

Reaching New Audiences in 4-H

With Multi-Cultural Pride Day and College and Career Readiness Day

Narrative

Need

This project targets Finney County in Southwest Kansas where the three population centers are Minority-majorities. Finney County is 52% racial minority. Garden City schools exceed the county's statistics with a 78% ethnic minority student population of which 69.5% are of Hispanic origin as compared to the Kansas average of 17%. It is worthy to note that in the student population in the schools, 49.7% of students speak a language other than English at home, and there are 24 language and dialects represented in the schools. Also, the majority of schools' student populations are living in poverty (72%), which negatively impacts student academic achievement and graduation rates. Hispanic students still lag behind Anglo (White) students by 30% when it comes to high school graduation rates and subsequent enrollment in technical school, college, or university.

Finney County has a long history of large ethnic populations since the early 20th Century when Hispanics emigrated from their Latin American countries to work in sugar beet fields and for the railroads. Finney County is the model county for integration of new and emerging populations. The other counties include Ford (Dodge City), Gray (Cimarron), and Kearny (Lakin). Ford is a Minority-majority while Gray and Kearny have 30 to 40% "minority" populations. All sites currently have 4-H Youth Development bi-lingual/bi-cultural clubs, which tend to have a strong whole-family focus. These growing populations in ethnic concentrations are the major workforce centered in agricultural industries including meat processing, manufacturing, agricultural production, field work, and agricultural construction. The population tend to be rather young with median ages around 29 years old, and one-third (1/3) of the population being around 18 years old and younger.

Those young populations constitute our target audience in 4-H Youth Development. Never has it been more important to work with these groups to finish high school, seek higher education, and find niches in careers that play to their strengths of having bi-lingual skills. Ninety-eight (98%) of Finney and Ford counties' Hispanic student population is bi-lingual (Spanish/English). The Educational Development Centers, Inc. notes, in its cultural and linguistic responsiveness research, children who are bi-lingual have an easier time understanding math concepts, using logic to solve problems, learning other languages, and participating in the global community. Those are skills that we want for all 4-Hers.

After working with bi-lingual/bi-cultural populations in 4-H and in afterschool programs in community-based organizations, we know that there is great interest in activities in which the whole family can participate. The students especially like those activities that are hands-on like science experiments, cooking/baking, artistic creation, and technology-based activities like geo-caching, mapping, games, and internet research. Currently, there are four bi-lingual/bi-cultural 4-H Clubs in Finney, Ford, Gray, and Kearny counties with 77 4-H members from 122 families. There are actually more youth and children who come to 4-H, but only age-eligible youth are "enrolled" as 4-H members. Whole families tend to participate in the clubs' activities. We are in the process of recruiting for a Burmese/English language 4-H Club at the request of Burmese community leaders. The neighborhood learning centers are where many attend to receive tutoring to advance in school projects and class assignments and have become an important part of these neighborhoods that are rich in ethnic heritage and strong in educational priorities.

Our main focus for the purpose of this funding is the Hispanic population, which is 32 - 57% in the aforementioned counties. Qualitatively, we have found that ethnic parents feel inadequate when it comes to encouraging or supporting their children academically and/or socially. There is a widespread perception among parents of our target audience that their children "probably are not" college-bound, and that "our receiving community does not really want us here". Those perceptions likely originate from 1) Parents' lack of correct information about higher education; 2) Parents' language barriers to playing a prominent role in the educational environment, and 3) Negative societal views which do not support ethnic students in educational and social system (Easterling, Foy, Fothergill, Leonard & Holtgrave, 2007; Bolton & Dick, 2013).

Project Goals

One of the goals of this project is to work with previously identified groups of Hispanic families. We have deeply rooted relationships with different sectors of Hispanic and other racial minority communities in Finney, Ford, Gray, and Kearny counties. Relationships with the target families have been in adult education settings, in Head Start settings, nutrition education classes, school-oriented activities, neighborhood learning centers, and church groups all of which include family-oriented activities. We have learned that the preferred way of interacting is in group settings. We recognize a cultural pattern of group-orientation and not drawing attentions to ones-self (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). Respectfully, we do include the whole family in 4-H activities and in after school academic

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activities. Recent multi-lingual studies have revealed that: 47% of non-Anglo respondents said that “more education” would help them to live better lives. Interestingly, 46% of respondents have learned to “read and write” their adopted English language. This illustrates that our target population’s families place great value on education and the social integration that it affords (Bolton & Dick, 2013). However, access to higher education still lags for this population as only 6% report having college/university degrees. We see that families lack exposure to the pathways to finishing high school, moving on to higher education, integrating socially, and becoming involved community-wide. We note that the graduation rate for the Minority-majority high schools is 63% compared to the state rate of 85% (Public School Review, 2013). We want to change this trend by exposing families and their school/4-H aged children to activities that foster a whole-family approach with leaders who model behaviors and guide the path toward academic and social achievement. The majority of our Hispanic and other underrepresented populations have agricultural backgrounds in their countries of origins. Though 4-H is not just for “farm kids”, there is recognition among the families in these target populations that agriculture, science, engineering, math, and the arts are noble and well-respected careers that 4-H supports and promotes. Much of the youth in this target population have expressed an ideology that U. S. acculturation means leaving their own roots behind. We also want to promote bi-culturalism, and, indeed, multi-culturalism.

Kansas State University Research and Extension has a long history of working with underserved population. Extension educators across the state have been working with families to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables, stretch food dollars, prepare commodity food supplements, teach family financial management, and offer food stamp education, more commonly called SNAP-Ed. Finney County families with school-aged children have been very active in SNAP-Ed programs since 72% of the students qualify for free and reduced school meals. K-State Research and Extension also administers another grant that serves the nutrition educational needs of our low-income (resource) populations: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The families that participate in these extended nutrition education programs (6-week time period) have moved into other educational programs at our Southwest Research Extension Center. For example, in the past two years, 30 adults have received their high school diplomas through self-directed study in our computer laboratories. Currently, there are 112 adult students (parents of our 4-Hers) enrolled and getting closer to graduation. It is those families that remain our best advertisement for Kansas State University, Extension programming. It is also those families in whom we want to plant the notion of looking to the future, finishing high school, and considering higher education.

Engaged Activities with On-Campus Visits and Local University Area Activities

Our activities are called “**Multicultural Pride Day**” and “**Career and College Readiness Day**.” The goals of the on-campus visit are different for the groups represented. For the Parents our goal is to connect them to resources for supporting the path to college and to introduce them to resource people on campus. The middle and high school student goals are to increase the college readiness, and connect them to resources on campus for applying to college, including our transfer admissions reps. For the K-8th grade participants the goal will be to help them feel comfortable on campus by having activities in the Library, Student Union, green spaces and classrooms.

The activities for the day of arrival would be hosted by the KSU student chapters of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), of which Dr. Zelia Wiley has been national chair. SHPE supports Hispanic students in beginning the process as early as middle school to the academic pathways toward mathematics and other sciences, specifically engineering. MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) is a student group supported through the College of Agriculture that provides a local and national network of support for K-State students. MANRRS goals are to increase the number of students studying agricultural sciences and related fields, promote leadership qualities in students, and aid in the recruitment and placement of ethnic minorities in professional positions. Other representatives of MANRRS and SHPE will serve in the local outreach in Southwest Area activities. The “Ambassadors” will provide information and mentorship by visiting high schools and presenting information to help high school students better navigate the college experience. The Ambassadors would also serve as mentors on campus when the high school students participate in an on-campus tour during Multicultural Pride Day.

The visiting bi-lingual/bi-cultural 4-H youth would begin with a session that will include a visioning/brainstorm activity that will ask participants to envision how education will make their lives different in 5 years. The presumption is that they will have a student in college, siblings will have progressed toward college preparation and there are guardians who will also have progressed in their own High School diplomas.

The evening will continue with a panel about applying to and paying for college, including resource persons from KSU Financial Aid, Admissions, and current KSU students. There will also be an optional social event for the

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families to close out the evening. This will likely be shopping, bowling or billiards in the Student Union, along with a driving tour of the campus and Manhattan itself.

During the Multicultural Pride Day event, SHPE and MANRRS students will host activities for the Kindergarten to 8th grade students from 9am to 1pm. The K-8th grade students can have lunch with our SHPE and MANRRS students and then join the rest of the family for the campus tour. This will allow the guardians and the potential students to focus on the sessions and to listen to the translator during the Multicultural Pride Day sessions.

The timing of these campus trips will coincide with the dates of the KSU Multicultural Pride Day hosted by admissions. The KSU events will be in the semesters and will be an incentive for the students to keep up good grades and 4-H club participation during entire school years. This proposed project would take place over two years, targeting the fall 2015, spring 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017 semesters for KSU campus visits. The area “College and Career Readiness Day” events will take place in the fall of 2015, 2016, and 2017.

To reinforce what was learned on campus visit and/or to catch youth and their families who were not able to travel to campus, we will have “College and Career Readiness Day” in the Southwest Area hosted at a community college with KSRE Area Specialists and KSU Campus Partner Representatives.

Timeline of Project

4-H members and their parents will be on-campus Multicultural Pride Day (Friday) and College and Career Readiness Day (Saturday) in the spring of 2016 and 2017.

Southwest Area College and Career Readiness Day hosted at Dodge City Community College, or Seward County Community College, or Garden City Community College in the falls of 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Logic Model and Accomplishment Benchmarks

Long-term Outcome:

- 1) Increase enrollment in bi-lingual/bi-cultural 4-H Clubs in Southwest Kansas, specifically in Finney, Kearny, Gray, and Ford counties by 1% annually.
- 2) Increase number of bi-lingual/bi-cultural 4-H Members who participate in STEaM-based activities by 0.5% annually.
- 3) Increase by 1% “minority” students graduating high school with baseline count in May 2015.
- 4) Increase access to college campus visits for bi-lingual/bi-cultural students and their parents

Collaborative Partners:

The gain from this proposed outreach, as a campus partner, will be the potential multicultural admits and graduates from STEaM or Agriculture disciplines. Other benefits will include campus and area connections to the new 4-H groups in Southwest Kansas. This outreach supports the goals of the KSU 2025 initiative and the diversity goals of each of the colleges to attract diverse learners and serve the constituencies of the state of Kansas.

This process of reaching new and underserved audiences in 4-H Youth Development and promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEaM) is a collaboration among 4-H Youth Development, Southwest Area Family and Consumer Sciences/4-H Reaching New Audiences, College of Engineering, Diversity Programs in the College of Agriculture, and College of Human Ecology Admissions for Hispanic Recruitment, K-State Research and Extension Agricultural Specialists, and Kansas Geographic Alliance.

Potential Impact for all Collaborative Parties

Each of the aforementioned partners gain access to audiences that have traditionally been hard-to-reach. For the past two years, Southwest Area Extension Office in collaboration with the State Office of 4-H Youth Development has been successful in reaching underserved audiences. Please see this video that highlights this important work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZVK-LmGzYE>