Section Two: 4-H Projects

All of the evaluation tools in this section are self report instruments. Self report simply means that the youth themselves are providing feedback to you as to their gain in knowledge or skill. You are not actually administering a knowledge or skills test.

All of the tools in this section are written at the 6th grade and above reading level (Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test). Therefore, these tools should NOT be used with youth in grades K through 5 unless the wording is changed to the appropriate readability level.

I. What is the Animal Project evaluation tool about?

Often times we are asked to demonstrate what the young people are learning by participating in 4-H animal projects. This tool will enable you to show both the important youth development skills that result from participating in animal projects, as well as the specific knowledge and skills related to caring for animals. Question 1-8 covers the youth development skills that youth gain from participating in animal projects such as setting goals, completing obligations and being more responsible. We all know that these are valuable skills and attributes to have. We have also been saying that 4-H project work builds these intrinsic skills. Now, you have the tool to demonstrate it. Questions 9-10 ask about skills and questions 11-15 ask about knowledge directly related to the animal project such as showing animals, grooming animals, understanding how to feed and care for the animal, etc.

The tools require the youth to reflect on their skill and knowledge level before and after the 4-H Project. The youth will answer all the questions and rate themselves as 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good and 4=Excellent both before they participated in the project and after. This method is called a reflective pre-test and post-test. This method of evaluation is consistent with the way in which objectives are written (increase of skill or knowledge). For each skill or knowledge area, you will be able to see if the level has increased (e.g. from good to excellent, etc.). Also, this method is less time consuming to complete than a pre-test then a separate post-test. Even though this tool is given at the end of the training/program, it requires youth to think and give a response for their level of knowledge/skill prior to training, then do the same cognitive process for after the training.

This tool can be used with any animal project. For example, if you were working with swine then you would change the word “animal” to “swine” on the evaluation tool. This is a first level evaluation to meet the needs of all agents. However, you may want to specifically concentrate on one skill for a year such as showing animals or training animals. You would still use the youth development questions 1-8 because our focus as youth developers is clear. But, you could put specific knowledge or skills that you want the youth to develop related to showing the animal in place of questions 9-15. You may contact me for assistance in revising this tool.

How do I analyze and report results for the 4-H Animal Project?

Questions 11-15 Objective: By the end of the 4-H year, X% of the Z number of youth participating in the 4-H Animal Project will indicate an increase in their knowledge of how much food to feed animal and how to maintain health of animal (or what ever knowledge you are evaluating)

Report:  Compute the average for each response category for BEFORE and AFTER. Then, compare the percentages for those whose knowledge was “Poor” or “Fair” in BEFORE and “Good” or “Excellent” in the AFTER section. This would give you aggregate information for overall increase in knowledge. Or, you could compare each individual before and after for a small group of youth to track individual progress.

Questions 1-10 Objective: X% of the Z number of youth in the 4-H Animal Project will indicate an increase in their ability to show animal, groom animals and be more responsible (or what ever youth development and/or life skills you are evaluating)

Report:  Compute the average for each response category for BEFORE and AFTER. Then, compare the percentages for those whose skill was “Poor” or “Fair” in BEFORE and “Good” or “Excellent” in the AFTER section. This would give you aggregate information for overall increase in knowledge. Or, you could compare each individual.

II. What is the Community Service Project Report Form about?

In an extensive report by The National Academy of Sciences entitled Community Programs To Promote Positive Youth Development (2002), youth participation in community service was linked to their self esteem. Equally important, we know that individuals who receive the service are positively effected. Thus, evaluating community service projects can consist of collecting information pertaining to the project themselves and how individuals
(recipients) are impacted. For example, you can build your case about the importance of the community service projects by maintaining records of the following:

- **Effect of the project on recipients**: This is the most important aspect to capture for accountability. You are showing the effects that the service projects are having on those who are receiving the benefits of the project. For example, you interview a random (do not hand pick) number of the recipients to learn how they have benefitted from the service. A systematic process for conducting interviews for evaluation is provided in EDIS (Guion, Lisa. (2001). Conducting an in-depth interview. EDIS Publication FCS 6012 (FY393), Florida: IFAS). If you have a large number of recipients, you can administer a simple survey to capture the perceived benefits. Or, if the two aforementioned strategies are not feasible at the time, you can collect simple testimonials (statements) from recipients to report. You would include this information in the “results” section of the report form.

- **Type of community service**: You can document that you are doing a variety of projects to give youth exposure to different service areas as well as different problems, issues and opportunities within the community. You could also document youth’s increased understanding of the types of issues in the community by having them write journals to document their experiences. You would analyze this information by examining the projects listed in the “project description” section of the report form.

- **Duration of projects**: You can document that the duration of the projects are gradually increasing to become more long-term, sustained efforts for community change. For example, instead of a one day project, you are engaging in projects that last 6 months, one year, or carryover to two years. You would analyze this by closely examining the report form.

- **Frequency of the projects**: You can document that you are not doing a “one shot” project, but are working with a problem consistently over a period of time (duration). For example, the service project is occurring one Saturday per month for six months with the same organization or tackling the same issue. You would analyze this information by examining the “total number of visits” section of the report form.

- **Intensity of the project**: You can document that projects are increasing in depth, meaning and significance. For example, you may start off with 4-Hers serving food at a homeless shelter which is a one day project for a couple of hours. Then, the 4-H Sewing Club may make clothing items for residents of the shelter. This project involved a larger commitment of time and energy. You may end up later in the year doing a more involved project that put the 4-Hers not only committing more time and energy, but also having a more meaningful contact with the residents. The project must occur with the same organization in order to show intensity of involvement. You would also analyze this information by examining the projects listed in the “project description” section of the report form.

### III. What is the 4-H Gardening Project evaluation tool all about?

Questions 1 - 8 cover the youth development skills that youth gain from participating in gardening projects such as setting goals, completing obligations and being more responsible. We all know that these are valuable skills and attributes to have. We have also been saying that 4-H project work builds these intrinsic skills. Now, you have the tool to demonstrate it. Questions 9-16 ask about skills directly related to the gardening project. Some of the knowledge and skills include understanding when to water plants, understand how to safely apply pesticide, identify different types of plants, trim plants correctly, identify problems with plants, understand what to do to treat plants that have different problems, etc.

**How do I analyze and report results for the 4-H Gardening Project?**

Questions 1-16

Objective: X% of the Z number of youth in the 4-H Gardening Project will indicate an increase in their ability to safely apply pesticides, identify problems with plants, etc. (or what ever youth development and life skills you are evaluating)

Report: Compute the average for each response category for BEFORE and AFTER. Then, compare the percentages for those whose knowledge was “Poor” or “Fair” in BEFORE and “Good” or “Excellent” in the AFTER section. This would give you aggregate information for overall increase in knowledge for the group of youth. Or, you could compare each individual before and after for a small group of youth to track individual progress.

### IV. What is the Service Learning Tool all about?

A service learning project is different from a community service project. Service learning is a teaching/learning method connecting meaningful community service with academic learning, personal growth, and/or civic responsibility. As a method of educational and informational delivery, the service learning model emphasizes that
clients (recipients of service) and youth learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully well
organized experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in on-going collaboration with the
community organization(s). Thus, community service projects are the vehicle by which students learn, grow and
develop personally and/or academically (if tied to school curriculum). Service learning also differs from community
service in that there must be scheduled time for students to reflect and analyze the experience and the connection
between the experience and themes or theories that you are teaching (particularly if tied to school curriculum).
Service learning projects are typically more in-depth which facilitates youth personal growth and development.

This tool measures whether youth are learning key values, virtues and/or volunteer ethics. Thus, its focus is on
the personal development of the young people. We in 4-H know that young people gain key skills by participating
in service learning projects such as empathy, concern for others, and cooperation. Now, you will have the tool to
document it. It is intended to be a post-test that still captures whether the young person already knew the
information before the training. Although, it is not as rigorous or precise as the 4-H Animal and Gardening Projects
(reactive pre/post-test).

The tool contains a total of 10 items. Questions 1-10 represent statements about the purpose and benefits of
service learning. The statements ask if the item was learned and youth will respond by checking, “Yes,” “No,” “Not
Sure” or “Already Knew.”

**How do I analyze and report results for the Service Learning Tool?**

Questions 1-10

**Objective:** X% of the Z youth participating in the service learning project will indicate that they learned that volunteering allows them to understand themselves better; explore their personal values and feel good about themselves (or whichever values, virtues and/or volunteer ethic you want to focus on)

**Reporting:** Report the % of youth responding “yes” to the items.

**IV. What is the 4-H Sewing/Clothing Project evaluation tool all about?**

Question 1 - 8 covers the youth development skills that youth gain from participating in sewing projects such as
setting goals, completing obligations and being more responsible. We all know that these are valuable skills and
attributes to have. We have also been saying that 4-H project work builds these intrinsic skills. Now, you have the
tool to demonstrate it. Questions 9-18 ask about skills that directly relate to clothing selection and/or sewing.
Some of the skills include sewing clothing from a pattern, taking measurements, selecting clothing that best fit my
body type, purchasing clothes to get the best value for the money, etc.

**How do I analyze and report results for the 4-H Sewing/Clothing Project?**

Questions 1-18

**Objective:** X% of the Z number of youth in the 4-H Sewing Project increased their ability to sew clothing using a pattern, take measurements, etc. (or whatever youth development and life skills you are evaluating)

**Report:** Compute the average for each response category for BEFORE and AFTER. Then, compare the percentages for those whose knowledge was “Poor” or “Fair” in BEFORE and “Good” or “Excellent” in the AFTER section. This would give you aggregate information for overall increase in knowledge for the group of youth. Or, you could compare each individual before and after for a small group of youth to track individual progress.