

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

The Organizational Leader

Mike Klumpp
Associate Professor -
4-H Youth Development

As an organizational leader, you will serve as the "4-H Club Leadership Team" captain. Your position is tied to four key leadership needs. Those needs are:

1. The club program development process.
2. The generation and guidance of club officers.
3. Keeping the club in touch with resource and program information available from your county Extension office.
4. The coordination of the leadership team in response to the club program development process.

4-H Club Program Development

Program development is the process of planning meetings and activities in response to what members of the club are interested in learning or doing. Youngsters will more readily express what they want to "do" than what they want to "learn." The objective of the leadership team is to facilitate "learning by doing."



*18 U.S.C. 707

Program Development and the Leadership Team

The "4-H Club Leadership Team" must be continuously involved in the ongoing program development

processes of planning, doing and reviewing programs. These processes include:

- **Program Planning** – Based on the interests of your 4-H'ers, plan learning and social events designed to help them gain knowledge and skills in their areas of interest.
- **Program Doing** – Implement your plan using people, places and things to do the programs included in your plan.
- **Program Reviewing** – Having done the planned program, did you reach the educational goals that you planned? Do you want to do it again?

These three processes will go on continuously once your 4-H club is established and your program begins. Everyone involved in the 4-H club is involved in the program development process. It represents the ongoing effort to "learn by doing."

As an organizational leader, you will come to understand and be involved in all three steps of program development, but the majority of your time will be spent in the planning phase.

People in the 4-H Club Program Planning Process

Just as leadership is everybody's business on the leadership team, so is the program development process.

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Each member of the team will be continuously involved in planning, doing and reviewing in relation to their particular role in the team.

The Club Officers and the Club Program

As organizational leader, you serve as immediate advisor to the officers elected by the members of the club. The club officers represent the organizational tool which you and the leadership team use to gain member involvement in the events and activities. The club officers are the link between the 4-H'ers and the leadership team for planning, doing and reviewing programs.

Coordinating the Leadership Team

As a club long-range plan is developed, you should begin staffing the plan. As the members identify their interests, you must communicate these interests to the members of the leadership team and respond to their feedback.

Keeping the Club in Touch With the County Extension Office

Your club is one of many clubs which operate in your county. Each club has the same overall youth development objectives. Each one, however, has a unique program in response to the needs of the youngsters who participate in that particular club.

Your county Extension faculty must support each club's program by supporting the leadership team which is involved with each club. As organizational leader you represent the communication link between the county office and other leadership team members.

The 4-H Club Calendar

As coordinator of long-range club program development, one of your tools is the 4-H Club Calendar. The production and coordination of that calendar is a very important part of your position.

As you remember, the club calendar includes meetings and activities. Most 4-H clubs conduct:

1. **Meetings** – Meetings include regularly scheduled club meetings designed to conduct club business and programs, committee meetings and project group meetings. (As project groups develop, they will hold additional meetings.)

2. **Activities** – In addition to a full calendar of meetings and project group sessions, most 4-H clubs develop a calendar of activities. These include educational, social, community service and fund-raising activities. Other activities are planned on a county-wide basis.

With the growth of the program through meetings and activities, your club calendar will fill up. As organizational leader, it is your responsibility to keep up with club meetings and activities and help the members avoid conflicts in schedule and resources.

Communicating the Calendar

It is important to inform the appropriate people of the events on the club calendar. The three groups you need to keep informed are:

1. The members of the leadership team
2. The club officers (they in turn keep the 4-H'ers informed)
3. The parents of 4-H'ers

Communication within the leadership team is very important. Periodic meetings of the leadership team are important to keep the group informed of long-range plans. Participation in meetings will drop, however, if they are held too often. Other forms of communication should make up the bulk of the leadership team communication.

The club officers must also be kept informed of the calendar. They help make decisions and develop club programs. The officers can also help manage the calendar and communicate its meetings, activities and events to the club members.

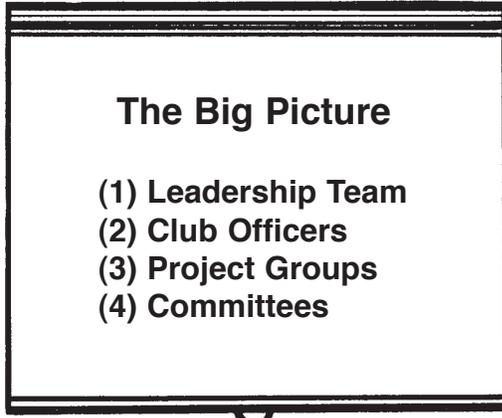
Parents of 4-H'ers must be kept informed of the calendar if you expect participation by the youth and assistance from the parents.

As organizational leader you will continually coordinate the plans and projections for involvement for these two major groups of contributors to the club's calendar – the leadership team and the club officers.

A Look at the “Big Picture”

As your club and its activities expand, you must have an understanding of the basic parts of the club. These parts include the following:

1. **The Leadership Team** – Includes all organizational, project, activity, records, teen and resource/support volunteers who give guidance to elements of the program. Through time, the size and composition of the team will change in relation to the needs of the planned program.
2. **The Club Officers** – The youngsters elected by their peers to serve in leadership roles. As organizational leader, you will guide the club officers. One of your objectives is to help club officers develop social and self-conceptual skills that relate to working successfully in a group and being a productive group member.



3. **Project Groups** – After 4-H'ers identify their learning interests, the project leaders begin to plan programs in response to those interests. As several youngsters express an interest in a particular project, those youngsters will form a project group which will meet by itself at times.
4. **Committees** – The leadership team and the club officers will need to form committees in response to programs they plan. These committees may add activities to the club calendar.

Roadblocks to Success

As a 4-H club organizational leader, you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on the club members and on the volunteers who serve as your leadership team. You will realize very quickly the personal rewards of working with both youngsters and adults in the positive environment of 4-H. There are several potential roadblocks, however, to success which might be considered and avoided. They include:

1. Do not try to do too much too soon. Begin simply and build on your early success and increased personal skills.
2. Do not do too little too long. Just as doing too much too soon can cause frustration, doing too little too long can be boring. Make sure your program grows through time to become more challenging to yourself, your leadership team, the club officers and the 4-H'ers.
3. Delegate from the beginning. Do not try to do everything yourself. Your job requires that you feel responsible for things getting done but not that you do everything. Allow others to do their jobs and help them feel good about doing them.
4. Include others, don't exclude. Your skills will grow as you work with your club. As we gain knowledge and skill in complex processes, such as your role in the club, there is a natural tendency to "do it ourselves." But, sharing knowledge and skills with others is what 4-H is all about. Take the time to share your knowledge by continuously drawing new people onto your leadership team. It will benefit them and the youngsters in your club.
5. Expect some problems and frustrations and learn from them. 4-H is a "people program," and there is always the need to be flexible and sensitive with others.
6. Keep the youngsters as your focus. As an organizational leader, you are in a position to create the club spirit for both volunteers and youth. Always keep the interests and needs of the youngsters at the core of your efforts. It is very easy to get the cart before the horse and let "how we do things" become more important than "why we do them."
7. Enjoy yourself and realize that the work you are doing is very important. It has both immediate and long-range benefits for yourself, your fellow volunteers and the youngsters with whom you work.

Good Luck

It is important that you realize that 4-H is simply a tool that you have chosen to use to accomplish an important job. Allow yourself and those with you to grow with your program and enjoy its benefits and rewards. Good Luck!

This material was adapted for use in Arkansas from material developed by Dr. Thearon McKinney, Extension 4-H Specialist, North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

MIKE KLUMPP is associate professor - 4-H youth development, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock.

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