

## History of 4-H International Exchange Program (IFYE)

4-H International exchanges were officially organized in 1948, when seventeen U.S. delegates visited seven European countries and six Europeans came to the U.S. The program actually had its beginnings in 1947 when ten young farmers - six from England and four from Germany visited and lived with 4-H and FFA families in the U.S.

Those first participants, like the thousands after them, did not come as tourists. They lived and worked with host families and became a part of the activities in the communities in which they lived. This family/ community-centered experience has been the crux of the 4-H International program and the basis for long-term impact and expansion. A report to the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) on the "International Farm Youth Exchange Project" in 1948 clearly implied that the "project" was meant to be more than just a youth exchange. ECOP approved a plan of action on January 9 of that year which provided for:

1. Direct 4-H relief activities in western countries of Europe - such as CARE packages, seeds, garden implements, and other material assistance.
2. A clearing house of information for the exchange of correspondence and information.
3. A direct exchange of young persons under the International Farm Youth Exchange project.

In addition to the exchange in 1948, 38 states prepared food packages for distribution to rural hospitals in England. They were brought to Washington, D.C. that year by delegates to National 4-H Camp (now National 4-H Conference). ECOP and its 4-H youth development subcommittee have continually supported 4-H International and related programs.

The need for a formal structure to support and promote the IFYE program led, in part, to the establishment of the National 4-H Club Foundation, one of the two predecessor organizations of National 4-H Council. Since that time, Council has conducted 4-H International programs in support of the 4-H program of the Cooperative Extension Service. Today youth programs similar to 4-H exist in some 80 countries and involve about 10 million young people, including 5 million in the United States. Many of these programs have been enhanced as a result of 4-H International exchange and training programs. Over 3,100 young Americans from 49 states and a similar number from over 85 countries have participated in the IFYE program (now referred to as IFYE Representative) since its beginning in 1948. IFYE was expanded after a decade of successful programming to include opportunities for currently enrolled 4-H members. Other 4-H International programs have been developed as a result of IFYE. Participation in all programs combined now totals over 31,000. What started as a cultural exchange of farm youth has broadened to a program that now involves technical help and specialized training. And the success of these programs has intensified interest in international affairs as a part of community 4-H activity in the United States. Today's 4-H International programs are many things to many people. To a host family they provide a living international experience. To 4-H they are the strongest link between U.S. 4-H and similar programs around the world. To participants they are a resource in learning and understanding international differences in living and working.

The 4-H International experience has by no means been limited to those who have taken part in the exchange and training programs. The programs have affected the lives and attitudes of many thousands more and has sown the seeds for action, involvement and community development. Most U.S. delegates give 100 or more slide presentations to audiences totaling some 10,000 persons. In addition, they participate in discussion groups, conferences, many radio and television broadcasts and author many articles and newsletters. These cross-cultural exchanges and the influence they have on international understanding provide major support of the Cooperative Extension Service mission function related to youth exchanges and international awareness.

More than 575 4-H International delegates have assisted with youth development programs in other countries through 4-H Peace Corps projects and the International Youth Development-Project (YDP). Beginning in 1961 and for the following ten years, 4-H Peace Corps projects were active in Brazil, El Salvador, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Malaysia. Four hundred and fifty volunteers worked with programs similar to 4-H in these countries through contract arrangements between the Peace Corps and National 4-H Foundation (now National 4-H Council). The YDP program was developed in response to the expressed need in developing countries for longer-term practical assistance programs - a function currently emphasized by Extension. YDP delegates work 18 months with staff in a wide variety of ways to help recruit and train leaders, develop educational materials, conduct camps and training sessions, and expand the reach and impact of youth programs. YDP started in Botswana in 1967 and continues today. Since that time, delegates have also worked in Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Philippines, Guatemala, Paraguay, Venezuela, Jamaica and Thailand. One of the criticisms of the initial 4-H International exchange was that it did not involve many young people who were currently enrolled in 4-H. As a result, the IFYE Ambassador program (initially called the 4-H Member Exchange and then Teen Caravan) was started in the early 1960s. This is a 5-8 week family-living experience in another country - usually during the summer months. Involvement of 4-H members was also enhanced with the development of a special exchange with Japan. Jointly sponsored by 4-H in the United States and the Labo International Exchange Foundation in Japan, a program providing a one-month exchange for Japanese and American youth was started in 1972. Over 30 states have participated in this exchange, which now involves 4-H, Labo and two other organizations in Japan, LEX and UTREK.

In the mid-1960s the International Agricultural Training Program (ATP) was initiated. Japan was the first country involved when 150 young Japanese farmers - came to the U.S. for a two-year practical training program. That program continued until 1983 and included trainees from Korea, the Philippines, the Republic of China, Poland and a few European countries.

To help enhance rural youth programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Inter-American Rural Youth Program (PIJR) was developed during the 1950s by the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the OAS (IICA) and the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA). IICA contributed its expertise in agricultural development and AIA provided the administrative management, rural youth program specialists and financial resources. The purpose of AIA was to initiate development programs, then to turn them over to other institutions for continuation. Thus, in 1958 the responsibilities of AIA for PIJR were transferred to the National 4-H Club Foundation of America (now National 4-H Council). The program was operated through an office of the Foundation in Jan Jose, Costa Rica. The purpose of PIJR was to cooperate with government and institutions, and private organizations, to develop effective informational-educational programs and to develop and strengthen private support entities in these countries similar to National 4-H Council. PIJR phased out in 1975, at which time National 4-H Council was instrumental in helping persuade IICA to create a youth section (CAJIR) to coordinate youth programs in Latin America and the Caribbean similar to PIJR.

Staff and volunteer opportunities have made possible international experiences for over 600 Extension staff members and volunteer 4-H leaders. These programs help meet Extension's objective of providing training for U.S. Extension staff and volunteers and their counterparts from other countries.

The Professional Rural Youth Leader Exchange (PRYLE) was started in 1962 for both Americans and participants from other countries. It provides a two-to-four month experience in the U.S. or another country.

International Extension 4-H Travel Seminars provide two-to-three week opportunities for volunteers and professionals to travel to other countries, observe youth programs, talk with leaders and youth,

and experience another program and culture firsthand.

Following several years of negotiation, an exchange with the Soviet Union was initiated through National 4-H Council and the U.S. Department of State. 4-H had initiated discussions with Soviet officials as early as 1962. An exchange, the Young Agricultural Specialists Exchange Program (YASEP) got under way with the Soviet Union in 1976 and continued for four years.

A group of 4-Hers visited the People's Republic of China during the year of 1982. That same year a delegation representing the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and National 4-H Council visited China to explore areas of cooperation between China and the U. S. 4-H program.

National 4-H Council has worked closely with several countries to develop proposals and seek funding for food production and nutrition projects - a major objective of Extension. Projects are currently under way in Jamaica and Panama. Many programs have been enhanced and supplemented by National 4-H Council in support of states involved with organizations such as Partners of the Americas. For example, YDP and IFYE Representative delegates have often been assigned to countries where a state has a partner relationship. It was not until 1973 that the words, "and my world," were added to the 4-H pledge. This was the first time the pledge had been officially changed, although the action was principally a recognition of what many states already had done on their own. It had been recommended by delegates attending the 1967 National 4-H Conference and again at the conferences in the three years (1969 - 1971) preceding the change. It is conservatively estimated that over 100,000 young people are engaged in some 4-H international activity annually. International educational projects and host family experiences help people learn about different cultures without leaving their own communities. Participants in 4-H International exchange program provide a valuable resource for local leadership. Currently, some 40,000 youth participate in international study projects annually. Thousands more participate in international activities related to their ongoing 4-H projects.

An international dimension is often incorporated at local, county, state and national events. For example, all citizenship/leadership training conducted at the National 4-H Center is enriched with international or cross-cultural components which expose youth and adults to concepts of global community.

Dr. Norman A. Brown, former State 4-H Leader in Michigan and Director of Extension in Minnesota, and later Program Officer of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, summed it up well with a statement to the 1981 National 4-H Staff Development Workshop on International Programs: "...International is not a foreign-aid program but a program for the growth and development of the citizens of each state. We must make the commitment that we're going to have a level of excellence in our 4-H International programs, such that decision makers are really not going to have any choice...They are going to see that it's in the best interests of our young people, our families, and the economies of our states to be involved and to invest in 4-H International programs...Certainly it's consistent with our charter and our mission that we extend our resources beyond our borders."

International relationships are vital to understanding, friendship, and peace. 4-H International programs are an important part of this need. They have created, and will continue to create, valued partnerships which enhance global cooperation and cultural understanding, and contribute to the international mission of the Cooperative Extension Service.

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