

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

An Evaluation of the Land O'Lakes Community Service Projects

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Land O'Lakes Foundation awarded \$4,000 to the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation to support 4-H community service programming. Any 4-H club or group of clubs could apply for a grant from \$50 to \$1000 with the restriction that the grant was not to cover the entire cost of a project. Clubs were to supplement the grant money with other sources of assistance. Grants were awarded to projects that

- were determined and led by the youth, with support from adults
- were expected to have a lasting, positive impact on the community
- were, when possible, designed to involve organizations and individuals outside of 4-H as partners

In 1999, thirteen clubs received grants that ranged from \$50 to \$750. Land O'Lakes continued its support of the program in 2000.

UWEX 4-H clubs use community service activity to build civic responsibility in their members. Community service activities help young people learn about their communities, practice democratic processes and engage in meaningful public work. The Land O'Lakes grants provided a unique opportunity to investigate the value of these projects for involved youth, adults and their communities. The grants also provided an opportunity to begin refining an evaluation process that would be suitable for assessing the contribution UWEX 4-H Youth Development makes in building civic responsibility among youth who live in Wisconsin.

Description of the Land O'Lakes Foundation Grant Projects

In 1999, thirteen 4-H groups received Land O'Lakes Foundation grants for community service projects. Taken together, the projects selected by the 4-H clubs represented a wide variety of community service activities, including planting flowers at a local park and undertaking a major renovation of a historic community meeting place (Table 1). The projects ranged in duration from one month to almost two years, including the initial planning stage (Table 2). Most clubs met approximately four times to work on their projects. One club met 25 times over the course of two years. In total, more than 200 young people ranging in age from five to 19 participated in these projects (Table 3). The number of young people involved in each project varied from six to 40, depending in part on the number of young people who were members of each club (Table 4).

In addition to Land O'Lakes grant money, clubs were required to obtain other sources of funding to carry out their projects. Clubs raised money through a variety of activities including bake sales and requests for donations from other community organizations. Two clubs used their Land O'Lakes funds as seed money to engage

in large-scale projects, each of which required more than \$10,000 to complete. In Rock County, the LaPrairie Township 4-H club collected more than \$20,000 to restore the historic LaPrairie Grange Hall building, a community meeting place that had fallen into disrepair. Club members worked alongside volunteers from other community groups to restore the building's foundation, to reside the structure and to make other improvements to both the interior and exterior of the building. In conjunction with a Community Park Committee, members of the Jolly Jets 4-H club of Crawford County collected \$13,000 in donations by holding fundraisers and soliciting additional funding from local organizations and the state. This funding was used to purchase and install new, safer playground equipment and park benches and to build a new concession stand. Both projects were still in progress at the time of this evaluation.

Table 1. 4-H Land O'Lakes Community Service Projects, 1999

Club County	Club Name	Project Name	Project Description
Crawford	Jolly Jets	Just Park It	Install new playground equipment and make other park improvements
Dane	Sun Prairie Star Bursts	Blooming of Sun Prairie	Plant flowers in Wetmore Park
Dodge	Hyland Prairie	Books for Kids	Donate new and used children's' books to community agencies serving parents and children; read books to children at Parent Resource Place
Fond du Lac	Several clubs in the county	Quilting Service	Make quilts to donate to charities
Lincoln	Hi-Lo's	Operation Dug Out	Build benches and roofs for dugouts at Somo Avenue Recreation Area
Marinette	Peshtigo Pine Trees	Bird Feeders	Build bird feeders and install them behind school playground
Pierce	Trail Travelers	Banquet Basket	Put together baskets containing food and personal care items and donate to 38 families in the community
Polk	Blake Badgers	Georgetown Town Hall	Build picnic table and landscape around historical sign
Richland	Ash Creek Actioneers	Intergenerational Therapeutic Gardening and Beautification	Assist residents to plant flowers at local nursing home
Rock	Milton	Schilberg Park Picnic Table	Build picnic tables for local park
Rock	LaPrairie	LaPrairie Grange Hall	Restoration Restore the LaPrairie Grange Hall
Shawano	Caroline Aces	Best Mill by a Dam Site	Build benches to place on grounds of historic grist mill in Caroline
Waukesha	Brookfield Blazers	H.U.G.S.	Donate clothing and personal care items to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission and Hebron House

Table 2. Project length (n = 11)

Days	# of projects	% of projects
30 – 90 days	4	36
91 – 180 days	3	27
181 – 365 days	1	9
Greater than 365 days	3	27

Table 3. Ages of youth participants in years (n = 227)

Age	# of participants	% of participants
Less than Age 10	50	22
Age 10 – 13	113	50
Age 14 – 18	58	26
Over age 18	6	3

Table 4. Number of youth participating in each project (n = 11)

Youth participants	# of projects	% of projects
Fewer than 11	3	27
11 – 20 participants	3	27
21 – 30 participants	2	18
Greater than 30 participants	3	27

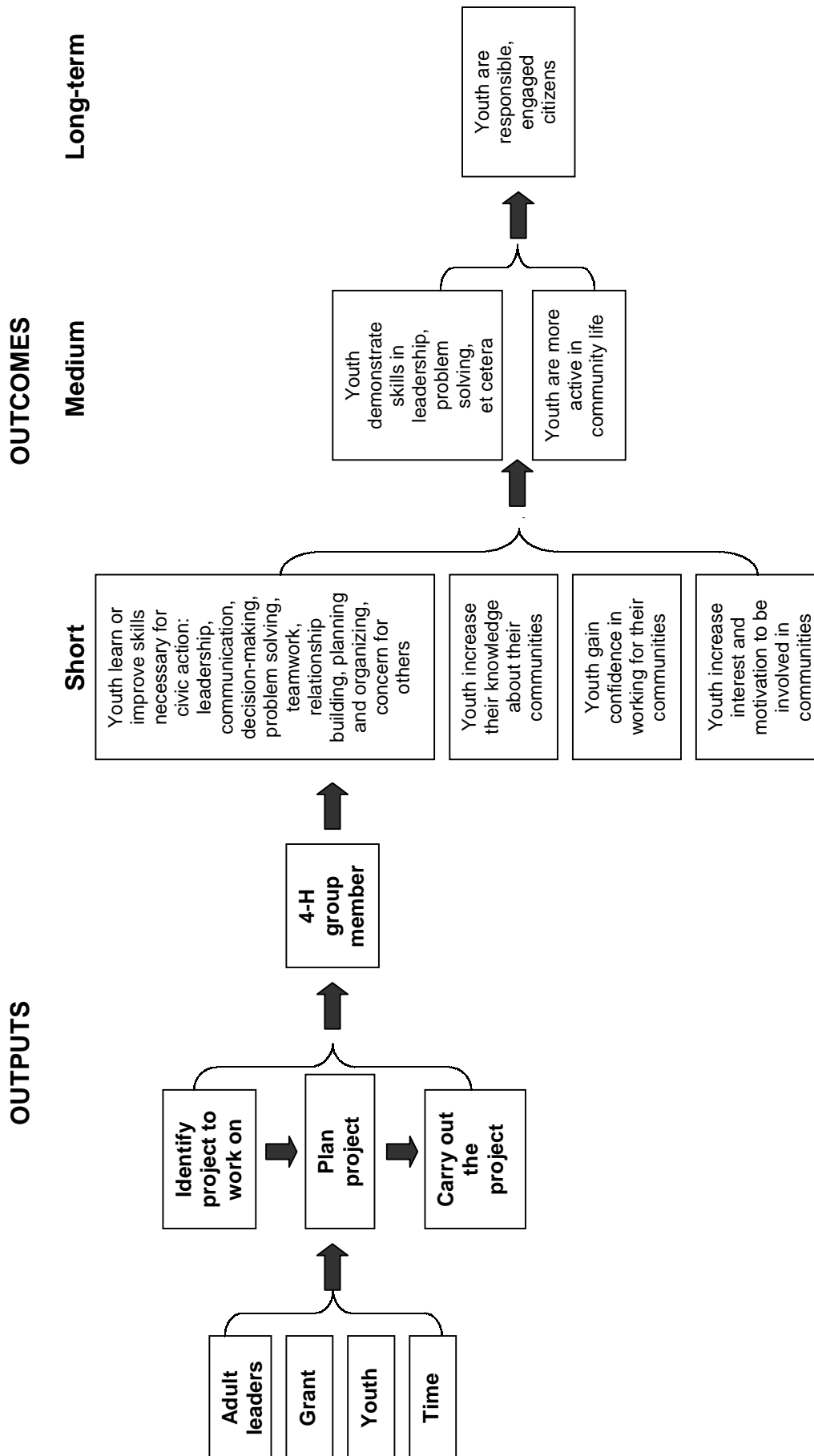
EVALUATION STRATEGY

While there is widespread agreement that participating in 4-H clubs builds life skills necessary for responsible citizenship, there is no clear definition or consensus on what the desired civic outcomes are or should be. A simplified logic model was created to describe the underlying “theory of action” of involving youth in their communities; this model represents how community involvement is expected to result in benefits for youth (Figure 1). The logic model provided an organizing framework to help focus the evaluation and determine the level of outcomes to measure. Given the nature and scope of the Land O’Lakes Foundation projects, it was decided to focus measurement at the short-term outcome level. For the purpose of this evaluation, the outcomes of interest included:

- Youth learn or improve skills necessary for civic action: leadership, communication, decision-making, problem solving, teamwork, relationship building, planning and organizing and concern for others.
- Youth increase their knowledge about their communities.
- Youth gain confidence in working for their communities.
- Youth increase their interest and motivation to be involved in communities.

Research indicates that the nature of the community service involvement makes a difference in youth outcomes. When young people involved in community service projects take on more responsibility and are involved in more meaningful activities, they are more likely to develop responsible civic attitudes (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Youniss & Yates, 1997; Blyth, Saito & Berkas, 1997). Consequently, there was interest in how the Land O’Lakes projects involved youth in project planning, management and evaluation.

Figure 1. Logic model: Youth involvement in community service



Additionally, there is the expectation that community service projects enhance youth-adult partnerships. Strengthening partnership between youth and adults has become an Extension programming priority. It is assumed that when youth and adults work together, negative attitudes and misunderstanding between them decrease and relationships emerge that are more productive.

Thus, the evaluation questions that were central to this evaluation included:

- Did the community service result in positive outcomes for youth?
- How were youth involved in these community service projects?
- Does working with adults on community service projects result in changes or improvements in youth-adult interactions?

The evaluation team designed two survey questionnaires: one for youth leaders and participants 10 years of age and older (Appendix A) and one for adult leaders (Appendix B). Youth leaders were those individuals in each club who had lead responsibility for their club's project. Youth aged 10 and over were 79 percent of all the youth participating in these projects. The youth questionnaire was field-tested at three clubs that did not participate in the Land O'Lakes projects. Evaluators revised the questionnaire by shortening it and simplifying the wording of several items. Because this evaluation also served as a pilot for future evaluations of civic outcomes, the questionnaire was distributed in several ways to see which was the most efficient and produced the highest response. The highest response rate occurred in the survey mode of distributing questionnaires at club meetings for completion and return before youth left the meeting. Further description of differences in modes of administration can be found in Appendix C.

Eleven of the 13 clubs that received Land O'Lakes grants in 1999 participated in this survey. In total, 105 surveys were distributed to youth in these clubs. Seven youth leaders and 54 youth participants completed the questionnaires for a total of 61 respondents. This yielded a response rate of 58 percent for youth participants. Eleven of 14 adult leaders returned questionnaires yielding a 79 percent response rate for adult leaders.

In addition to collecting information using a survey questionnaire, evaluation team members visited two clubs where they interviewed youth participants in an informal group setting. Group discussion questions are included in Appendix D.

YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

Youth Respondent Profile

The average age of the 61 youth respondents was 14 years old. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents were between 10 and 14 years old. The oldest respondents were 19 years old (Table 5).

Table 5. Age distribution of respondents (n=61)

Years of age	# of respondents	% of respondents
10 - 11	14	23
12 - 13	17	29
14 - 15	13	21
16 - 17	10	16
18 - 19	7	11

The group of respondents to this survey was similar demographically to statewide 4-H membership on the characteristics of gender and ethnicity (Table 6). A smaller percentage of respondents in this study (34 percent) live on farms and in rural settings than the statewide membership (40 percent). A greater percentage of respondents in this study (32 percent) live in towns and cities of 10,000 to 50,000 people than statewide membership (10 percent).

Table 6. Youth respondent characteristics compared to statewide club membership characteristics represented in percentage of each group

	% Evaluation sample	% Statewide club membership
Gender		
Male	38	43
Female	62	57
Ethnicity		
White	100	98
Other	0	2
Residence		
Farm	34	40
Rural (fewer than 10,000 people)	25	44
Town & city (10,000 – 50,000 people)	32	10
Suburb (of cities of more than 50,000 people)	2	1
City (greater than 50,000 people)	7	5

A majority of youth respondents participate in clubs other than 4-H. The greatest percentage participates in a sports club or team and/or a church or religious club (Table 7).

Table 7. Participation in groups other than 4-H (n=61)

Name of group	% of respondents
Sports club or team	61
Church or religious club	61
School club	38
Boy or Girl Scouts	7
Future Farmers of America	7
Musical group (e.g. chorus, American Music Federation)	7
Other: FBLA, Children’s Theater, Earn, Healthy Communities	7
Boys or Girls Clubs	2

Why Youth Got Involved in Community Service Projects

A majority of respondents indicated internal or personally oriented reasons for participating in community service projects. Seventy-seven percent indicated, “I thought it would be fun” and 70 percent indicated, “I wanted to help others” (Table 8). However, external motivators also were factors, with respondents’ group, leader, parents and friends all exerting some influence. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that one of their reasons for participating was “My group decided to do it” and 36 percent indicated they participated because “My leader wanted us to do it.”

Responses such as “I thought it would be fun” and “I wanted to help others in my community” were selected by twice as many respondents as were “My parents/ leader wanted me to” or “My friends were doing it.”

Table 8. Reasons for youth involvement in community service project (n = 61)

	% of respondents
I thought it would be fun	77
I wanted to help others in my community	70
My group decided to do it	62
I thought I would learn something	54
My leader wanted us to do it	36
My parents wanted me to do it	31
My friends were doing it	26
It will look good on my college or job application	21
I got school or class credit for doing it	2

Knowledge and Skills Youth Developed

From a list of possible benefits, respondents were asked to indicate what they thought they gained from their community service experience. Respondents indicated learning about community service as well as what they gained from their experience. Results are listed in Table 9.

Table 9. Youth gains from community service experience (n = 61)

	% of respondents
I had fun	85
I feel good about what we did	85
I learned that I can make a difference in my community	75
I learned how to work in a group to accomplish a goal	74
I learned that by working together we can make a difference for people in our community	70
I learned community projects are hard work	69
I learned community projects take a lot of time	67
I feel more comfortable working with adults	51
I feel better prepared to work on other community needs	48
I got a chance to make important decisions	46
I have more interest in my community now	43
I didn't gain anything from this experience	3

Most respondents indicated some sort of personal gain from this experience. Eighty-five percent indicated that they “had fun” and “feel good” about their involvement. Seventy percent reported that they learned that working together can help make a difference in their community and 75 percent reported that they as individuals could help make a difference in their communities. Seventy-four percent reported learning how to better work in a group to accomplish a goal. More than 60 percent of respondents learned about characteristics of community service projects – that they are “hard work” and that they take “a lot of time.”

Three percent (or two individuals) reported that they did not gain anything from their community service experience.

The results indicate that youth felt they did learn or improve important community building skills as a result of working on these projects (Table 10). The greatest impact appeared to be in the following areas: “working as part of a team,” “completing projects,” “getting along with others who are different,” “communicating within my project group” and “communicating with adults.” Respondents also felt

that their project management skills (planning and organizing, setting goals, making decisions and figuring out how to solve a community problem) improved. Participation in these community service projects appeared to have less impact on participants' project evaluation and public speaking capabilities when these are compared to other skills that youth participants learned or improved.

Table 10. Skills learned or improved (n = 59)

Skill	% A lot	% Some	% Not much
Working as part of a team or group to solve a community need	56	36	8
Completing projects	48	48	3
Getting along with others who are different than me	48	46	7
Communicating within my project group	39	54	3
Communicating with adults	38	59	3
Planning and organizing	37	48	15
Setting goals	33	54	13
Making decisions	32	52	17
Figuring out how to solve a community problem	28	51	21
Reviewing projects to see what went well and what didn't	17	51	32
Speaking in front of a group	5	43	52

Most of the respondents reported that they gained confidence in and skills for working on community problems. A majority of the youth respondents reported that the community service project helped them either "some" or "a lot" in the five areas listed below in Table 11. More than 50 percent of the respondents reported that their projects helped them "some" in understanding the needs of others; in gaining new skills and in learning how to solve a community need. More than 40 percent indicated that their projects helped them "a lot" in gaining confidence in working on community problems, in understanding the needs of others and in learning how to solve a community need. Of these items, respondents reported less gains in terms of learning about their community, with 73 percent reporting that they learned "some" about their community.

Table 11. Reports of how much the community service project helped the youth participants in the following ways (n = 60)

	% A lot	% Some	% Not much
Gain confidence in working on community problems	43	48	8
Understand the needs of others	42	50	8
Gain new skills	42	52	7
Learn how to solve a community need	35	55	10
Learn about your community	18	73	8

The most important thing youth learned. Respondents were asked to describe the most important thing they learned from participating in the Land O'Lakes community service project. Responses to this open-ended question are categorized and reported in Table 12.

Table 12. Most important thing respondents learned from community service experience (n = 55)

	% of respondents
How to work with others in a group	42
How to work on a project	20
How to help people	16
I can make a difference	10
Project-specific skills (e.g. siding, planting flowers, quilting)	10
Other: "There are really needy people in my town."	2

The greatest percentage of respondents (42 percent) indicated that the most important thing they learned was how to work with others in a group. Sample respondent comments included "I learned how to get along with everyone and get the job done right" and "I learned that by working together we can accomplish anything if we try, no matter how hard it is." Several youth participants mentioned learning how to work on the tasks involved in a project as the most important thing they learned (e.g. how to plan, budget and obtain money and donations). Respondents expressed an appreciation for what it takes to carry out a community project with comments such as "Big projects tend to take longer and cost more than originally expected" and "It takes a lot of commitment and dedication to accomplish some goals."

Youth perception of impact on community. A majority of youth participants (84 percent) felt that their community service project helped their community. Of youth respondents, 16 percent reported, "I am not sure." None reported that their service project had not helped their community.

Those who felt that the project helped their community indicated how it had done so. Examples provided by respondents included that they had "improved the appearance of the community," "we helped people who needed help" or "I felt like we provided something that community members would be able to use."

Respondents were asked how their projects could have been improved. Thirty-three of 61 individuals responded (54 percent), although only nineteen respondents had suggestions for improvement. Many youth participants gave positive responses to this question, with comments like "[The project] went smoothly and I liked the way it was run" and "We did great!" Suggestions for improvement included procuring additional resources (people, time and donations), improving planning and organization and expanding the scope of their projects.

Levels of youth involvement. Youth were asked to report recollections of their involvement in each of the tasks listed in Table 13. These tasks were considered essential for meaningful community service work. A majority of all respondents were involved in the initial stages of each project, and nearly all respondents took part in the actual "doing" of the project. Unless they were project leaders, youth were less involved in the initial planning stages. Research suggests that having time to reflect on and discuss the service experience increases its overall impact on participants (Conrad & Hedin, 1982; Moore & Allen, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1997). As might be expected, a greater percentage of youth leaders reported involvement in all stages of these community service projects than did youth participants who were not leaders.

Table 13. Percentage of youth involved in each stage of community service projects

Task	% of youth leaders	% of youth members	% of all youth
Deciding what the project would be	86	46	51
Planning the project	100	52	57
Doing the project	100	94	95
Reviewing the project – talking about what went well and what didn’t	57	44	46
Telling others about the project (giving a talk, writing a news story)	71	35	39

Youth and adult partnering. The results of this survey suggest that youth/adult relationships are strengthened as a result of community service work. Of those who responded to this questionnaire, 62 percent indicated that they are working differently with adults since participating in these community service projects. Conversely, 38 percent indicated that they are not working differently with adults as a result of their community service experience.

Those respondents who indicated that they were working differently with adults after the project reported changes as seen in Table 14 suggesting differences in both adult behavior and in youth attitudes. Other responses included such comments as: “I’m more comfortable with communicating [with adults],” “We can compare our ideas better” and “[I now know] how to approach adults [in our community] for donations and/or our service.”

Table 14. Ways that youth are working differently with adults (n = 38)

	% of respondents
Adults have given me more responsibility	71
I am more confident when working with adults	68
I am more involved in making decisions	55
We listen and talk more to each other	47
Adults ask me for my ideas more often	45
Other	16

ADULT SURVEY RESULTS

The adult survey was intended to shed further insight on the youths’ community service experience, to determine what adults learn from leading community service projects, and to inform adults’ future work on civic capacity building and developing youth-adult partnerships. As such, many of the questions asked were open-ended and exploratory in nature. The following results represent the responses of 11 of the 14 adult leaders, who were surveyed, a response rate of 78 percent.

Adult Leader Experience Profile

All of the adult leaders who responded to the survey had been 4-H leaders for at least two years at the time of the survey. More than 70 percent had been leaders for two through eight years. One respondent had been a 4-H club leader for 24 years. Eighty percent had previous experience working with youth on other

community service projects before becoming involved with the Land O'Lakes project. Slightly more than half had also led other youth groups over the past five years.

Adult Perception of Youth Involvement

Adults were asked to indicate which roles youth and adults played in each stage of the project (Table 15). This question is similar to questions 8 through 12 on the youth survey, but provides more detail about various stages of the project and a more encompassing view of how each project was carried out.

Table 15. Adult leader description of youth involvement in projects (n = 11)

	% Youth did alone	% Youth and adults did together	% Adult(s) did alone
Reviewed/assessed community needs	0	80	20
Identified possible projects	0	90	10
Decided which project to do	10	70	20
Wrote the grant	10	60	30
Secured materials	0	55	46
Got people to help	0	73	27
Planned the project	0	100	0
Carried the project out	0	100	0
Recognized and celebrated accomplishments	0	100	0
Evaluated the project	0	63	38
Told the story of the project	20	70	10

Adult Description of Youth Gains

Adults were asked to describe what skills or knowledge youth had gained as a Result of working on the Land O'Lakes community service project. Adult leaders most frequently mentioned learning how to work as a team and how to work on a project as skills gained by the youth in their groups. Adult leaders also often mentioned gaining an understanding of the needs of others as an outcome for youth.

One adult leader described these outcomes in the following way:

The 4-Hers worked side by side with elderly residents, hearing stories of the older people's experiences with gardening and growing flowers. They learned a little about landscaping, different types of mulch and a few new varieties of flowers. They learned about working together with residents, parents and other 4-Hers. They learned that working together was still work (ex. digging up sod, removing old shrubs and planting large bushes), but it was more fun by doing it together.

About three-quarters of the adult leaders reported seeing a change in youths' personal commitment to their community as a result of the Land O'Lakes community service project. Four leaders mentioned that the youth who were involved with these projects appeared to have more interest in doing future community service work. Sample comments include "They want to do more projects" and "More youth want to volunteer in community activities." Two leaders stated that youth participants were invested in maintaining the projects they had worked on; one commented, "They now feel a responsibility to the project and maintenance of the building."

Adult Gains

All of the adult respondents reported learning or improving skills to help them increase youth involvement in the community. The responses to this question were quite varied. Some leaders mentioned improving on general project management skills, including how to procure financial and human resources, identify community needs and organize projects to ensure maximum participation. Several others noted that having the right type of activities is key to increasing youth participation. Sample comments include “The trick is...to provide activities that fit in to today’s busy schedules” and “Having a wide variety of activities and things to be done so there is something that interests everyone.”

More than 80 percent of adult respondents thought that adults in their communities changed their perceptions of youth as a result of the Land O’Lakes project. Most of the narrative comments supporting these assertions focused on how work on community projects made the 4-H members more visible community members. One respondent wrote, “They see kids giving and doing for others in the area. This helps the kids’ self esteem and keeps them out of trouble. The adults are more willing to help and support the kids’ projects.”

CONCLUSIONS

Outcomes of participation in the Land O’Lakes grant projects can be examined on several levels for the youth who responded to this study – at the personal level, the club level and the community level. Available to us in this study are the self-reports of 58 percent of the youth and 78 percent of adult leaders who participated in these community service projects.

Knowledge and Skills Outcomes

The Land O’Lakes grants fostered a variety of important outcomes for youth and their communities. Youth gained knowledge about themselves, the nature of community service work and their community. How to work with others in a group was cited by the highest percentage of respondents as the most important thing learned through participation in the project.

They also learned skills – such as how to work with others – that can be help lead to further public engagement. They gained confidence in working on community issues and learned how to work together on a project to make a difference in their communities. The skills that approximately half of the youth respondents reported that they had learned or improved “a lot” were

- working as part of a team or group to solve a community need
- completing projects
- getting along with others who are different from me

Some youth learned how to use the seed money from their club’s grant to generate additional resources; having developed this skill can be important to future community building activities. Building communication skills “some” was a gain for approximately half of the youth respondents.

Youth Involvement in Projects

The scope and magnitude of the community service projects varied widely. Not all community service projects are alike, nor can they be expected to achieve the

same outcomes. Other research shows the relationship between the nature of the activity and the nature of the youth's participation to behavioral outcomes.

Youth indicated a mix of internal and external motivations for their involvement in the project. The greatest percentage of youth respondents reported becoming involved in the projects because of their own interest and motivation. Seventy-seven percent became involved because they "thought it would be fun." A majority of those surveyed (85 percent) reported that they did have fun and that they felt "good about what we did." Having fun and feeling good are important motivators for continued involvement in community service.

While internal motivation for involvement was reported by the greatest percentages of youth, external influences were also important. Two-thirds of youth respondents became involved because their group wanted to do the project; approximately one-third of respondents became involved because their leader, parents or friends wanted them to do the project.

Youth leaders were more active in all phases of project management than were general members. A larger percentage of youth leaders were involved in three of the five stages of community service projects than were general club members (by a margin of approximately 40 percent). These stages were

- deciding what the project would be
- planning the project
- telling others about the project

Members and leaders reported "doing the project" at 94 percent and 100 percent respectively. Greater engagement across all phases of project management is likely to lead to more individual growth and commitment to civic action. Thus, according to these results, we might expect youth leaders to be more likely than general club members to participate in more and/or greater civic projects in the long-term.

A majority of youth surveyed thought that their projects helped their communities. Sixteen percent reported that they were not sure whether their project helped. It may be likely that those who understand the linkages between their community service work and the betterment of their community will participate in future civic action relevant to their communities.

Youth-Adult Interactions

Youth reported that they learned about communicating with adults "some" (59 percent) or "a lot" (38 percent) as a result of their community service project. Fifty-one percent reported, "I feel more comfortable working with adults" as a result of their experience.

More than 60 percent of the respondents reported that they are working differently with adults as a direct result of their experience in their group's Land O'Lakes-sponsored project. This may indicate that it is possible for involvement in a single project to make a difference in youth-adult interaction. None of the respondents offered negative comments in their written answers regarding their interaction with adults relative to their community service projects.

Of those who reported change, three-quarters indicated that adults had given them more responsibility and greater than half indicated that they were more involved in making decisions than prior to the community service project. Nearly half reported

that they listened and talked more with adults and that adults ask them for their ideas more often – both positive signs of having their ideas valued and interactions sought.

A majority of adult leaders reported that youth and adults worked together on each task related to their community service project.

THE LOGIC MODEL AND YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK

The logic model that guided this evaluation was an attempt to construct a theory of action for community service work to begin to clarify what the expected outcomes are for engaging in community service. It is unknown to what extent these outcomes are held in common by the participating clubs. Nor is it known to what extent clubs have articulated civic outcomes they hope youth will achieve through community service involvement with a strategy to achieve them. Work on this will continue.

A majority of youth respondents reported learning about community service work (e.g. that it can be difficult work, that it can help them make a difference in their community). Nearly half responded positively to items that might indicate readiness or preparedness for participating in future community service projects and work that requires civic action (e.g. feeling better prepared to work on community needs, having more interest in their community after their participation in the project). Actual linkage of these shorter-term outcomes to longer-term gains needs further work.

LIMITATIONS

The results of this survey are based on self-reports and respondents' recollections of events that took place a year after their service projects had been completed. As such, accurate recall by respondents may suffer. The overall response rate was lower than what is desirable. Despite these limitations, the results are useful and provide ideas for continued research.

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Appendix

- A. Youth Questionnaire**
- B. Adult Questionnaire**
- C. Results of Pilot Test of Methods of Survey Distribution**
- D. Group Discussion Questions**

Appendix A: Youth Questionnaire



YOUTH LEADER SURVEY LAND O'LAKES COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANTS

County: _____

Name of community project: _____

Thank you for participating in this study. Community service is an important part of 4-H and the Land O'Lakes grants are helping 4-H groups make a difference in their communities. We would like to find out what you learned from this experience and how it helped you be involved in your community.

You do not have to complete this survey if you don't want to. If you do decide to answer the questions, please read each question carefully. Think about this project and what you learned from it. Your honest answers will help us a lot.

If you have questions about completing this survey that cannot be answered by your leader, please contact:

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Ph: 608-263-0857*

TO START, WE'D LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT YOU.

- 1) How old are you? _____

- 2) What grade are you in? _____

- 3) Are you male or female? (*Circle one.*)
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

- 4) How would you describe yourself? (*Circle one.*)
 - a) White/Caucasian
 - b) African American
 - c) Native American
 - d) Hispanic
 - e) Asian American
 - f) Racially Mixed

- 5) How many years have you been in 4-H (*Circle one.*)
 - a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1-2 years
 - c) 3-4 years
 - d) 5 years
 - e) Over 5 years
 - f) I don't know

- 6) Do you belong to other groups besides 4-H (*Circle all groups that you belong to.*)
 - a) Boy or Girl Scouts
 - b) Boys/Girls Club
 - c) Church or religious group
 - d) School club
 - e) Sports club or team
 - f) Other group (*Please name it.*):

- 7) Where do you live? (*Circle one.*)
 - a) Farm
 - b) Non-rural: Under 10,000 people
 - c) Town and city: 10,000 – 50,000 people
 - d) Suburb: Over 50,000 people
 - e) City: Over 50,000 people

NOW, PLEASE THINK ABOUT THIS PROJECT AND WHAT YOU DID DURING THE PROJECT. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

8) Were you involved in **deciding** what the project would be? (*Circle one.*)

a) No

b) Yes

If you said YES, tell us what you did to help decide what the project would be.

9) Were you involved in **planning** the project? (*Circle one.*)

a) No

b) Yes

If you said YES, tell us what you did to help plan the project.

10) Were you involved in **doing** the project? (*Circle one.*)

a) No

b) Yes

If you said YES, please tell us what you did to help complete the project.

11) Were you involved in **reviewing** the project – talking about what went well and what didn't? (*Circle one.*)

a) No

b) Yes

If you said YES, please tell us what you did to review the project.

12) Were you involved in **telling** others about the project (such as giving a talk or writing a news story)? (*Circle one.*)

a) No

b) Yes

If you said YES, please tell us what you did to tell others about the project.

THE NEXT QUESTIONS ASK ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS YOU MAY HAVE LEARNED AS A RESULT OF WORKING ON THIS PROJECT.

13) How much did this community service project help you? (*Circle one answer for each item.*)

- | | | | |
|--|-------|------|----------|
| a) Learn about your community? | A lot | Some | Not much |
| b) Learn how to solve a community need? | A lot | Some | Not much |
| c) Understand the needs of others? | A lot | Some | Not much |
| d) Gain confidence in working on community problems? | A lot | Some | Not much |
| e) Gain new skills? | A lot | Some | Not much |

14) Listed below are some skills people may use when working on community projects. How much did this community service project help you **learn or improve** the following skills? (*Circle one answer for each skill.*)

- | | | | |
|---|-------|------|----------|
| a) Setting goals | A lot | Some | Not much |
| b) Communicating within my project group | A lot | Some | Not much |
| c) Communicating with adults | A lot | Some | Not much |
| d) Speaking in front of a group | A lot | Some | Not much |
| e) Making decisions | A lot | Some | Not much |
| f) Figuring out how to solve a community problem | A lot | Some | Not much |
| g) Working as part of a team or group to solve a community need | A lot | Some | Not much |
| h) Getting along with others who are different than me | A lot | Some | Not much |
| i) Planning and organizing | A lot | Some | Not much |
| j) Completing projects | A lot | Some | Not much |
| k) Reviewing projects to see what went well and what didn't | A lot | Some | Not much |

NEXT IS A QUESTION ABOUT HOW YOUTH AND ADULTS MIGHT WORK TOGETHER ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS SUCH AS THIS ONE.

15) Do you think that you are now working differently with adults than you did before this project? (*Circle one.*)

- a) No
- b) Yes

If you said YES, how are you working differently with adults? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- a) Adults ask me for my ideas more often
 - b) Adults have given me more responsibility.
 - c) We listen and talk more to each other.
 - d) I am more involved in making decisions.
 - e) I am more confident when working with adults.
 - f) Other: (*Please tell us how.*) _____
-

FINALLY, WE ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE.

16) What do you think you gained from this community service experience? (*Circle all that apply*)

- a) I had fun
 - b) I learned how to work in a group to accomplish a goal
 - c) I got a chance to make important decisions
 - d) I have more interest in my community now
 - e) I learned community projects take a lot of time
 - f) I learned community projects are hard work
 - g) I learned that I can make a difference in my community
 - h) I feel good about what we did
 - i) I feel more comfortable working with adults
 - j) I feel better prepared to work on other community needs
 - k) I learned that by working together we can make a difference for people in our community
 - l) I didn't gain anything from this experience
 - m) Other (*Please tell us what it is.*) _____
-

17) What are some of the reasons that you got involved in this activity? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- a) My group decided to do it
- b) My leader wanted us to do it
- c) I wanted to help others in my community
- d) I thought it would be fun
- e) I thought I would learn something
- f) It will look good on my college or job application
- g) My friends were doing it
- h) My parents wanted me to do it
- i) I got school or class credit for doing it
- j) Other (*Please tell us what it is.*)

18) Do you think this project helped your community? (*Circle one.*)

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) I'm not sure

If you said YES, please tell us how this project helped your community.

19) What is the most important thing you learned from doing this project?

20) How do you think this project could have been improved?

THANKS SO MUCH FOR HELPING US WITH THIS SURVEY!

Appendix B: Adult Questionnaire



ADULT LEADER SURVEY LAND O'LAKES COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANTS

County: _____

Name of community project: _____

Thank you for participating in this study. Community service is an important part of 4-H and the Land O'Lakes grants are helping 4-H groups make a difference in their communities. We would like to learn more about your experience leading this community service project and the impact it had on the youth that participated. Your responses will be part of a statewide study of community service projects funded by the Land O'Lakes Foundation, and will be used to improve our programming in this area. All responses will remain confidential.

Please take a few moments to reflect on your experience and complete this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

*Carol Hermann
Program Development and Evaluation Unit
University of Wisconsin-Extension
432 North Lake Street, Room 617
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-0857*

FIRST, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1) For how many years have you been a 4-H leader? _____

2) Before the Land O Lakes project, had you worked with youth on other community service projects (either with 4-H or another organization)? (*Circle one.*)

a) NO

b) YES ———▶ Approximately how many other community service projects have you been involved in? (*Give number.*) _____

3) Over the past 5 years, have you been a leader of any other youth groups?

a) NO

b) YES ———▶ Please complete the following table for all groups you have led in the past 5 years.

NAME OF GROUP	# OF YEARS AS LEADER
<i>Example: Boy Scouts</i>	2

FOR THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS, PLEASE THINK ABOUT HOW THIS PROJECT BENEFITTED THE YOUTH WHO PARTICIPATED.

7) As a result of this project, what skills or knowledge did youth gain that will enable them to be more active in their communities?

8) As a result of this project, did you see a change in the youth participants' personal commitment to their community?

- a) NO
- b) YES → Please give specific examples.

NOW, PLEASE REFLECT ON YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT ON YOU.

9) As a result of this project, have you learned or improved any skills that will help you to increase youth involvement in the community?

a) NO

b) YES → What skills have you learned or improved?

10) Do you think adults in the community have changed their perceptions of youth as a result of this project?

a) NO

b) YES → Please give specific examples.

FINALLY, WE ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT HELPS MAKE SUCCESSFUL ADULT-YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS. Please take a moment to think about what is critical for adults and youth to work successfully on community projects, then answer the following questions.

11) What skills, attitudes and knowledge do **youth** need to work successfully with adults on community projects?

12) What skills, attitudes, and knowledge do **adults** need to work successfully with youth on community projects?

PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE REGARDING YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS PROJECT.

Thank you for completing this survey!!

Appendix C: Results of Pilot Test of Methods of Survey Distribution

This survey was conducted using three different methods to determine which was most effective in collecting data from youth participants at clubs across the state. These methods were:

- distribution and completion on-site by youth at a club meeting
- distribution by the club leader at the club meeting with youth returning their questionnaires via post to the survey sponsor after completing them at home
- distribution from the state office directly to the home address of the youth with youth returning their questionnaires via post to the state office

The method used by individual clubs was based on adult leader input and the timing of club meetings with respect to survey deadlines. The results of Table A indicate that having youth complete the surveys at club meetings yielded the highest response rates.

Table A. Methods of youth questionnaire distribution

Distribution method	Number of clubs	% Response rate
Youth complete at club meeting	3	100
Direct mail to youth from state office	3	56
Leader distributes; youth complete independently and mail in	5	41

Members of the evaluation team visited one club to observe the adult leader administer the survey, to find out how long it took to complete and to hear any questions respondents had while taking the survey. Youth participants from the informal focus groups were also asked for their impressions about taking the survey. In general, respondents found the survey easy to understand and to complete. A few respondents expressed a preference for multiple choice versus open-ended questions. Some respondents and one adult leader felt that the timing of the survey was an issue. The adult leader commented, "I feel you would get a much better response to these surveys if we would have had them right after we completed the project instead of a year after we did the project." One youth leader also mentioned that receiving surveys in May – the end of the school year – conflicted with many other end-of-year activities and projects.

Appendix D: Group Discussion Questions

- 1) How was this project different from other community service projects you've done?
- 2) What have you learned about your community from doing this project?
- 3) What do you think you can do now that you might not have been able to do before?
- 4) What did you think about taking the survey?
 - a) What did you think about the length of the survey (how long it took to finish)?
 - b) What did you think about the questions and the words (were there some words that were hard to understand)?
 - c) Are there better ways to find out about projects like these besides doing surveys?

