

# research in brief

## **Detroit 4-H Program**

This study reports a process and impact evaluation of the Detroit urban 4-H program. The process evaluation measured the performance against certain national criteria for urban 4-H programs; the expectations of individual 4-H Clubs, volunteers, and 4-H members; and the assessment of the accomplishments of the program by its administrators.

The process evaluation measured the effect that 4-H had on the community, family relationships, the behavior of youth, the social networks of youth, and the selection of role models by youth; the extent to which volunteers

were used; and the impact of the 4-H Center on the community.

The researchers studied reports and other existing data and interviewed program administrators, leaders, parents, 4-H members, community residents, business people, police, and others.

At the end of the process evaluation, it was concluded that the Detroit program hadn't reached the level of program and staff performance common to most rural programs. There was, however, evidence that the 4-H program was potentially viable for addressing urban problems related to youth. The community viewed the program positively, but there was a need for more effective use of community resources.

The impact evaluation showed several important results of the program:

1. The maximum impact of 4-H was near the immediate location of the 4-H Center, but positive effects extended to a 2-mile radius from the center.
2. Greater communication and understanding existed between children and parents involved with children in the 4-H program. However, the program didn't obtain significant parental involvement.
3. Children in the program showed less asocial behavior, had a significant reduction in juvenile offenses, and chose more pro-social friends than children not involved. The program seemed to have its greatest impact on teenage boys.
4. Involvement with the 4-H program caused a significant change in friendship networks of youth. Members identified most of their friends as fellow 4-H members. The number of their friends who engaged in asocial behavior declined after joining the 4-H program. There was also more productive use of leisure time.
5. The program was attractive to adults in the community. Many of the adult volunteers didn't have children of their own in the program.
6. 4-H members looked toward 4-H leaders and other adults for models of behavior.
7. The longer the youth were involved in the program, the more they used the 4-H Center.

"Process and Impact Evaluation: The Detroit 4-H Program." Final Report. Ralph Abbott, Billye Suttles, Maxie C. Jackson, Jr., and George W. Logan. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Center for Urban Affairs/College of Urban Development, October, 1976. Abstract available from Michigan 4-H Youth Program, 175 South Anthony Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

*Charles Sappington*