5. The proven techniques and principles of experiential learning can be applied in a variety of learning environments, contribute to increased skill development in youth and support an environment for positive youth development.

6. Communication and organization challenges exist for this effort. Because participants are located throughout a district, organizing the group for an activity, training or event can be a challenge. Many participants are not able to drive and though attempts are made to schedule things in a central location, the distance some must travel can be difficult.
Southern District Leadership Team
Planning Retreat

Friday, October 26

10:00 a.m. Arrival and Registration
10:30 a.m. Get-Acquainted by returning SDLT members
11:00 a.m. Plans for the retreat, knowing your audience, presentation skills, review officer training materials
12:30 p.m. Lunch
1:15 p.m. Action Center Ideas by SDLT members
1:45 p.m. Present Officer Training Lessons; Share Parliamentary Procedure Ideas
3:00 p.m. Break
3:15 p.m. Future Directions for SDLT; Decide Three Work groups
3:45 p.m. Work Groups develop lessons, visuals, etc.
6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:30 p.m. Delegate Games; Action Center Ideas by SDLT members; finalize presentations for Saturday morning
9:00 p.m. Check on progress, free time, movies, etc.

Saturday, October 27

7:00 a.m. Rise and Shine and Pack
8:00 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Community Service Project for Camp Gray
10:00 a.m. Work Groups present programs; Sign up for county presentations; Set Spring meeting date; Complete Evaluation
11:00 a.m. Depart for home

11:00 p.m. Lights Out
1999-2000 Southern District Leadership Team

SPRING EVALUATION

1. Participation in this type of structured leadership opportunity (specific lesson plan development and county teaching opportunities) is of value to me as a 4-H teen leader.
   _____YES
   _____NO

2. How do you think you improved your leadership skills through this experience?  (Please describe.)

3. What parts of the experience (from the first October retreat through December 1999) were most meaningful in helping you improve those leadership skills?  (Please describe.)

4. What could have been included in the October retreat that would have been helpful to you as you developed your leadership skills?  (Please describe.)

5. Participation in this type of team building experience (county teams, cross-county teams, working with other Extension 4-H staff in the Southern District) is valuable to me as a 4-H teen leader.
   _____YES
   _____NO
6. I felt I was part of a team through this experience.
   ____YES
   ____NO

7. What parts of the experience were most helpful to you in helping you feel part of a team? (Please describe.)

8. What could have been included in the experience to allow more opportunity for team building? (Please describe.)

9. As a member of the Southern District Leadership Team, I had an opportunity to: (Please check all that apply.)
   ____A. Look up or find information I needed to use.
   ____B. Learn new things.
   ____C. Use new information I learned.
   ____D. Learn about how to be more effective when giving presentations.
   ____E. Plan and organize a presentation.
   ____F. Present a lesson to others.
   ____G. Clearly state my thoughts, feelings and ideas to others.
   ____H. Be a responsible leader.
   ____I. Involve others in sharing leadership responsibilities.
   ____J. Help others learn new things and set goals.
   ____K. Contribute as a member of a team.
   ____L. Be a responsible team member.

10. Anything else you would like to share with us:

   (Thanks for being honest in your responses!)
2000-2001 SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM EVALUATION

1. Participation in this type of team building opportunity (i.e. County teams, cross-county teams, work with other Extension agents) is of value to me as a 4-H teen leader. ______ Yes _____No

2. I felt I was part of a team through this exercise. ______Yes ______No

3. What activities or experiences were most helpful in helping you be part of a team?

4. What could be included in the program to allow more opportunity for team building?

5. What parts of the SDLT experience (February meeting – county fairs) were most meaningful or helpful to you in improving your leadership skills?

6. What additional experiences would allow increased opportunity for leadership skill development?
7. As a member of the Southern District Leadership Team, I had an opportunity to: (circle all that apply)

a. learn new things
b. demonstrate activities to others’
c. learn about how to be more effective when giving presentations
d. present programs to others
e. clearly state my thoughts, feelings and ideas to others
f. be a responsible leader
g. involve others in activities
h. help others learn new things
i. promote 4-H
j. contribute as a member of a team
k. be a responsible team member

Please complete this evaluation and mail it to Deb Ivey or bring it to the retreat in October.
Southern District Agent Survey on the Impacts of the Southern District Leadership Team

1. Has your county ever had representatives on the Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT)?

Yes

NO

If no, move to question 5.

2. Considering the skills your county youth had before participation in SDLT, rate the youth from your county on the following skills after participation in SDLT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Skills in public speaking increased</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Increased ability to lead groups</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Increased understanding of teamwork</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Increased ability to plan, organize and lead a group</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Increased ability to promote 4-H</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Increased ability to demonstrate activities or teach lessons to others</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Is a more responsible leader</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. List any additional skills or comments about skills that your county SDLT participants gained. Make comments about specific changes that were noted after participation in SDLT.

4. Describe any other activities that have occurred in your county as a result of SDLT or with SDLT members?
5. Please rate the quality of the materials developed by SDLT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer Training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Procedure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Brochure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Respond concerning the SDLT materials that you have used in your county. If you have used any of these, check the line and briefly explain who used the materials and at what event or how they were used.

   ____ Officer Training Lessons

   ______________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

   ____ Action Center Activities

   ______________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

   ____ Parliamentary Procedure Ideas

   ______________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

   ____ Promotional Brochure

   ______________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

7. Approximately how many people were reached through the use of the SDLT materials?

8. What future SDLT activities would most benefit your county?