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AUTHOR Clouse, James; Cary, Lee
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ABSTRACT

Part of an effort to implement the 15-year old Building Our American Communities Program in secondary schools, this student handbook provides detailed information for designing, implementing, and evaluating community development projects. Each chapter presents introductory and background information, student objectives, related activities, and review questions. The topics addressed in each chapter are: "Understanding the Community," "Relating Vocational Agriculture and the Community," "Identifying Community Needs," "Identifying Potential Projects," "Deciding on the Project," "Getting Ready for Action," "Making Things Happen," and "Learning from What We Did." Suggested activities include mapping community facilities and service areas, identifying activities related to community development, determining what residents think about the community, creating a project performance checklist, making project committee assignments, and conducting a project evaluation meeting. (NEC)

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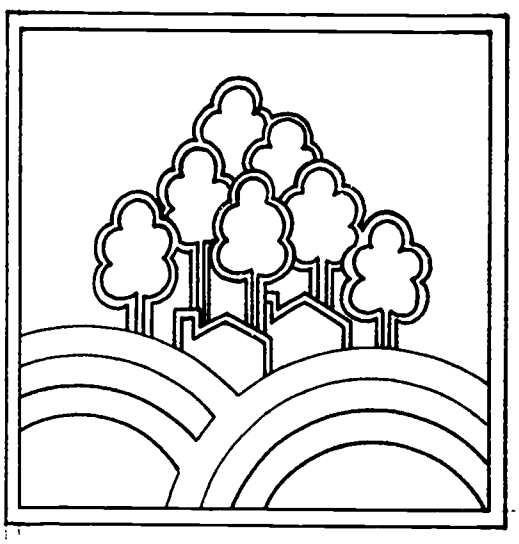

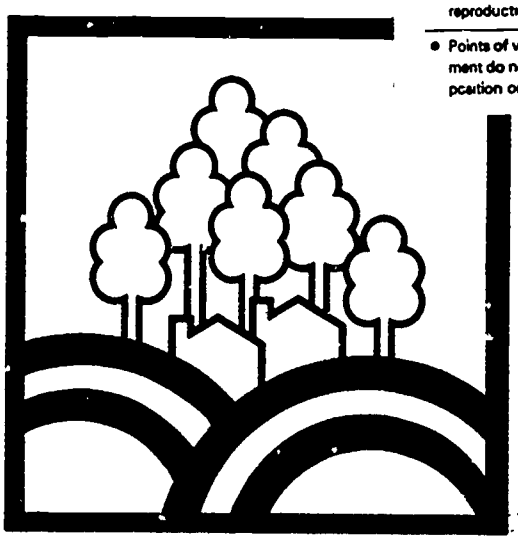

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - FFA STYLE
Student Manual

James Clouse, Professor
Agricultural Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

and

Lee Cary, Professor
Community Development
University of Missouri-Columbia

A special project for the
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Understanding the Community

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In rural communities, local issues are getting much attention. Issues such as energy, recreation, jobs, water supply, pollution and congestion are of major concern. As needs become more critical, individuals and groups must learn more about their local communities and be prepared to take a leadership role in making a lasting contribution in community development.

In this chapter you should learn to:

1. Describe a community as it affects people.
2. Explain how agriculture is an important part of the community.
3. Identify the occupations of people in a community.

Background

What are the boundaries of a community as it affects people?

A local FFA chapter should recognize that there are at least six dimensions that are particularly important in learning about and describing a community. The dimensions are: people or population; a social organization; a cultural system; an economic system; a place; and a political or decision-making system.

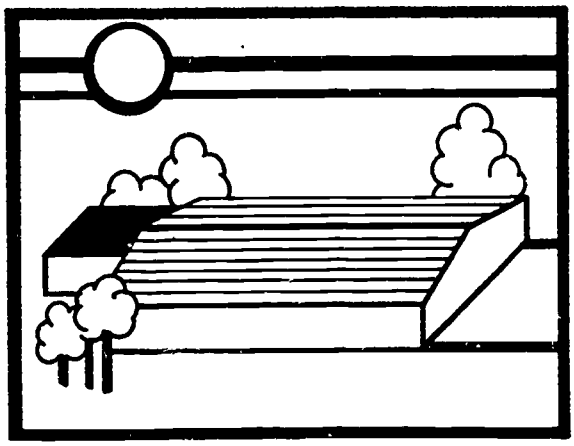
The person or group concerned with community development needs to know as much as possible about the community. The community is very complex and can be described in many different ways. It is people, it is a place, it is ideas and beliefs, and many other things. These different ways of looking at the community or "dimensions" of the community are complementary, just as the study of soils and fertilizer are complementary to the study of crops.

In trying to define what a community is, one chapter in Alabama talked about their community.

> One member suggested that their community was their school district or area.
>
> Another member mentioned that her family attended church outside of the school district.
>
> Two others mentioned that they paid taxes in the county seat.
>
> Several others mentioned that most of their shopping was done in the city of Harrison about eight miles north of their school district.

A chapter in New Hampshire decided that its community went far beyond the thirty-six square miles that made up the school district. In fact the chapter members decided that the boundaries of the community depended on where the residents had common interests with other people.

Usually, when chapter members think seriously about where they and their families live, they find much variety in the organizations, businesses, recreational facilities and other activities in which they are involved. Frequently, the chapter will find that no two members live in exactly the same community setting. As a result, it can be said that community boundaries are determined by com-



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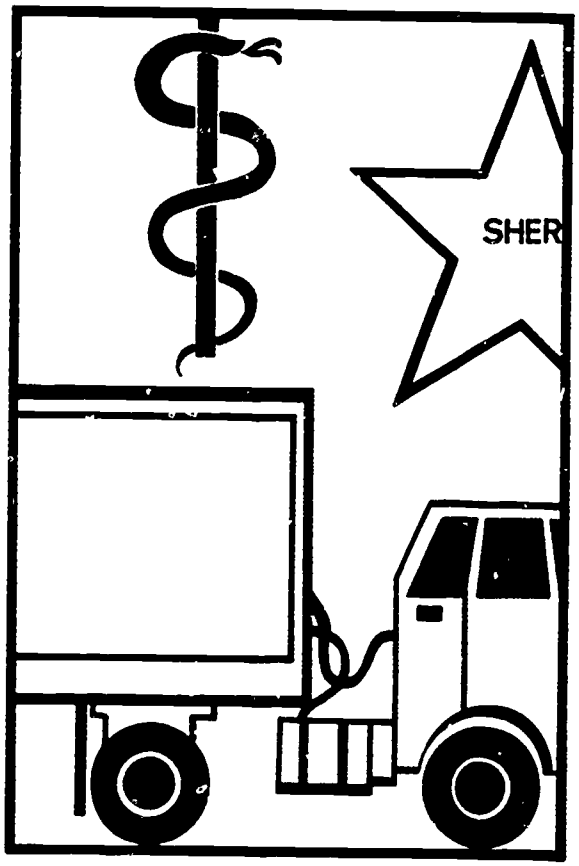
mon bonds of interest rather than by geographic boundaries on a map.

How is agriculture an important part of the community?

In rural community development, it is very important to understand what part agriculture plays in the community. This usually can be done by obtaining information from such groups as farm organizations, local realtors and bankers, extension personnel, people in agricultural industries, and other well known agricultural leaders or families. To determine the importance of agriculture, the FFA chapter should learn the following about its community:

a. The number of people engaged in the industry of agriculture together with the variety of skills and knowledge employed in jobs on and off farms.



b. The amount of land devoted to agriculture, both farm and non-farm, and the influence of these holdings on community life and well-being.

c. Agriculture's influence on the way of life and the participation of the people in the community.

d. The types of participation by people in agriculture which results in a unique contribution to the community.

e. The factors that make agriculture a varied and broad-based industry which affects the way people think and act.

f. The influence of the agricultural sector on the industrial sector and the way the community functions.

g. The purchasing power of agriculture as it relates to community growth and development.

One chapter in Virginia wanted to start a feeder calf sale program but first had to learn about their community and the impact that agriculture was having on the area. Improving the forested areas of their community was the goal of a Minnesota chapter. Before starting they learned about forestry in their community and its impact on the economic future of the community.

What are the occupations of people in our community?

A person's occupation tells a lot about his or her background and interests. It also indicates that different people have different skills that they can contribute to a community improvement project.

After an FFA chapter has learned about its community and the place of agriculture in the

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community, the members need to learn something of the people in the community.

A chapter in North Carolina, in studying their community, found many people employed in agriculture were cash grain farmers and livestock and dairy farmers while others were feed and fertilizer dealers, farm equipment dealers and their employees. A chapter in New Jersey found that there were greenhouse operators, nurserymen, garden center operators, a flower shop operator, and growers of specialty crops in their community. Their study also showed that many people worked in surrounding factories, businesses, offices, and banks. An Ohio Chapter learned that, in addition to many different types of agricultural workers in their community, there were also several professional workers such as doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, and engineers.

In most cases after learning about the people in a community, chapter members usually find that the people of the community have a great variety of skills that can be brought to bear upon community problems.

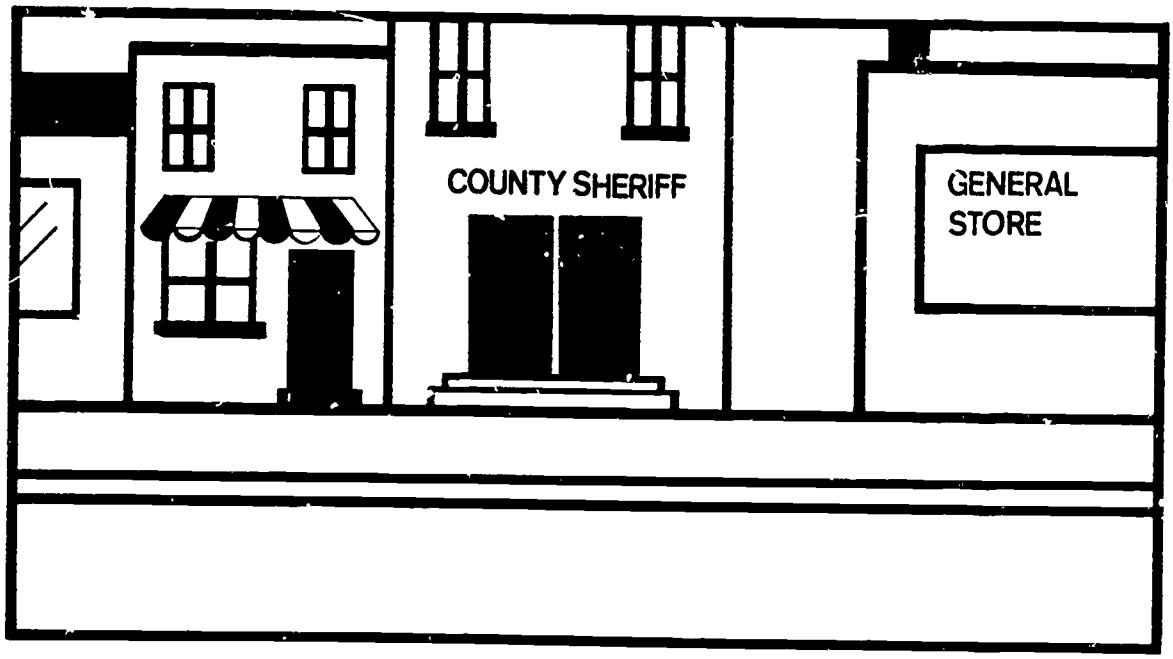
Practical Application

In these activities, you will have the opportunity to describe your community and learn about the importance of agriculture and the work activities of people in the community.

Determining the boundaries of your chapter's community

Outline the geographic area of your community on a map and using symbols or numbers locate each of the following:

1. Churches members attend
2. Recreation areas
3. Schools
4. The principal areas of buying and selling
5. The major agricultural businesses



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6. Principal places of employment
7. Where people transact government business
8. Headquarters for organizations
9. Health facilities
10. Cultural facilities
11. Other facilities

After completing this exercise, draw your own conclusions concerning the geographic and social boundaries of your community. Compare the geographic boundaries of the community with the locations of the various organizations and places where people gather informally.

Determining how agriculture is an important part of your community

1. Obtain a copy of the latest agricultural census and summarize the information to show how important agriculture is in the community.
2. Make a survey of agricultural businesses in the community to determine the impact they have on the community and the people.
3. From the information obtained in 1 & 2 above draw some conclusions about the importance of agriculture.

Determining the occupations of people in your community

As a chapter or as individual chapter members do the following:

1. Identify people engaged in the production of agricultural products by type of farming.
2. Identify the businesses and jobs of those who supply farmers with the products and services required for production of feed, fertilizer, fuel, etc.
3. Identify the businesses and jobs of those who market or process agricultural commodities.
4. Identify the types of factory jobs and other industrial work.
5. Identify service occupations such as auto mechanics, appliance repair people, etc.
6. Identify professional workers such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and ministers.
7. Identify occupations in large business organizations.

Review Questions

1. What determines the boundaries of a community?
2. What are six dimensions of a community that are particularly important?
3. What are the production agriculture jobs in your community?
4. What are the agribusiness jobs in your community?
5. What is some evidence that agriculture is important in your community?
6. Why should your chapter learn about your community?

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Relating Vocational Agriculture and the Community

CHAPTER II

Introduction

The local vocational agriculture program is an important part of a local community because it includes four major aspects common to every community and contributes directly or indirectly to community improvement. It is important to know these program components and to understand how each is related to community development.

In this chapter you should learn to:

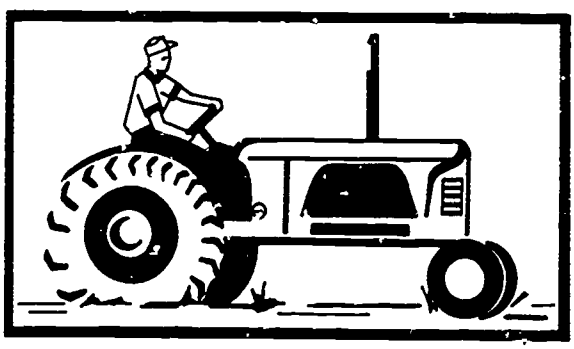
1. Explain how instruction in the vocational agriculture classroom and laboratory assists in community development.
2. Explain how the FFA can provide participation for many students in community improvement.
3. Explain how supervised occupational experience programs help students get involved in community development.
4. Explain the place of the Adult and Young Farmer Programs in community development.

Background

How does instruction in the vocational agriculture classroom and laboratory promote community development?

Instruction in the classroom and laboratory supports community development by teaching high school students how to improve their communities and use community improvement activities to develop personal skills. Each of the instructional areas has important application for community development.

Students enrolled in agricultural mechanics or machinery service may develop skills in special areas of mechanics by assisting with community improvement activities. A Maryland FFA chapter constructed a shelter in the town park. A Tennessee chapter repaired and sold farm equipment, and a Florida chapter conducted a safety campaign. Such activities give meaning to instruction and help students apply what they have learned.



Horticulture has many opportunities for initially involving students in community improvement activities. These activities can be used to get students started in community activities and help them learn how to participate more effectively as adults. A Kentucky chapter developed plans for a town park, and a Hawaii chapter, with the help of other groups, constructed a botanical garden. A Georgia chapter landscaped their school grounds.

Instruction in forestry and renewable natural resources can involve students in a variety of community improvement activities. Forestry may include converting unattractive land into productive forest areas, carrying out fire prevention programs and assisting with timber-stand improvement practices. The area of renewable natural resources offers opportunities similar to those in forestry. Education on natural resources includes the responsible use of resources. Some examples of activities in this area are the following: a West Virginia chapter constructed and stocked a pond and planted 500 trees and shrubs; an Indiana chapter built a nature trail

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with signs and rest areas on their school farm; a Mississippi chapter built and maintained over five miles of fire trails for timber companies and woodland owners.

Students in production agriculture get involved in many different community improvement activities. Examples include energy conservation programs, activities to promote the responsible use of soil and water resources, and protection of the environment through the proper use of pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals.

Working with other groups is an important part of community development. In Iowa an FFA chapter and the FFA alumni constructed an area for local livestock shows, and in South Carolina a chapter managed a summer student work program to help the farmers with seasonal work.

The area of agricultural supplies and services or business affords the opportunity for students to promote the scope of today's agricultural industry. In a similar way, agricultural products and processing are important in the economic development of many communities. A Nevada chapter maintained an agricultural employment service bulletin board, and a Vermont chapter operates a community farm market.

How can the FFA provide a means for participation in community development by students?

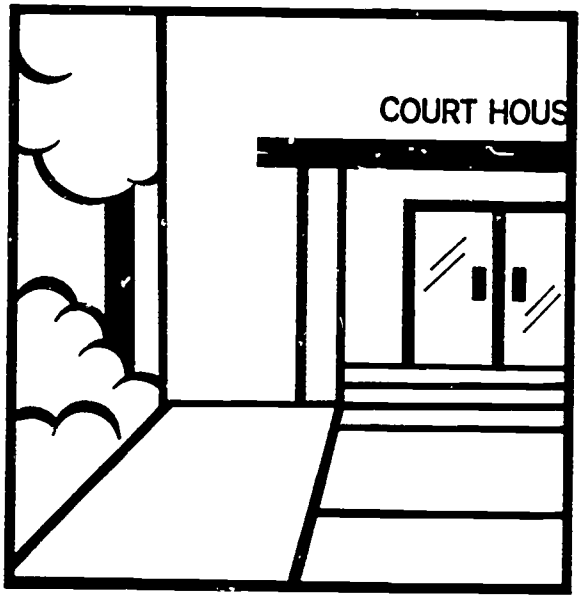
Activities through the FFA have been the primary means of encouraging participation in community improvement by many students. The FFA has achieved high visibility in some communities because of its involvement. Further, awards provided by the Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program reinforce the work of many FFA chapters.

The FFA has a number of individual achievement award programs and activities to further encourage community development. Through these the member is recognized for his or her work in community improvement activities. An FFA chapter in Arizona marked highways and cleaned up roadsides, while one in Maine began a program to educate the youth in the community about drugs and alcohol.

In addition to studying this publication, it is important for each chapter member to become familiar with the other publications concerning community development available from the National Future Farmers of America. (See Resource Information for BOAC Program in the BOAC Committee Handbook.)

How can the student's Supervised Occupational Experience Program help the student get involved in community development?

Students need to realize that career responsibilities include community participation. The careers of individuals do not grow independently of the community. Supervised occupational experience can be used to develop this awareness and afford the opportunity for high school students to get involved.



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Students who have ownership programs realize that every entrepreneur has a responsibility to the community. Production agriculture programs result in a minimum of damage to the environment. Farms and homesteads should be kept free of safety hazards and made attractive.

Students who have placement programs can participate with their employer and fellow employees in community development activities. A Rhode Island chapter started a home beautification project which developed into a continuing activity. A safety education campaign was an added feature two years later. In cooperation with the Salvation Army, a New York chapter collected agricultural food products for distribution at Christmas time.

Students who have supervised occupational experience programs at school may be directly involved in community improvement activities. Under the direction of their teacher, they engage in a variety of activities. An FFA chapter in Montana carried out a number of school improvement and beautification projects. This was greatly appreciated by the people in the community and improved the appearance of the school.

How can the Adult and Young Farmer Programs be involved in community development activities?

Usually, the adult students have become more established in the community. They see what needs to be done, are willing to help and frequently have more influence in deciding what happens in the community. Once the adults and young farmers are motivated and want to see their community become better, they become active participants and supportive boosters.

The local vocational agriculture department, through the instructional program and related activities, should become the prime educational and motivational force in helping the local FFA chapter select, pursue and complete its BOAC project each year. An adult farmer class working with the local FFA chapter in Pennsylvania constructed a twenty-six-acre community park. A Revolutionary War Cemetery in Virginia had fallen into disrepair. A local young farmers group and the FFA chapter in that school worked together to restore the cemetery and make it the center of an annual work day activity.

Practical Application

In these activities, you will have an opportunity to identify how the parts of a vocational agriculture program relate to community development.

Determining how the parts of a vocational agriculture program relate to community development.

Take the following major parts of the vocational agriculture program and explain how each is directly and indirectly related to community development.

1. Classroom and laboratory instruction
2. Future Farmers of America
3. Supervised Occupational Experience Programs
4. Adult and Young Farmer Programs

Identifying activities that are related to community development.

Name the FFA activities that are most closely related to community development. Briefly explain how each is related to community development.

Review Questions

1. What are the four major parts of a local vocational agriculture program?
2. How can each of these major parts contribute to community development?

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Identifying Community Needs

CHAPTER III

Introduction

Change in a community can take place only when individuals and groups see a need, have a desire to bring about change, and get involved. It is important to be able to identify community needs as one source of possible projects. It is equally important to be able to identify individuals and groups who might help your FFA chapter carry out its project.

In this chapter you should learn to:

1. Identify groups and organizations with which the chapter might work.
2. Identify people and programs that "make things happen" in the community.
3. Identify community needs.

Background

What are the groups and organizations in the community with which the chapter might work?

All communities have many different groups and organizations which influence the lives of residents. The FFA chapter and its BOAC committee will want to identify different formal and informal groups within the community. The chapter will need to work with many of these organizations in carrying out its project. A chapter in Nebraska decided to give the downtown area a facelift. It worked with many other community groups to accomplish this project.

Individuals with common interests such as religion, education, business, civic, recreation, etc. tend to form organizations. Certain groups and organizations will be more important than others to the FFA chapter, depending on the nature of the project undertaken.

A community may have several youth organizations in addition to the FFA chapter. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, and others may be active and are potential helpers in any chapter project as are churches, the Grange, civic clubs and other groups. The board of education and other local public offices are another resource. An important thing to remember is that many persons belong to several organizations, but many others belong to no organizations. Thus, a list of organizational members does not represent all the people.

Who are the people and programs that "make things happen" in the community?

Events in a community are influenced by a wide variety of factors. Some are clearly visible, and some may be much less obvious. These factors include such things as local ordinances, financial considerations and the influence by groups representing special interests. In addition, some people, because of their special interests, resources, or position are strong forces in a community.

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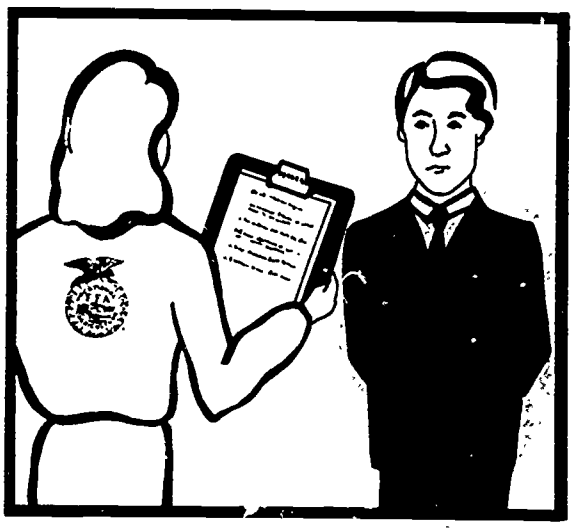
Identifying Community Needs

Many projects and activities are affected by factors outside the community. For example, federal policies and regulations have an impact on local agriculture. State laws and regulations apply to a wide range of community interests including state highways and school-funding policies. Once aware of these influences, it becomes easier to deal effectively with them.

One chapter in Wisconsin wanted to develop a land laboratory and first discussed the idea with the Soil Conservation Service, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. These programs were important to the chapter in its efforts to develop a land management and conservation program for the area. A community water-testing project in Illinois involved representatives from thirteen businesses and from local and state agencies and organizations which helped the FFA chapter with information and technical assistance.

How do you go about identifying community needs?

There are a number of ways of identifying needs in the community. Members of your chapter can list what they like best about the community and, when completed, combine the lists. Next they can list what they like best about other communities and again combine their lists. Finally, they can list things in the community that they think need to be improved and put those lists together. A discussion of the combined lists will begin to identify what members like best about the community and about other communities and things that could be improved. This is just one systematic way to identify community needs.



Another approach is to talk with community residents. An FFA chapter in Arizona decided on a project to name streets and roads, erect signs, and number houses and businesses after it had contacted people through town meetings, local community groups and individual contacts. A chapter in South Dakota surveyed community needs before it undertook a beautification project. Many chapters have a number of projects suggested by residents of the community.

A simple questionnaire can be prepared asking people about local project possibilities. Interview as many people as you wish, but the more people you talk to, the longer it will take to pull together. You might start by identifying and interviewing people who "make things happen" in the community. One practical advantage in interviewing local residents is that they get involved early in helping identify needs and may be more willing to participate later in the selected project.

Practical Application

In these activities, you will have an opportunity to identify groups, organizations and individuals with whom your chapter might work and to consider ways of identifying community needs.

Identifying groups and organizations that might help the chapter.

1. Obtain a copy of a directory of local agencies and organizations (if avail-

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able in the community) and decide which ones might help your chapter.

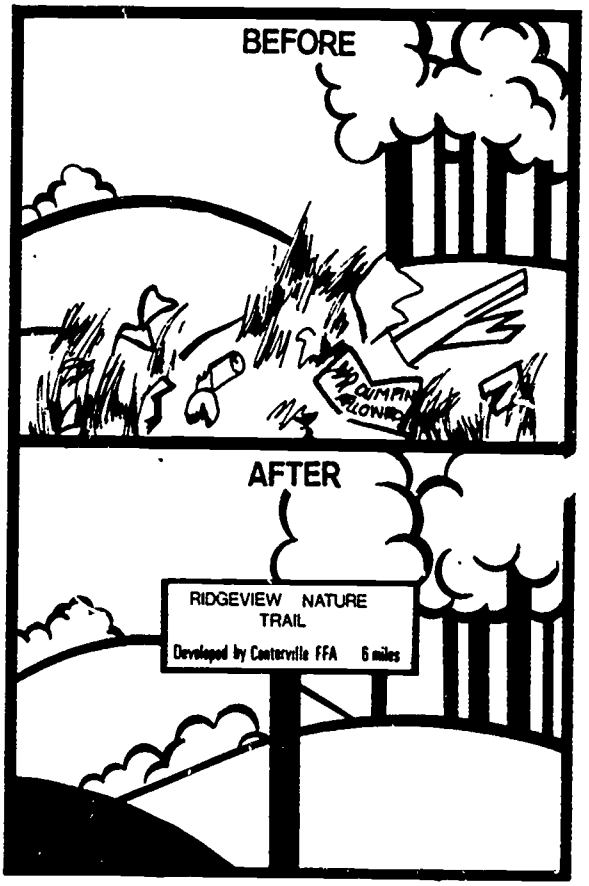
2. Using the yellow pages of the telephone directory, make a list of the local organizations and, again, decide which ones might be helpful in carrying out a chapter project.
3. In addition to these listings, try to identify other local groups which might be interested in the chapter and its activities. Remember to include youth organizations, community civic groups, educational institutions, farm organizations, recreation organizations and others.

Determining the people who "make things happen" in the community.

1. List those persons who make things happen because of special knowledge and skills and their willingness to share with others.
2. List those people who are important in the community because of their property holdings or other forms of wealth.
3. List those who make things happen because of their position (such as mayor, manager of a local industry, bank president).
4. List other people who you consider important in the community and tell why.
5. After completing these lists, discuss the community leaders who have been listed and attempt to determine the effect each has on the community.

Identifying community needs · what you think about the community.

1. List at least three things you like about the community.



2. Have chapter members report their list.
3. List at least three things you like about other communities.
4. Have chapter members report their list.
5. List at least three things about the community you would like to see improved.
6. Have chapter members report on what they have listed.
7. Draw some conclusions from the discussion.

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Identifying Community Needs

Identifying community needs - what other community residents think about the community.

1. List of questions to be asked. You might ask the same questions used in the previous activity.
2. Organize the chapter into interviewing teams of two members each.
3. Before going out, have the chapter members interview each other as practice for the interviewing.
4. Select a sample of individuals to interview, or interview community leaders, or have each team stand at a certain location and interview people who come by.
5. Conduct the interviews, record the answers and compile the results.
6. Discuss the results.

Review questions

1. What are some of the groups and organizations in the community which might work with your chapter?
2. How could you identify some of the individuals and programs in the community that help to make things happen?
3. If you were to interview people in the community, how would you go about selecting those to be interviewed?
4. Why should your chapter spend time collecting ideas and identifying needs?

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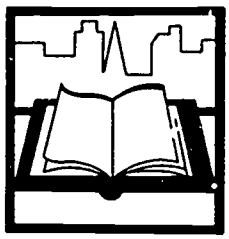


Identifying Potential Projects

CHAPTER IV

Introduction

Throughout our lives we make decisions. Some of these are minor, others have important impact on our lives. To make wise decisions, we need good information; we need to look at alternatives, and we need to decide on the best course of action.

FFA chapters must make important decisions about their projects and activities for the BOAC program. How these actual decisions are made will be discussed in Chapter V. Here we want to concentrate on how to determine whether potential projects are suitable. To help in this determination, you will want to know what information is needed and how the information can be obtained.

In this chapter you should learn to:

1. Determine possible projects for your chapter and the community.
2. Identify what information to collect about the potential projects.
3. Determine ways to gather information.
4. Study the information.

Background

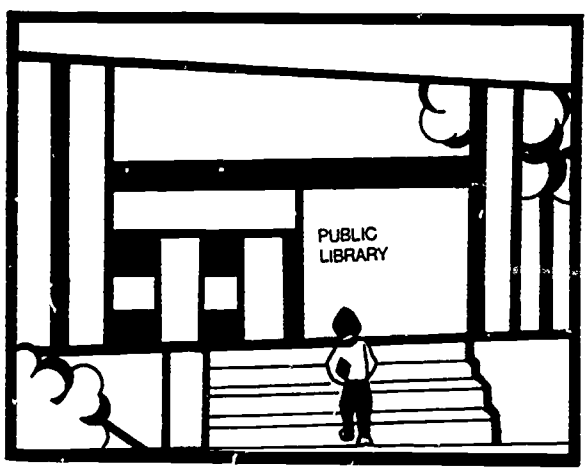
How do you determine the appropriateness of a potential project for your chapter and the community?

It is important to determine how suitable potential projects are for your chapter and the community. Are the potential projects of interest to more than just the person or persons presenting them? Will the suggested project meet a community need and be of value to the community? Just as carefully as a chapter goes about the process of identifying community needs, a chapter should carefully look at all potential projects and community needs brought to its attention. An FFA chapter in Oregon had a number of projects suggested by people in the community and decided to participate actively in an annual community celebration. The project was selected because it was: what the chapter could handle, an important event in the life of the community, and it served as a good learning experience for chapter members.

Quite often a chapter does not go through a formal process of identifying needs. Instead, a particular project or need is brought to the chapter's attention. One of the members may have a specific project in mind or want to enlist the chapter's support in meeting a particular need. Someone in the community or several individuals or groups may request your help. This is not unusual and is another good approach to collecting ideas and identifying needs.

What information do you need about the potential projects?

To make a sound decision, it is not



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necessary or possible to have all the facts. It is important, however, to have adequate relevant information. This means that you need to know what facts are missing and what gaps exist in your information. The objective is to gather as much sound and accurate information as possible on the need or project under consideration. A problem well identified is easier to solve than one that remains clouded and obscure. Projects well defined are easier to implement than those that are vague and not clearly focused on specific goals.

For example, an FFA chapter in Tennessee was concerned about a serious insect infestation in the county. Before launching a project to eradicate the insects, the chapter would need information on: (1) the nature and extent of the infestation; (2) what, if anything, is currently being done to eradicate the insects; (3) what eradication methods are available and how successful these methods are; (4) how much would each of these methods cost; (5) what problems or drawbacks may be related to each of these methods; (6) what community interest and support might be available to help the chapter in this project; (7) what efforts, if any, have been made in the past to eradicate these insects.

How are you going to collect the information?

There are any number of ways of collecting information. A general rule is to use the simplest, most direct method to gather the facts you need, rather than involving the chapter in elaborate, time-consuming survey activities that may gather more information than you want or can use. Here are a few ways to collect information:

1. Contact resource persons — One of the quickest and most effective ways of collecting information is to contact individuals who are knowledgeable about the problem under study. An FFA chapter in Vermont contacted the state Commissioner of Agriculture as one step in planning for a farmers' market.
2. Check the school or public library - Libraries and other community institutions can provide information on a wide range of problems and needs. Reference books, census reports, local studies and reports, newspaper clippings and other reference material provide a good source of factual information.
3. Arrange tours and trips - To understand fully a particular problem in the community, it may be helpful to arrange a tour so that you can observe existing conditions. If a nearby community has carried out a similar project, you may want to take a trip to that community.
4. Observe - Depending on the nature of the problem being studied, simple observation may answer a number of questions. An FFA chapter in Florida

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asked to inspect an abandoned cemetery to see if there was anything the chapter could do.

5. Conducting surveys — FFA members may choose to conduct interviews or distribute questionnaires. This method of gathering information is particularly useful if you want a number of people to respond. An FFA chapter in Iowa surveyed the needs, resources, and job opportunities of the community before deciding on a three-phase community solar energy program.

How are you going to study the information?

First, it is important that the information is accurate. You may need to check one source against another. If two or three resource persons have given you different estimates of the extent of a particular problem, you may have to look further or may simply arrive at an average based on combined estimates. Second, all the information you gather is not of equal value. Some facts will be much more important than others. This may be due to the nature of the information itself or the source of the information. Third, the information needs to be studied carefully and used to help the chapter decide whether to continue with the project, to modify it, or to look for a different project.

Practical Application

In these activities, you will have the opportunity to determine possible projects, identify information to collect, determine ways to collect information and study the information gathered.

Identifying what information to collect

1. Write a title of the chapter's potential project at the top of a blackboard or large sheet of paper.
2. List the information the chapter would like to have about the project.
3. List possible sources for each item of information.
4. Review the list to see if any gaps in the information can be identified.

Determining ways of collecting the information

1. Using the list of items of information just developed, discuss ways each item can be obtained.
2. Decide the best way to collect each item of information.
3. Have chapter members volunteer to collect the information.
4. Discuss the results after members have had an opportunity to carry out their assignments.

Studying the information

1. Have chapter members discuss the accuracy of the information collected.
2. If some information does not agree with other information collected, discuss ways you might determine which facts are correct.
3. Discuss which of the facts are more important and why.
4. Decide if you need additional information and, if so, how to collect it.

Review Questions

1. How can you decide whether or not potential projects are suitable for your chapter and the community?
2. What are some ways an FFA chapter can collect information about potential projects?
3. How does a chapter know what information to collect?
4. What does a chapter do with the information after it is collected?

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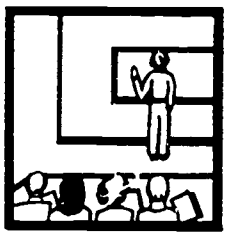

Deciding on the Project

CHAPTER V

Introduction

Now that your chapter has gathered information on one or more potential projects and has had the opportunity to study the information, the next step is deciding on your BOAC project. It is important that a majority of the chapter members participate in this decision since members need to support and work on the project.

In this chapter you should learn to:

1. Present information to the chapter.
2. Reach a chapter decision.

Background

How do you present information to the chapter?

Perhaps your chapter has looked into the need for a local fire department, as one chapter did in Oklahoma. Or perhaps there is a need to improve the grounds and expand the seating at the local fair, as one Missouri FFA chapter discovered. Whatever information you have collected, should be presented as clearly, completely, and objectively, as possible to chapter members. Relevant information should be discussed, including potential difficulties which the chapter might encounter in carrying out a particular project.

J—POST-GAZETTE: Thurs., July 19, 1990

2 farm groups back program to save soil

The Ohio Farm Bureau Fed- eration thinks the public and farmers are overlooking soil con- servation and both parties bet- ter start paying attention before it's too late.

The farm bureau and the Washington-based American Farmland Trust announced Wednesday a year-long, $45,000 effort to focus attention on soil conservation and farmland use in Ohio.

THE FARM bureau is the state's largest farm organiza- tion, and the Trust has 25,000 members.

William Swank, the executive vice president, ...ajor threat of the ...e to ensure that ...ture advan- ...Proper-

...Soil erosion is not evident to ...tizens," said Trust President Doug Wheeler. He said five tons of soil an acre a year — is the average affordable loss — is the equivalent of the thickness of a dime when spread over an acre. Thus, significant losses can be imperceptible.

"IOWA HAS lost half of its soil base in 100 years," Wheeler said.

The Ohio project involves an inventory of current land use, a ...ipth farmland-use survey of ...ermont, Darke, Defiance, ...rankiin, Hancock, Hocking, Lo- ...ain and Wayne counties.

Farm product pric...

WASHINGTON (AP) — ... Farm product prices rose 4.6 ... report in August — the biggest ... nearly increase in more than three years, the Agriculture De- ...partment said.

The actual presentation will be more helpful to the members if charts and other visual aids are used. One-page handouts containing the most important information also will help members to better understand the project and its benefit to the community. Make sure there is time for members to ask questions and make comments. You may want to present this information at one meeting and delay a decision until the next meeting. This allows time for members to study the information, to seek additional information if they wish, and to talk further with those who gathered the information.

An FFA chapter in West Virginia decided on improving the vocational agriculture facilities as its BOAC project. The chapter's BOAC planning committee detailed various ways and means of carrying out this project After looking at all the information and considering several possibilities, the chapter decided that remodeling a nearby concrete block building was the answer. Because of the careful planning and a thorough decision process, chapter members were ready to participate, and each one took responsibility for a specific part of the renovation program.

How do you reach a decision on a project?

The chapter officers and chapter advisor may recommend a particular project based on review of the information. If so, they should present the relevant information and inform the chapter of their decision and how they ar-

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Deciding on the Project

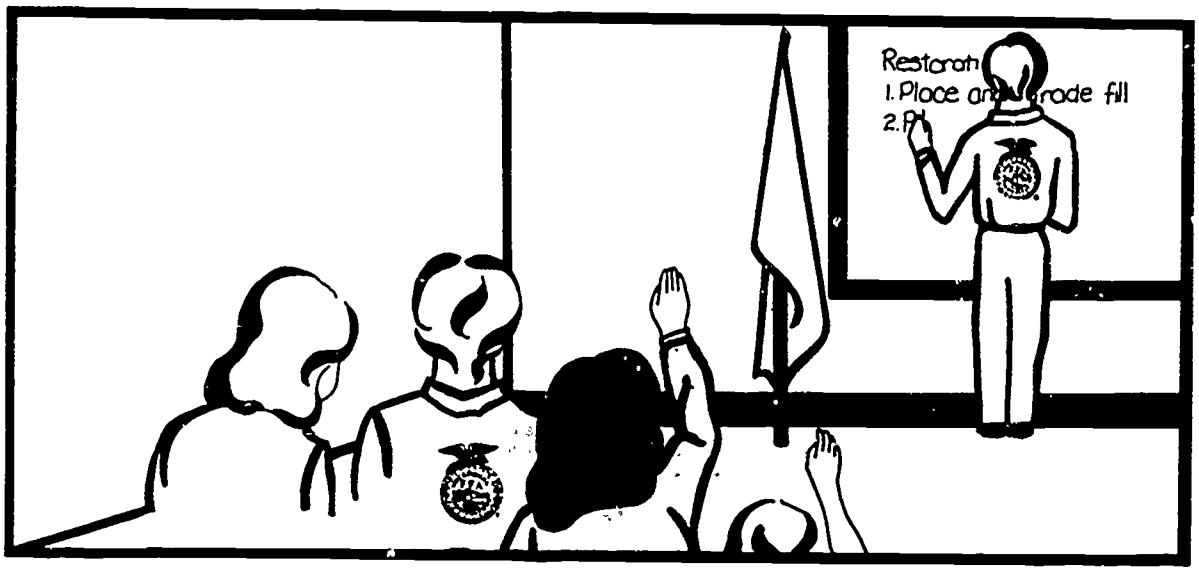
rived at it. A special committee, rather than the chapter officers, may be the appropriate group to make this report. Sufficient time should be allowed for questions and discussion. Perhaps even a second meeting will give chapter members a greater opportunity to be fully involved in the decision. When that time comes, a decision can be reached by a simple majority. This means that at least one more than half of the voting members agree on the decision. Hopefully, many more members than a simple majority will support the decision on a BOAC project.

Members of an FFA chapter in Ohio worked over 800 hours on just one phase of their BOAC project — constructing a greenhouse for the school's vocational agriculture program. In the state of Washington, all two hundred members of the FFA chapter were involved in a project which included the planting of over 200,000 Douglas Fir seedlings. This level of member participation in a chapter's BOAC project can best be achieved when the members have been involved in deciding on the project and are ready to give it their full support.

To help your chapter reach a decision about a potential project, you might want to consider the following suggestions:

1. Make sure chapter members have an opportunity to express their opinion.
2. Consider different opinions as helpful in bringing out additional information.
3. Avoid reaching a decision too quickly. One or more "straw votes" will show how close the members are to general agreement on a project.
4. Vote when it is clear that the chapter members are in general agreement.

There are other techniques the chapter may wish to use in reaching a decision. In another approach, members are asked to express their opinions first, frequently in writing. Individuals compare their views with each other and later the views of each are considered by the entire chapter. This insures that everyone has an opportunity to express opinions and compare them with others in the group.



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Deciding on the Project

Practical Application

In these activities you will have the opportunity to present information to help the chapter reach a decision..

Presenting information to the chapter

1. From your own knowledge, from local newspaper stories, or from other sources, identify a new project in the community.
2. Gather as much information as you can about the project.
3. Prepare the information for presentation to the chapter (you may want to use charts, maps, handouts, etc.).
4. Present the information on the project and lead the chapter members in a discussion of the project.

Deciding among potential projects

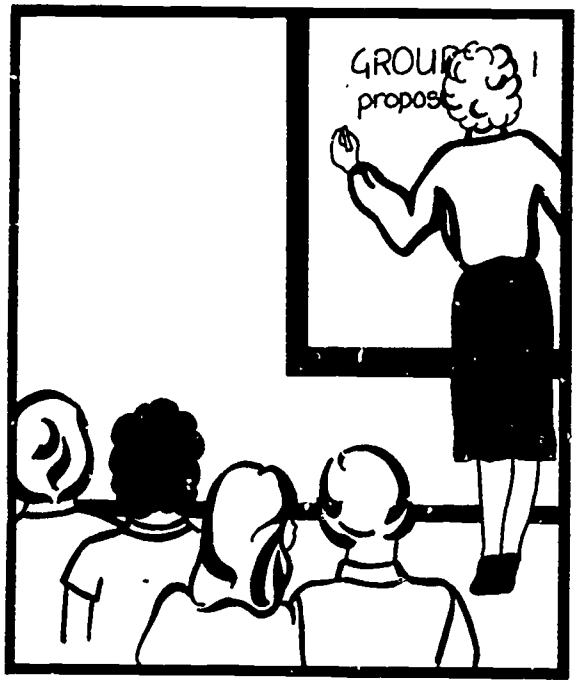
1. Invite one or more persons to meet with your chapter to suggest possible projects or identify needs. Members of your group may have suggestions of their own.
2. Agree on how you are going to decide from among the projects so that your chapter can make a wise choice. This might include such considerations as: Is this project important to the community? Can we find the resources to carry it out? Is someone or some group already doing it?
3. Discuss and rate the suggested projects.
4. Based on the discussion and ratings, the chapter should decide which project seems "right" for them.

Reaching a decision on a project

1. List two or more potential BOAC projects on the blackboard or a large sheet of paper.
2. Have members individually state which project they prefer and why.
3. Take a "straw vote" at one or more points in the discussion.
4. If chapter members are in general agreement, take a formal vote. If no agreement has been reached, have the members continue to discuss the potential projects.

Review Questions

1. What items of information would you like to have about a potential project and how might you present such information to chapter members?
2. How might the chapter members decide which one of these potential projects they will adopt as their BOAC project?
3. Discuss the decision-making process including whether or not individual members believed their opinions were heard and taken into account.



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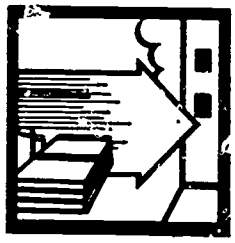


Getting Ready for Action

CHAPTER VI

Introduction

For many FFA chapters, deciding what to do may be fairly easy. Once a decision has been made, planning the activity and getting ready for action become very important. The chapter must develop a carefully-thought-out action plan and mobilize the resources of the chapter and the community for the activity to succeed.

After the chapter has identified the needs in the community, studied the information completely and decided what activity or project to carry out, it is time to organize for action.

In studying the content of this chapter, by reviewing the examples and by participating in the practical application, you should learn to:

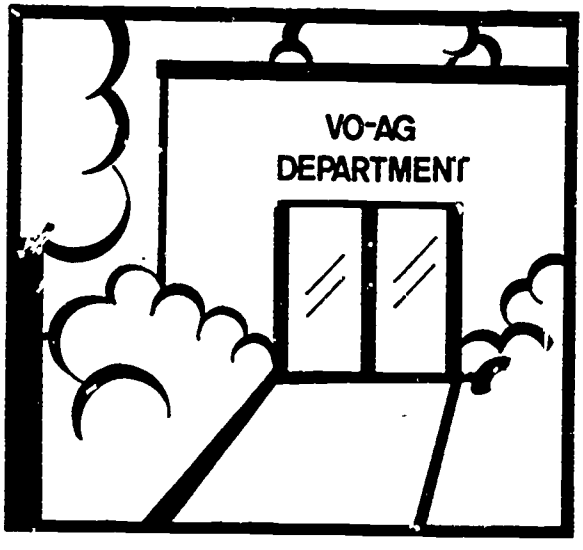
1. Understand what a "plan of action" is and who is involved in developing it for a chapter.
2. Identify the individuals and groups who will be most affected by and support the activity.
3. Develop ways of gaining the support and help of community, individuals and groups.
4. Mobilize the available resources (people, materials, dollars).
5. Develop a "plan of action" for the activity.

Background

What is a "plan of action" and who is involved in developing the plan for the chapter?

Past experience tells us that if we want to accomplish something to the best of our ability, then we must have a plan. When we have an action project and we want to involve people, we need a well-thought-out plan. It should include not only what your chapter plans to do, but how other people might react to the plan.

Just as each student studying vocational agriculture needs to keep a well-organized record of what is being studied in vocational agriculture, an FFA chapter needs to plan carefully what it will do to carry a project to completion. In this case, a plan-of-action is a step-by-step written way to proceed from an idea to a completed project. A good plan includes what is to be done, who will do the work, who will be responsible and some idea of when the project will be completed. The chapter members should understand that a good "plan of action" is much like a good program of activities for their chapter. If an idea is good and a plan well developed then the activity when completed will be successful. The chapter members and officers usually decide that, since it is their project, they will be responsible for its planning. Of course they will normally ask for and receive help from many others in the community. For example, as a part of the planning step, advice should be obtained from their advisors and from other leaders in the community.



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Who are the people who will be most affected by and can be expected to support the activity?

The first step in developing a plan of action is to identify the people in the community who would be affected by the activity or project and how they would be affected.

The chapter should be concerned that all of these individuals should have an opportunity to hear the proposal, express their opinions and reach some type of agreement regarding the project.

The chapter recognizes that all of these individuals need to be convinced that the project is in their best interest and they should assist the chapter and the community. This can be undertaken by assigning a committee to that specific task.

A large chapter in Arkansas decided to establish a nature trail as their project for the year. After their BOAC Committee had studied the idea, collected information and made a list of who would be affected, their list looked like this:

Those who will be affected	How they will be affected
1. School officials	a. more activities on the school grounds
	b. an additional area for supervision and responsibility
2. Local residents	a. concern for appearance of area and noise involved
	b. possible vandalism and littering
	c. added area of beauty and relaxation
3. Organizations	a. an additional facility for learning and recreational programs
	b. new activity possibilities
4. Young people	a. a common outdoor meeting place
	b. an added learning opportunity for school classes
	c. responsibility for maintenance and additional improvements

Once this information has been collected, the chapter members are ready to identify those persons and groups who would provide support for the project. There are many peo-

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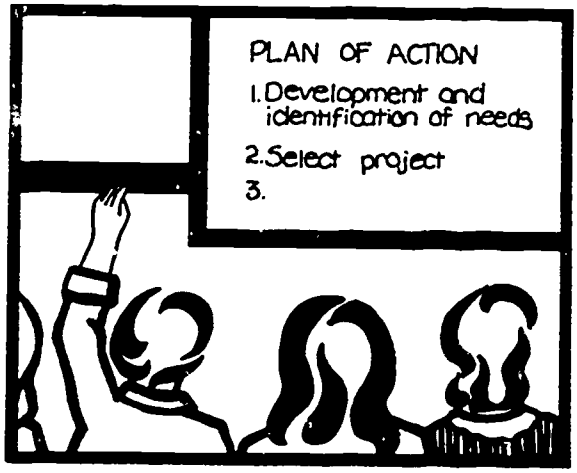
ple within the community who, by their position or power, can influence the actions of others. Any project has a much greater chance for success if these people support the plan. On the other hand, if they oppose the plan, they could cause it to fail. Because of their influence, a few words from these leaders, for or against, will have a tremendous impact on the success or failure of a project.

One way a chapter may identify these individuals is by asking community residents this question: "If you needed help in making decisions affecting the community, whose judgment would you value the most?" By tallying the results of the survey, chapter members can see that some names are often repeated. A list of the names that appear most often will determine that these people usually are "opinion leaders" in the community.

From their list of "opinion leaders," chapter members can first identify those most likely to have a favorable reaction to their proposal. In making their decision, they should consider the person's willingness to stand by the group when the plan of action is implemented. They also should consider resource persons who have been involved in earlier discussions of proposals as well as government officials, local businessmen, farmers and others.



What are some ways of gaining the support and help of community, groups and individuals?

In gaining support for a project, attention must also be given to people besides key individuals. The chapter should prepare a list of individuals who would be affected by the project because the chapter needs their support to make a project a reality. In many cases, the chapter can solve this problem by selecting chapter members to meet with those who would be affected to explain the benefits of the project. In this manner, they not only convince people of the need for the project, but they also gather information which will be helpful in carrying out the project.

A Wisconsin chapter found that most of the youth organizations in the area were in favor of its history forestry project, and many offered to help. A local farm building contractor offered assistance in the form of technical advice and materials and additional help when needed. The chapter members must continue working with other segments of the community until they have strong support from the leading individuals and groups.

To gain the support of the "key individuals," chapter members need to realize they must have answers to many questions before they make their approach for support. Before some chapter members in New Mexico made their visits, they did their homework by obtaining the answers to questions like these: What kind of project is being planned? What problems are associated with operating a recreation area? What are the planned solutions to these problems?

A special research committee may be assigned to the task of gathering information. They could use the library, local and state agencies, and neighboring schools as resources. A chapter in Idaho, using lists of key persons and organizations prepared earlier, mobilized teams to begin contacting key individuals and groups in their community.

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They also began telling other people about the project. It was easy since they had to tell many different people why the project was necessary and why the procedure the chapter had chosen was best to achieve the goal.

A Virginia chapter gave the responsibility for spreading the word about their Community Library Project to their chapter Public Relations Committee. The committee prepared a public relations schedule which included three radio programs, one television show, several newspaper articles, and a number of presentations by members at civic club meetings.

What are the resources available and how can they be mobilized?

After identifying the people and groups that could be supportive of the project, the chapter should collect the people, materials and finances to start the project. The actual work is usually done by the chapter members with some help by community members, FFA alumni members, young farmers in the community and others. A Florida chapter had help from a local contractor on a one-room school house renovation project, and in Kansas a nursery helped supply materials for a courthouse landscape project.

Money for projects can come from such sources as a community improvement grant, help from local community groups and chapter funds earned from the sale of citrus fruit.

How is a plan of action developed for the project?

The development of a good BOAC project requires the involvement of people and the commitment of resources such as money, materials and ideas.

The chapter must first develop a list of activities appropriate for the project, then list the people and organizations that can help with each. The list is developed at the same time the campaign to publicize the activity is conducted. As the chapter proceeds with the project, chapter members quickly learn that those who will benefit most from the activity are the ones most willing to work on its completion.

As a part of the plan of action, the chapter realizes it must set goals and have a time table for completion. The members first identify their goals such as:

1. Raise funds for the project.
2. Make special arrangements with suppliers and others for support.
3. Organize members of the community in a self-help building program.

The goals become the basis for establishing the phases of the project. The chapter must set specific dates by which it plans to complete each phase or step. These goals also become the basis for determining responsibilities. Now the chapter is ready to carry out the project.

Most chapters follow the steps of action outlined in the BOAC Committee Handbook. The steps followed are:

1. Identify and study community needs.
2. Select a high priority BOAC project.
3. Select a BOAC chairperson and committee.
4. Make and carry out a BOAC project plan.
5. Publicize the BOAC project.
6. Recognize group and individual effort and achievement.
7. Apply for chapter and member recognition.

Practical Application

Many community projects decided upon with enthusiasm are never completed. People and groups originally interested in a project fail to understand the planning process essential to the project's success. Can you

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think of projects talked about in your community but never completed because they did not have the support of the people or were not planned well? If so, can you list the reasons why a good planning process was not followed and why the project was not completed?

Researchers who have studied these "failures" and successes point out that community improvements are made in and by the community. After all, community resources of time, energy, materials, and money are involved, and the community will only support those projects it favors, thoroughly understands and defines as "good for our community."

You have seen how the members of some FFA chapters have gone about developing a plan of action for improving their community. See the following check list for a step-by-step procedure you can use in developing a plan of action for your community improvement project!

Performance Check List (Check each as completed)

_____1. Decide who in the community will be affected by the action.

_____2. Develop a list of those who will be affected and indicate whether the effect will be seen by them as positive or negative.

_____3. Develop a list of key individuals who can legitimize your proposed action or make suggestions to help your plan succeed.

_____4. Gather facts and necessary background information.

_____5. Hold a meeting(s) of the FFA chapter to hear "feedback" and suggestions from those who visited the key individuals.

_____6. Decide whether the original strategy for action is still appropriate or whether it needs modification.

_____7. Tell others of your plan so that they will want to see the improvement in the community.

_____8. Get commitments from the various people and groups who will help work toward the completion of the community improvement activity.

_____9. Develop a step-by-step plan as to how the community improvement activity will go forward. What must be done first, second, third, etc.

Review Questions

1. What is a "plan of action"?
2. Why is it important to plan a project very carefully before carrying it out?
3. In an FFA chapter, who is responsible for developing a "plan of action"?
4. How can a local FFA chapter identify the people and groups in the community who will support an activity?
5. What are the steps to follow in developing a good action plan for a BOAC project?

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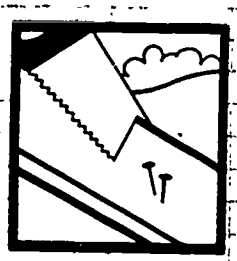


Making Things Happen

CHAPTER VII

Introduction

Until now the BOAC project or activity has been an idea, a goal, a topic for discussion and debate, and finally an organized, written plan of action. Now the project work begins.

As the chapter gets involved in making assignments, initiating and carrying out the plan of action, the members should learn how to:

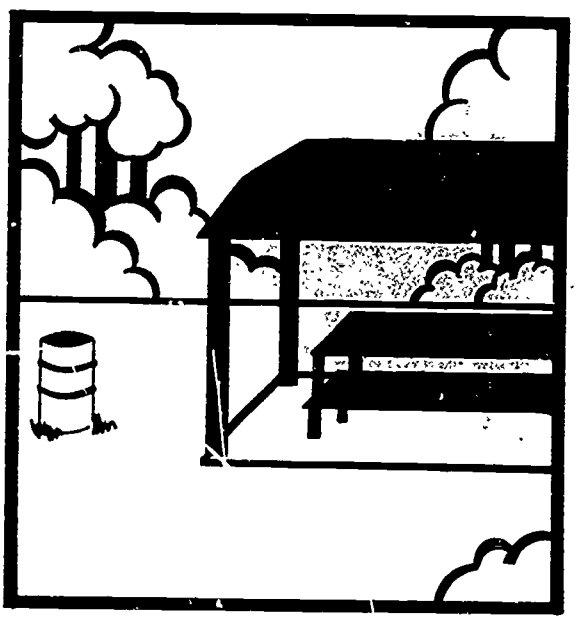
1. Assign individuals and/or groups to work on action teams.
2. Initiate the action plan.
3. Make sure the plan is being carried out.
4. Establish an appropriate central control and reporting system.
5. Publicize the action plan.
6. Bring closure to the project.

A good FFA chapter makes things happen. In all cases, it is important that what happens is well planned and the action is both timely and appropriate.

Background

How are individuals assigned to project work or action teams?

The placement of FFA members on the right committee or in the correct work group is very important. This is usually the responsibility of the chapter officers with the help of the advisor. An Indiana FFA chapter had established a BOAC committee to be responsible for and give leadership to its school farm development project. That committee decided to have three subcommittees, one for each part of the project with the chairman for each subcommittee being a member of the chapter BOAC committee. The chapter president then obtained volunteers for each subcommittee and made the committee assignments. The chapter BOAC committee, working in cooperation with its three subcommittees, received assistance from other school and community groups and individuals to carry out the total project.



How is the plan initiated?

A Georgia chapter has been actively involved in a Christmas package program for a number of years. Since this year's BOAC project involved the development of some additional features of the program, it was decided to work with four other groups and hold an open meeting to start their BOAC project.

Each of the BOAC subcommittees prepared a special program outlining what was planned and how it would be of help to the

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people in the community. Newspaper, radio and TV publicity was arranged, and local school and public officials were involved. As a result, the entire community was made aware of the project, added support was generated, and the BOAC project was started with a high level of member and community interest.

How does the chapter make sure the project is being carried out?

Community service is one of the eleven areas of a local FFA chapter program of activities. The chapter BOAC program is an important part of this area and is a part of the chapter annual program of activities.

A South Dakota FFA chapter meets every two weeks. The chapter decided that an item on the agenda for each meeting would be a progress report from the BOAC committee chairman. The committee planned to meet each week during the time the project—constructing a 40' x 96' pole barn—was in progress. Each subcommittee chairman gave a report at each committee meeting. Thus, if any problems were discovered or progress was not being made, the chapter and the advisors would know.

In addition, since this project involved and affected the school officials, farmers and others in the community, it was decided to prepare and share a written monthly progress report with the local school administrators, the county extension office and selected adult farm leaders in the community.

A project progress chart in the high school agricultural classroom is a good way to maintain a visual record of work completed and upcoming dates and activities.

What kind of central control and decision-making system is appropriate?

Very seldom does a plan proceed as originally planned. Often the plan must be adjusted as various steps are completed. The FFA chapter will need to keep close tabs on the action and modify the plan from time to time.

In Texas, the members of one chapter decided that their chapter worked well with the committee type structure. Thus, they followed the committee pattern of control and decision making for their lake and beach renovation project.

a. The subcommittees for each part of three new programs would be the first level of control and decision making.

b. The total BOAC committee would be the second level of control and decision making. This group would make sure each subcommittee and its activities were in line with the total BOAC project and were being conducted as planned.

c. The third level would be the Chapter Community Service Committee. As this group reviewed the total chapter community service program, it would make sure that the program was consistent with the chapter program of activities and was contributing to community improvement.

d. The final level would be the FFA chapter. The members at a regular meeting would hear reports about the BOAC project and make decisions regarding future directions and activities.

At all times, the chapter advisors should work closely with the BOAC committee and the chapter members. They should be well informed about the project and be sure that the local school officials and community leaders know about the progress being made.

How should the project be concluded?

After a BOAC project has been completed, it is very important that the chapter have

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some type of concluding activity or activities. Here the members and others who have made a major contribution are recognized and the activity is given community wide publicity.

A Pennsylvania chapter had a BOAC project of improving their school farm. As a concluding activity, they had an open house and conducted farm tours. An Alaskan chapter, to conclude their historical recognition project, held a recognition banquet with a formal program.

In the case of continuation projects, the concluding activity one year may serve as an introductory and motivating meeting for the next year's activity.

Practical Application

In this activity chapter, members have an opportunity to think through and carefully plan how they would begin a BOAC activity.

Initiating the action plan

Situation:

The Hickory Hill FFA chapter decided to have a "Young Farm Animal" exhibit at the county fair as their BOAC project. As a part of this exhibit, there would be young farm animals and FFA exhibits and animals. Using this as an example:

1. List possible ways of beginning this project.
2. List all of the resource people who should be involved.
3. List the public relations media that should be contacted and informed of the activity.
4. Plan a detailed program for a "kick off" meeting for this BOAC project.

Planning the chapter BOAC committees or action teams

The assignment of chapter members to work committees or action teams is critical to the success of the activity.

1. List the factors that should be considered in assigning committee chairmen for the BOAC project.
2. List the factors that should be considered in selecting committee members for the project.
3. Explain how the committees and/or chapter should select the community members to assist each committee.

Concluding the project

The successful realization of a good BOAC project needs to be shared in the chapter and with the people in the community.

Using the project or activity of your chapter, develop a plan for a project completion and recognition activity. Be sure to include the news media, community and school officials, FFA officers and members, people from outside the community, etc.

Review Questions

1. What are some good ways FFA members can be assigned to BOAC work or action committees?
2. Why is it important to have all members of an FFA chapter actively involved in the chapter BOAC project?
3. What types of media are good to use when informing the public about a BOAC project?
4. How could a project progress chart be prepared and kept current for a chapter BOAC project?
5. How are committees organized and operated in a good FFA chapter?
6. What are some ways chapter members and individuals in the community can be recognized for their special help and support on a BOAC project?

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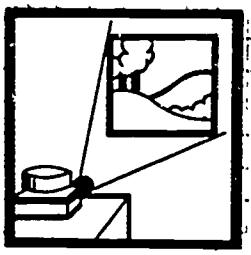


Learning From What We Did

CHAPTER VIII

Introduction

After a project has been completed, what are the results? What did chapter members gain from working on the project? What would you do differently next time and why? Has the community changed as a result of the project? If so, how has it changed and how does it feel about the change? If you are working on a long-range plan, it is particularly important to look at your results from time to time. In this way, you can change some of your activities if necessary and you can build on your experience as you plan for the next phase of your project.

In this chapter you should learn to:

1. Look at the results and decide what they mean to the chapter for the future.
2. Look at the total process and what the chapter members learned from it.
3. Determine how the community feels about the project and its benefits to the community.

Background

What do the results of the project mean to the chapter for the future?

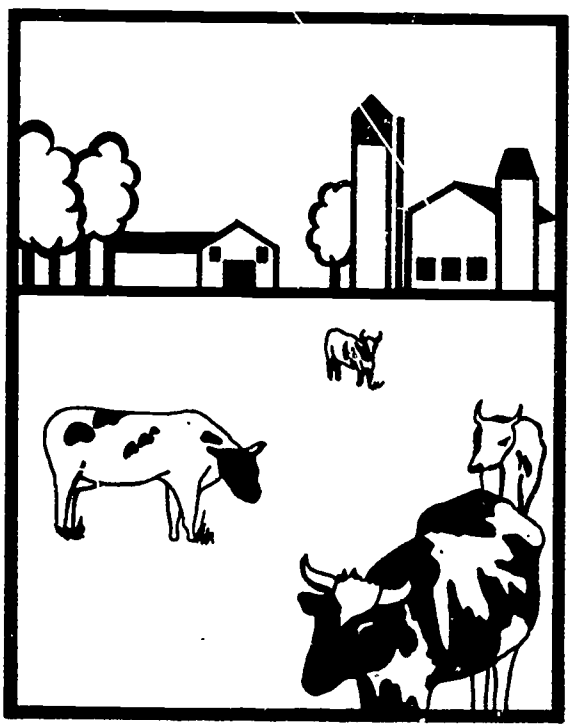
Whether your FFA chapter turned a recent field into a park, built a show barn arena for the county livestock show and fair, or helped restore the community's historical market square, it makes good sense to look at the results and ask yourselves a few questions.

1. Did the project turn out as you expected? If not, what happened and why? Were the changes in your plan an improvement or not?
2. If you were going to carry out the same project again what changes would you make?
3. What continuing responsibility, if any, does your chapter have for the project?

Answers to these questions should help you as you plan other projects. The experience gained through this project is a valuable resource that your chapter can make available to the community in future projects. Also, if you have some continuing responsibility for the project just completed, now is a good time to make certain what these responsibilities are and how they are going to be carried out.

How did the process work and what did the chapter members learn?

Your chapter has gone through the process which has been discussed in this manual. You first looked at various community needs



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Learning From What We Did

and potential projects and at individuals and groups with which the chapter might work. Next you gathered information on the potential projects and decided on which project to carry out. Having made this decision, you had to develop a plan of implementation and then carry out that plan. Now it is time to look back to see if the process worked for you and to see what you learned. Here, again, a few questions might help you judge how valuable you consider the experience.

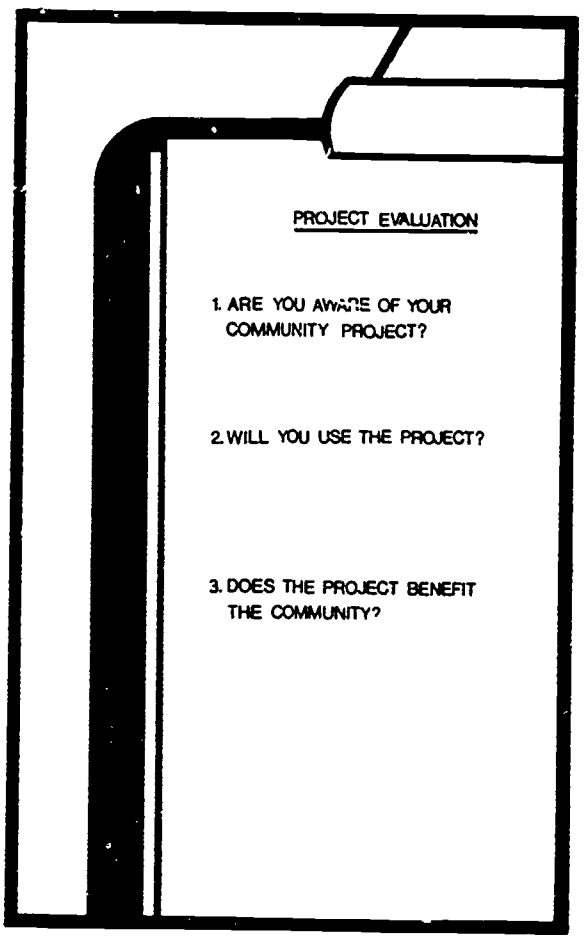
1. Did members of the chapter gain a greater awareness of the community and its needs?
2. Did members grow as individuals through this experience?
3. Did you gain in your ability to work together through working on the project?
4. Did other individuals and groups in the community learn how to work with your chapter?
5. Do you think the members of the chapter are better prepared to work on another project because of this experience?
6. Did the process work? Did it help the chapter progress from looking at community needs to completing a community project in a way that seemed effective and satisfying to those involved?

How does the community feel about the project?

Your chapter set out to improve the community in some important way. You helped build a new facility, repair or renovate an existing building, plant trees and shrubs, organize a farmers' market, or any one of a hundred other community improvements. Now that you have completed the project, you should find out how the community feels about it and how it benefits the community.

You may want to ask a few community leaders to give your chapter the benefit of their observations and thoughts about the project. You may decide to interview some community residents on their views. Is the community a better place in which to live because of the actions of your chapter? Are people more cooperative, more concerned, more willing to become involved in the community because of your project?

If your chapter decides to forge ahead on a new project, learning from what you did on the project just completed will be most helpful. You may want to turn back to the first



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page in this manual and begin again. The second time around should be more rewarding, more enjoyable, and perhaps more exciting for your chapter.

Practical Application

In these activities, you will have an opportunity to look at what this project means to chapter members and to the community.

During the time the action plan is being carried out, it should be publicized, and the public should know what is being done and what progress is being made. The action plan may be presented in printed or chart form and shared with chapter members and others. It may also be placed on a bulletin board in the vocational agriculture classroom. The plan should be shared with special groups and through newspaper articles or radio or television programs. By publicizing the action plan, people know what the chapter plans and provide support and help as needed. The plan also serves as a public commitment on the part of the chapter. It says "This is what we plan to do and how we plan to do it."

Determining what the project means to chapter members

1. Assign individuals to develop brief reports on how well the chapter carried out the various steps in the process including identifying a community need, deciding on a project, and carrying it out.
2. Ask chapter members to identify what they have learned about the community.
3. Ask chapter members to list what they feel they have personally gained through this experience.
4. Hold an evaluation meeting so that members can present and discuss these reports.

Determining what the project means to the community

1. Ask a few community leaders to meet with your chapter so that together you can discuss and evaluate how the chapter went about carrying out the project.
2. If your project resulted in a new or renovated facility, go to that facility and observe how it is used by people in the community.
3. Talk to people who are using the facility. Find out if they like it. Ask them how it could be improved.
4. Ask individuals and members of groups who worked with you on the project for their opinions about how the project was carried out.
5. Thank those who helped the chapter and publicly recognize the contribution they made.

Review Questions

1. What are the steps in the community development process?
2. How can the experience gained from completing BOAC project help a chapter with a future project?
3. How might chapter members gain personally from working on a BOAC project?
4. What benefits might the community realize from the BOAC project?

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