PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TRADITIONAL 4-H CLUBS AMONG THE HISPANIC CLIENTELE IN SOUTHWEST MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

By

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by

Gina Maria Canales Hernandez
To my parents, Eduardo Canales and Georgina Hernández de Canales.
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PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TRADITIONAL 4-H CLUBS AMONG THE HISPANIC CLIENTELE IN SOUTHWEST MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

By

Gina Maria Canales Hernández

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Chair: Nick Place
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According to the US Census Bureau, there has been a modest increase in the non-Hispanic White, African American and American Indian population. On the other hand, the Hispanic population is now considered the largest minority in the country (37 million). The 37 million does not include the estimated 3.5 million immigrants who have illegal status. Florida’s Hispanic Population increased by 70.4% (from 1.6 billion to 2.7 million) between 1990 and 2000. In sheer numbers, Miami Dade County will experience the largest increase, where the number of Hispanics is projected to increase by nearly 900,000, followed by Orange, Hillsborough and Palm Beach counties.

Hispanic youth have become the fastest growing youth population in the country. Hispanics make up a significant percentage of the population in many cities and will continue to comprise larger portions of school-age and college-age populations. This situation clearly shows the need to pay more attention to youth development programs targeting Hispanic youth.
The purpose of this study is to describe the perception of Hispanics about 4-H programs offered by the Cooperative Extension System in the State of Florida in southwest Miami-Dade County. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Describe the perceptions and impacts of traditional 4-H clubs among Hispanic members and their parents.
- Describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of traditional 4-H clubs in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County.
- Describe the perceptions of 4-H professionals regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County.

The overall purpose is to increase the ability of extension to respond to the Hispanics needs in Miami-Dade County. Miami-Dade County was intentionally selected due to the high percentage of Hispanic population. Four focus groups were conducted

- 4-H members
- parents of 4-H members
- non-4-H members and
- parents of non-4-H members

In addition, interviews with 4-H professionals were conducted to achieve the objectives. Overall, results provide an insight that involvement in traditional 4-H clubs does affect the development of life skills among Hispanic youth. It also shows that non-4-H members and parents of non-4-H members are eager to participate in 4-H programs, Four-H has the potential to provide the Hispanic population in Miami-Dade County with youth development programs that focus on providing youth with skills to become capable and competent adults. Finally, results showed the need to hire more bilingual/bicultural 4-H agents, to be able to outreach Hispanics and increase their enrollment.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Population counts from the 2000 Census indicate that the Hispanic population is the fastest growing group in the United States. The United States Hispanic population increased from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. These numbers indicate that the Hispanic population grew more than 57% since 1990. This is over four times the growth of the total population, which increased by 13% during the same period (Alba-Johnson, 2003; Brindis, Driscoll, Biggs & Valderrama, 2002d; Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Guzman, 2001).

According to Valdez (2000), this reported increase among Hispanics in the United States does not include the immigrants who have an illegal status, who are estimated to account for approximately 3.5 million people. Furthermore, Hispanics have continued to grow very rapidly since the last US Census; for example, the Hispanic population grew 9.8% between 2000 and 2002, while the population as a whole only had an increase of 2.5% (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004).

This high increase is a consequence of the high rates of immigration among Hispanics. Immigration to the United States has been greatest among Mexican and Central Americans fleeing the political and economic events in their countries of origin (Ortiz, 1995; Ramirez, 2004). The increase can also be attributed to the high rates of birth among Hispanics; in 2004 the rate was 22.9 per 1,000, which is the highest as
compared to 11.7 per 1,000 of non-Hispanic White and 15.7 per 1,000 of African American (Hamilton, Ventura, Martin & Sutton, 2005).

Hispanics tend to remain heavily concentrated in certain regions of the United States, notably the Southwest (most significantly, California), the Northeast, Florida and several urban centers of the Midwest (Department of Health & Human Services [DHHS], 2005; Kandel & Cromartie, 2004). Florida has the fourth largest population of Hispanics in the United States, it has increased by 70.4% from 1.6 million to 2.7 million between 1990 and 2000 (Guzmán, 2001). In sheer numbers, the top five counties in Florida with the highest Hispanic populations are Miami-Dade with 1.3 million, Broward with 271,652, Hillsborough with 179,692, Orange with 168,361, and Palm Beach with 140,675; Osceola County ranks sixth with 50,727 Hispanics (US Census Bureau, 2000). These numbers demonstrate that this nationality group is gaining ground in Florida. As result there are several places in Miami, like Hialeah, where the majority of people are Hispanic, and Spanish is the predominant spoken language.

Hispanics are a young population. The 2000 Census and the most up-to-date projections indicate that Hispanics are the fastest growing youth population in the country. Projections indicate that by the year 2050 Hispanics will represent 29% of the youth population. Guzman (2001) and Chapa and De la Rosa (2004) report that more than one third are under age 18, as compared to about one quarter of non-Hispanics; they have much younger age distributions (median age of 26 years) compared to non-Hispanics (median age 36 years).

This verifies that Hispanics make up a significant percentage of the population in many cities and will continue to compromise large portions of school age and college-age
populations. This rapid growth clearly demonstrates the need to focus on youth
development programs that target youth (Alba-Johnson, 2003; Chapa & De La Rosa,

Currently, Hispanic youth face a number of obstacles that obstruct them from
developing competencies to succeed. The 2000 Census reported that Hispanics are the
most undereducated group in the United States (Alba-Johnson, 2003). The educational
conditions of Hispanics has been characterized by:

- Below-grade level enrollment
- High drop out rates
- High illiteracy rates
- Low number of school years completed

According to Therrien and Ramirez (2000) only 46% of Hispanics had completed
high school or had some college and only 10% had a bachelor’s degree. Unfortunately
this contributes to lower-status occupations that translate into lower income and higher
poverty rates among Hispanics.

Alba-Johnson (2003) states that in the United States, a successful young person is
expected to graduate from high school, gain the education and skills necessary to be
economically independent, and consequently contribute to society. Furthermore she
explains that, Hispanic youth are not meeting these expectations because they do not have
access to basic opportunities and resources. They encounter a number of obstacles that
get in the way of their development such as language barriers, poverty and limited access
to education (Brindis et al., 2002a). Therefore, it is essential and reasonable to take into
account the cultural differences among Hispanics and then develop appropriate youth
programs that are going to prepare youth to lead productive and healthy lives
(Alba-Johnson, 2003).
Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is the world’s largest nonformal educational organization and is widely known for its achievements in addressing the concerns of a changing society (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, & Conklin, 1997). The term extension was first used during the late 1800’s, in connection with education, to describe the methods that were being used to disseminate knowledge from the University of Cambridge in England to the people that lived near their surroundings (Brewer, 2001; Jones & Garforth, 1997). According to Rivera and Gustafson (as cited in Brewer, 2001) it was after World War II that a number of countries decided to establish extension systems. The main reason was the considerable backlog of science and technology that had accumulated during the war and the fact that soldiers were returning to the farms. Extension work was seen as a way to promote economic growth and enhance the use of modern input through nonformal education.

In the United States extension is facilitated through the Cooperative Extension System (CES). In 1914 the Smith Lever Act formally created the CES, and it is a cooperative educational relationship between three different levels of government the federal partner USDA, the state partner being land-grant universities and the county partner being the local government. CES is a public funded, nonformal educational system that links the education and research resources (Graham, 1994; Seevers et al., 1997). Extension does not offer credit courses, grades or grants degrees but it enlarges and improves the abilities of the people to adopt more appropriate practices to adjust to changing and societal needs (Graham, 1994).
The mission of the CES has evolved over the years, but in essence it is to enable people to improve their lives as well as their communities. Cooperative Extension System accomplishes the mission by providing people with practical and useful education that they can use in addressing problems they face on a daily basis (Seever et al., 1997). For example, during World War I, extension mobilized the war food production efforts; while food production, preservation and clothing conservation projects were stressed. In the 1920’s, the emphasis changed from production to economic concerns, farm efficiency and the quality of life. During the great depression the farm seed and loan program was organized and extension managed it. Moreover farm families were drawn into active participation in county, state and national public affairs, home economics programs were geared towards family self sufficiency. In the post depression and the new deal era, extension became involved in the management of many federal programs such as: Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Rural Electrification Program, and the Farmer’s Home Administration (Pennsylvania State University, 2005).

**The 4-H Youth Development Program**

The 4-H program of the CES started as an American innovation. It originated at the turn of the 20th century because of a vital need to improve life in the rural areas. According to Kelsey and Hearne (as cited in Russell, 2001) the main purpose of the program was the development of boys and girls so they would turn out to be responsible and capable citizens. The program introduced improved methods of farming and homemaking to youth by practical and “hands-on” learning. During the early stages of 4-H, the clubs consisted of growing corn, planting a garden, testing soil, club meetings,
and visits to club member’s plots and exhibits (National 4-H Headquarters [N4H], 2005a; North Dakota State University [NDST] Extension Service, 2005).

The first record of any known 4-H type activity was in 1898. Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell University inaugurated a system of junior naturalist brochures in rural schools and assisted in the organization of nature study clubs. Around 1907, 4-H began to work under the auspices of the US Department of Agriculture. In 1914 through the Smith Lever act, Congress formed the Cooperative Extension Service, and it included boys and girls clubs also known as 4-H clubs. In 1915 there were 4-H clubs in 47 states in the United States. During World War I, the energies of 4-H members were devoted to raising food. Projects consisted of raising corn and canning tomatoes. Following a period of readjustment after World War I, 4-H club work showed continual growth. Some states developed 4-H programs in close relationship to local school districts. Others established clubs as community programs separate from schools (NDST Extension Service, 2005).

As the 4-H program continued to grow through the 1920's and 1930's more emphasis was placed on the development of the individual rather than the product produced. The focus of the program was the development of skills in farming and homemaking. The 1950's and 1960's saw increasing numbers of non-farm youth enrolling in the program. In 1948, 4-H went international with the establishment of the International Four-H Youth Exchange (IFYE), first called the International Farm Youth Exchange (N4H, 2005b; NDST Extension Service, 2005). According to the N4H (2005a), the program has evolved considerably through the past 100 years; 4-H offers youth opportunities in communications, leadership, career development, livestock, home
improvement, and computer technology. Nowadays, programs are found in rural and urban areas throughout the country, and it has been able to integrate boys and girls in clubs and reach a diverse cultural audience.

Florida 4-H reached a total of 240,563 youth in 2004-2005 (September 1\textsuperscript{st} to August 31\textsuperscript{st}) through their programming. Four-H serves youth from all racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Florida 4-H provides curriculum and programming in the following areas: citizenship and civic education, communication and expressive arts, consumer and family sciences, environmental education and earth science, healthy lifestyle education, personal development and leadership, plant and animal, and science and technology. In Miami-Dade 4-H reached a total of 10,368 through organized clubs (community/project, in school, after school, and military clubs), 4-H special interest/short term programs and 4-H camping programs. Only 480 youth was involved in community/project clubs representing only a 4.63% of the total youth reached (University of Florida, 2005).

**Problem Statement**

Hispanics are drawn to large counties like Miami-Dade, where more jobs are available and large numbers of Hispanics have already established their residence. Nevertheless, some of Florida’s smaller counties will experience the greatest changes of proportions of their population. These include Osceola, Flagler, and Lake counties, which were expected to grow by 281%, 257% and 217% respectively, between 2000 and 2003 (Smith, 2004). The youth population (0–19) in Florida has shown increasing growth rates over the last 30 years, from 15.5% between 1970–1980 to 25.2% between 1990 and 2000. It is projected, that the 2010 census will count 4,495,447 people ages
19 and younger, representing 23.7% of the total state population (Economic & Demographic Research, 2006).

As previously mentioned, this increase in the youth population indicates the increase of Hispanic youth in the State of Florida. That is why a lack of attention to Hispanic youth development could lead to greater economic and social problems such as decline in worker skill levels, below average income, and increases in health and social services costs across the country. All these problems can affect the economy and structure of today’s society (Mehan et al., 1994). In order to address this issue, extension programs in the United States should foster culturally sensitive contexts that target specific needs of Hispanic youth, promoting more adequate strategies that help them achieve positive development.

Reports suggest that Hispanics undergo unique educational and language challenges (Carlo, Carranza & Zamboanga, 2002). A good example is that Hispanics are less likely to complete high school and obtain a college degree compared to White non-Hispanic youth (Ramirez, 2004; Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). For this reason, it is important to consider that Hispanic youth have particular characteristics and obstacles to overcome such as: language barriers, poverty, immigration, acculturation, low educational attainment, low self-esteem, and mobility. These are obstacles that place them in very disadvantaged situations (Chain, 1993; Chapa & Valencia, 1993; Hurtado & Gauvain, 1997; Narro-Garcia, 2001; Orum, 1986; Valdivieso, 1990). Changing demographics and distinct cultural factors relevant to Hispanics have prompted the necessity for culture-specific programming (Zamboanga & Knoche, 2003). To work
effectively with any ethic group, educators and extension agents need to be aware of the values in their own culture, as well as sensitivity to differences in other cultures.

Hispanics are not only growing in numbers, but they are also moving to areas not previously populated by them. As a result extension’s Spanish-speaking audience has increased and understanding and addressing the needs of the Hispanic population is becoming increasingly important (Watson, 2001; Zamboanga & Knoche, 2003). One of the biggest challenges of extension is to attract and increase Hispanic clientele and to deliver programs that are culturally sensitive (Schauber & Castania, 2001). Based on the above, this study seeks to assess the factors that limit the extension system’s ability to meet the needs for the Hispanic population specifically in the 4-H Youth Development program. Through examining the impact on youth of past or present programs; interviews between 4-H professionals, youth and parents were be conducted. The goal is to identify areas for improvements that can be translated into practical recommendations for the UF/IFAS extension system.

Purpose

This study aims to describe the perception of Hispanics about 4-H programs offered by the Cooperative Extension System in the State of Florida in southwest Miami-Dade County. An aim of the study is to improve and develop programs that account for their specific needs. The overall purpose is to increase the ability of extension to respond to the Hispanics needs in Miami-Dade County.

Objectives

- To describe the perceptions and impacts of traditional 4-H clubs among Hispanic members and their parents.
- To describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of traditional 4-H clubs in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County.
• To describe the perceptions of 4-H professionals regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County.

Limitations

• The diversity of Hispanics in Florida. Hispanics are not only different from the general anglo and non-anglo population by most demographic and socioeconomic measures, but they also differ among themselves, representing a diverse collection of economic groups, nationalities, acculturation stages and English fluency levels.

• The resistance of Hispanics to participate in the study as a result of the current situation of their immigration status in the United States.

• Researcher bias. She has a preconceived idea of why Hispanics do not participate in 4-H programs. In order to minimize this effect a third person, who is more objective, will collaborate with the researcher on data collection and interpretation to assure validity.

Operational Definitions

• **4-H member**: a youth that is currently involved in a 4-H traditional club in Miami Dade County. The researcher determined this for the purpose of this study.

• **Traditional 4-H club**: a club consisting of boys and girls from eight to 18 years of age. The club provides the members with high ideals of civic responsibility, community leadership, and contributed to youth and growth development. It has a planned program that is carried out throughout the year. The researcher determined this for the purpose of this study.

• **Acculturation**: is the multifaceted process of adjusting to a host culture and taking on the values, beliefs and behaviors of that culture (Dana, 1996).

• **Assimilation**: is the process of social, economic, and political integration of an ethnic minority group into mainstream society (Keefe & Padilla as cited in Shaull & Gramann, 1998).

• **Cooperative Extension Service**: is a nonformal educational program implemented in the United States, designed to help people use research-based knowledge to improve their lives (Seevers et al., 1997).

• **Cultural awareness**: this requires one to understand similarities and differences between one’s own culture and other cultures. This process begins by understanding qualities important to one’s own culture (Oakland, in press).

• **Focus groups**: these are group interviews, fundamentally for listening to people and learning from them. A moderator guides the interview while a small group of
six to eight participants who come from similar backgrounds discuss the topic the interviewer raises (Morgan, 1998).

- **Hispanic**: person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (Ramirez, 2004).

- **Nonformal education**: any organized educational activity outside the established formal system: whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity. It is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives (Smith, 2005).

- **Youth development**: is an ongoing process in which all youth are engaged and invested, a process where young people need to meet their basic needs and develop competencies they consider necessary for success (Pitmann, 1991).

**Summary**

In summary, Hispanics in the United States and in the state of Florida are the fastest growing minority, and they are gaining ground. As a result, their presence will continue to be noticed, as more and more time goes by. This increase translates into an increase in the Hispanic youth population, fifty percent of the Hispanic population in the country is under the age of 26 and thirty five percent is younger than 18. Hispanics are the most undereducated group in the United States. Consequently this contributes to lower-status occupations that translate into lower income and high poverty rates. In addition the lack of youth development programs targeted to Hispanics has hindered them from becoming successful young adults. This chapter provided a background, and a description of the importance and relevancy of the study as well as an overview of the current situation of Hispanics in the United States and the need for youth development programs targeted to Hispanic youth.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the available literature on youth development, 4-H, and Hispanics. Youth development was discussed to give an overall purpose and need for youth development. Secondly, 4-H was discussed to have an idea of what it is and what it offers youth for their development. Lastly, the researcher provides an overview of the Hispanic culture, its demographics and the current situation in the United States.

Youth Development

Youth can be described as young people, adolescents or teenagers. Making the transition from elementary school-age children to adolescents is a time with great change on many levels (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine [NRCIM], 2002). Usually the most dramatic are the biological changes linked with puberty, that include shifts in the shape of the body, emergence of the menstrual cycle in females and onset of fertility (Herbert & Martinez, 2001). There are also major social changes linked with both school and shifts in the roles that adolescents are expected to assume as they mature. For example, teenagers select which peer groups to join and how to spend their time after school. They also make future educational and occupational plans that they pursue through high school coursework and out-of-school activities (NRCIM, 2002). Due to the impact that these choices and behaviors can have over their future, it is important to look at different options on how to help youth to make this transition smoother.
Many researchers have proposed systematic ways to think about the developmental challenges, opportunities, and risks of this period of life. The most prominent has been Erick Erikson with his theory of human development. Erikson (1950) believed that humans develop through a life span; he developed eight psychosocial stages that humans encounter throughout their life. The stages identified by Erikson (Huitt, 1997; Sharkey, 1997) are as followed:

- Trust vs. mistrust
- Autonomy vs. shame and doubt
- Initiative vs. guilt
- Industry vs. inferiority
- Identity vs. role confusion
- Intimacy vs. isolation
- Generativity vs. stagnation
- Ego integrity vs. despair

Erikson was one of the first theorists that recognized that the most important force driving human behavior and the development of personality was social interaction, and pointed out “ego strengths develop from trusting relationships” (Coughlan & Welsh-Breetzke, 2002; Huitt, 1997).

Pitmann (1991) defined youth development as an ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged and invested a process where young people need to meet their basic needs and develop competencies that are considered necessary for success. It is a process that automatically involves all the people around youth including family and community. A young person is not able to build essential skills and competencies and be able to feel safe; cared for, valued, useful, and spiritually grounded unless their family and community provide them with the supports and opportunities they need along the way (Center for Youth Development & Research, n.d.)
In the past youth development was focusing on problems that youth faced such as: learning disabilities, affective disorders; antisocial conduct; low motivation and achievement; drinking; drug use; smoking; psychological crises triggered by maturational episodes such as puberty; and risks of neglect, abuse, and economic deprivation that is common among certain populations (Damon, 2004; Lerner, Brentano, Dowling & Anderson, 2002). This approach viewed the adolescence stage as a period characterized with problems, where young people are seen as potential problems that need to be corrected before they harm themselves or others around them (Arnett, 1999; Damon, 2004; NRCIM, 2002).

During the 1990’s youth development experienced a shift from the approach that focused on the deficits of youth to an approach that emphasizes on supporting youth before problem behaviors arise (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 1998, 2004; Damon 2004). Youth practitioners realized that youth have talents and needs that communities could no longer ignore. When society fails to provide youth with support and opportunities, as adults they may experience unemployment, have drug or alcohol problems, commit crimes, and become a drain on community resources (National Clearinghouse on Family & Youth [NCFY], 2006)

**Positive Youth Development Approach**

According to Damon (2004) and Lerner et al. (2002), this approach begins with a vision of a fully able child eager to explore the world, gain competence, and acquire the capacity to contribute importantly to its community. The approach recognizes the existence of adversities and developmental challenges that may affect children in different ways. It emphasizes that young people may appropriately be regarded as resources to be developed rather than a problem to society (Lerner, 2005).
The focus of this approach is on providing services and opportunities to support all young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment (DHHS, 2004). Another change brought by the positive youth development approach was the way child-community was understood. It considers the whole community in relation to the whole child rather than privileging any particular interaction of capacity (Damon & Gregory, 2002). This approach perceives the child as a full partner in the community-child relation, bearing a full share of rights and responsibilities. It works best when all the community, including young people, are involved in creating a variety of services and opportunities they need to develop into happy and healthy adults (NCFY, 2006).

During the mid-1990’s the approach was solidified by the work of Benson (1997) and The Search Institute, they focused on the “developmental assets.” The Search Institute approach emphasizes the talents, energies, strengths, and constructive interests that every young person possesses (Damon, 2004). The Search Institute’s 40 developmental assets are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets are categorized into two groups of 20 assets (external and internal assets).

External assets are the positive experiences youth receive from the world around them. The 20 external assets are about supporting and empowering youth, about setting boundaries and expectations, and about positive and constructive use of their time. Internal assets identify the characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. These assets are about positive values and identity, social competencies, and commitment to learning (Appendix A).
The fundamental idea was that, the more of these assets that you provide teenagers with; the less likely they are to become involved in risky behaviors (Damon, 2004; Search Institute, 2006).

Currently researchers are finding new evidence that offers an empirical demonstration of why increasing positive youth development outcome is likely to prevent problem behavior (Catalano et al., 2004). This evidence shows that the same risk and protective factors that studies have shown predict problem behaviors are also important in predicting positive outcomes (Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard & Arthur, 2002; Pollard, Hawkins & Arthur, 1999).

**Positive Youth Development Constructs**

According to Catalano et al. (2004, p. 102) The Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation financed an evaluation project to look into youth development programs in the US. The project aimed at defining how youth development programs have been defined in the literature. The project also intended to locate, through a structured search, strong evaluations of these programs and summarize the outcomes of these evaluations. As result of the study an operational definition of youth development was created. Positive youth development programs are approaches that seek to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- **Promotes bonding:** bonding is an emotional attachment and commitment a child makes to social relationships in the family, peer group, school, community, or culture. Bonding is key to the development of the child’s capacity for motivated behavior. Strategies promoting bonding combined with the development of skills are an effective intervention for adolescents at risk for antisocial behavior.

- **Fosters resilience:** resilience is an individual’s capacity for adapting to change and to stressful events in healthy and flexible ways. It is a characteristic of youth who when exposed to multiple risk factors, show successful responses to challenges and use this learning to achieve successful outcomes.
• Promotes social competence: is the range of interpersonal skills that help youth integrate feelings, thinking, and actions to achieve specific social and interpersonal goals.

• Promotes emotional competence: is the ability to identify and respond to feelings and emotional reactions in oneself and others. There are five elements of emotional competence, including knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships.

• Promotes cognitive competence: it includes two overlapping but distinct sub-constructs. The first construct is defined as the ability to develop and apply the cognitive skills of self-talk, the reading and interpretation of social cues, using steps for problem-solving and decision-making, understanding the perspectives of others, the behavioral norms, a positive attitude toward life, and self awareness. The second construct is related to academic and intellectual achievement. The emphasis is on the development of core capacities including the ability to use logic, analytic thinking, and abstract reasoning.

• Promotes behavioral competence: it refers to effective action. There are three dimensions: nonverbal communication, verbal communication and taking action

• Promotes moral competence: is the ability to assess and respond to the ethical, affective, or social-justice dimensions of a situation. Moral development is defined as a multistage process through which children acquire society’s standards of right and wrong, focusing on choices made in facing moral dilemmas.

• Fosters self-determination: it is the ability to think for oneself and to take action consistent with the thought. Self-determination is defined as the ability to plan one’s own course.

• Fosters spirituality: spirituality is defined as “relating to, consisting of or having the nature of spirit; concerned with or affecting the soul; of from our relating to God; of or belonging to a church or religion.” Researchers have found that religiosity is positively associated with prosocial values and behavior and negatively related to suicide ideation and attempts, substance abuse, premature sexual involvement, and delinquency.

• Fosters self-efficacy: is the perception that one can achieve desired goals through one’s own action. Self-efficacy beliefs function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, affect, and action. Some researchers document that the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goals people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them.
• Fosters clear and positive identity: is the internal organization of a coherent sense of self. Identity is viewed as a “self structure,” an internal self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history, which is shaped by the child’s navigation of normal crises or challenges at each stage of development.

• Fosters belief in the future: it is the internalization of hope and optimism about possible outcomes. Research demonstrates that positive future expectations predict better social and emotional adjustment in school and a stronger internal locus of control.

• Provides recognition for positive behavior: behavior is strengthened through reward and avoidance of punishment and loss of reward. Reinforcement affects an individual’s motivation to engage in similar behavior on the future. Social reinforcers have major effects on behavior.

• Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement: is the presentation of events and activities across different social environments that encourage youth to participate in prosocial actions. It is especially important that youth have the opportunity for interaction with positively oriented peers and for involvement in roles in which they can make contributions.

• Fosters prosocial norms: this seeks to encourage youth to adopt healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior through a range of approaches. For example, providing youth with data about the small numbers of people their age who use illegal drugs, so they decide they do not need to use drugs to be “normal.”

**Youth Development Programs**

Catalano et al. (2004, p. 115) examined twenty-five effective youth development programs and summarized the main characteristics that made these programs successful. According to Catalano the characteristics of an effective positive youth development program include:

• Youth development construct: All the programs addressed at least a minimum of five positive youth constructs. The main constructs addressed were: competence, self-efficacy and prosocial norms.

• Measurement of positive and problem outcomes: There is a need for all positive youth development programs to measure both types of outcomes to assess fully the effects of these programs on youth. This integrated measurement approach will provide the field of youth development a greater understanding of programs effects on all important youth outcomes.
• Structured curriculum: Having a structured curriculum or structured activities is critical for program replication. This allows researchers and youth development professionals to go over the curriculum and choose activities that have been successful and replicate them in different settings making the necessary adjustments.

• Program frequency and duration: The most successful programs were delivered over a period of nine months or longer. For a program to be successful and have long-term impact there is a need to have continuity and follow up with the targeted audience. According to Knox, Bracho, Sanchez, Vasques, Hahn, Sanders and Kampfner (2005), change takes time; building community trust is a process that can take several years.

• Program implementation and assurance of implementation quality: implementation fidelity has repeatedly been shown to be related to effectiveness. Among multiyear, well funded studies, separate evaluations of implementation, in addition to outcome evaluations are common. Effective programs consistently focus on the quality and consistency of program implementation.

• Population served: three-fourths of the programs served African-American and European American Caucasian youth. About half of them included Hispanics and approximately one-third reported Asian American youth among their participants. In order to have a successful program there is a need to understand and determine the needs of the targeted audience. The majority of the participants (75%) in the successful programs were African-American and European Caucasian youth. These results indicate that youth development professional have had a better understanding of these two distinct groups.

Hispanics

Population counts from the 2000 Census indicate that the Hispanic population is the fastest growing group in the United States. The United States Hispanic population increased from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. These numbers indicate that the Hispanic population grew more than 57% since 1990. This is over four times the growth of the total population, which increased by 13% during the same period (Alba-Johnson, 2003; Brindis et al., 2002d; Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Guzman, 2001).

According to Valdez (2000) this reported increase within Hispanics in the United States does not include the immigrants that have an illegal status who are estimated to account for approximately 3.5 million people.
Furthermore, Hispanics have continued to grow very rapidly since the last US Census. For example, the Hispanic population grew 9.8% between 2000 and 2002, while the population as a whole only had an increase of 2.5% (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). This high increase is a consequence of the high rates of immigration among Hispanics. Immigration to the United States has been greatest amongst Mexican and Central Americans fleeing the political and economic events in their countries of origin (Ortiz, 1995; Ramirez, 2004). The increase can also be attributed to the high rates of birth among Hispanics; in 2004 the rate was 22.9 per 1,000, which is the highest as compared to 11.7 per 1,000 of non-Hispanic White and 15.7 per 1,000 of African-American (Hamilton, Ventura, Martin & Sutton, 2005).

Diversity and Cultural Traits

In an attempt to provide a common denominator to a large, but diverse, population with connection to the Spanish language or culture from Spanish-speaking countries the US federal government in the early 1970’s created the term “Hispanic” (Clutter & Nieto, 2006). In the past, Hispanics have been considered a homogeneous group. Nevertheless, research has been able to show that Hispanics are different from the general Anglo and non-Anglo population, as well as among themselves.

Even though this entire population is classified as Hispanic there are major ethnic subdivisions within Hispanics, as well as differences in their socioeconomic and family characteristics (Ortiz, 1995; Ramirez, 2004; Suarez & Ramirez, 1999; Warrix & Bocanegra, 1998). The three main Hispanic groups in the country are: Mexican American, Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans.

**Mexican American.** They account for the 60% of the total Hispanic population. Some are indigenous to the southwestern US and were already residing there when the
territory was taken over by the US in 1848. Since the early 1900’s, immigration from Mexico has occurred at a high rate, although the extent of immigration and the level of acceptance of Mexican Americans by non-Hispanic white society has varied with economic conditions. Mexican immigrants have typically been poor and from rural areas.

**Puerto Ricans.** They account for 10% of the total Hispanic population. Approximately 50% of the Puerto Ricans living in the US were born in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican migrants have typically been young, with a very low level of literacy and low occupational skills. In the past they have not done well economically in the US and are very disadvantaged in comparison to other Hispanic groups (Ortiz, 1986).

**Cuban American.** According to Bean and Tienda (1987), the reasons why the Cuban American population migrated to the US were completely different from those that forced the Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans to migrate. The Cubans who immigrated to the US during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s were predominantly professional and entrepreneurs who fled Cuba when Castro came to power. Taking into account the Cubans background and the fact that they were granted a refugee status and subsequently resettlement assistance by the US government, has meant that they have done relatively well economically. Because of the nature of entry into the US, Cuban Americans have quickly integrated into the US economic structure while still retaining a strong Cuban American identity.

In contrast, Hispanics are united by customs, language, and values (Clutter & Nieto, 2006; Griggs & Dunn, 1996; Valdez, 2000). In order to develop effective youth programs for Hispanics; youth professionals need to consider the needs, demographics,
common cultural characteristics and values of Hispanics. Valdez (2000), described the most common cultural traits in order to have a better understanding of Hispanics.

**Familismo.** The pillar of Hispanics culture is the family, which includes the extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The emphasis Hispanics place on relatives is called familismo. The family’s needs and welfare take priority over the individual needs. The family, as a group, is usually the first and only priority.

**Relationship with children.** A major difference between mainstream American and traditional Hispanic cultures is in child-rearing orientations. Children in Hispanic families are not believed to be capable of acting independently until they reach maturity, regardless of physical and emotional development of the child. This leads to parents keeping the child close and attached to the family.

**Machismo.** This is a complex set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors, about the role of men that is pervasive in Hispanic culture. The concept refers to the roles men fulfill according to societal rules and how they view themselves with respect to their environment and other people. It involves how men function as providers, protectors, and representatives of their families to the outer world. They have obligations, responsibilities to uphold the honor of the family members, to deal effectively with the public sphere, and to maintain the integrity of the family unit. Machismo also refers to having socially acceptable, manly characteristics, such as being courageous, strong, and virile. The manly image includes being seen as the head of the household, but listening to and being respectful of women. This traditional role provides much more freedom for men than women with regard to sexual activity, public and social interaction.
**Marianismo.** This is to some extent, the female counterpart of machismo. The term refers to an excessive sense of self-sacrifice found among traditional and less acculturated Hispanic women: the more sacrifice, the better the mother, the better the spouse, many times to the detriment of the woman. This cultural trait is supported by a complex set of deep-rooted beliefs and values that determine how Hispanic women choose to live or not to live their lives.

**Etiquette.** Hispanics tend toward formality in their treatment of one another. A firm handshake is a common practice between people as a greeting and for leaving. A hug and a kiss on the cheek are also common greeting practices between women, and men and women who are close friends of family. The Spanish language provides forms of formal and nonformal address (different use of “usted” vs. “tu” for the pronoun you, polite and familiar commands, the use of titles of respect before people’s first names such “Don” or “Doña”). In nonformal settings, conversations are usually loud, fast, and adorned with animated gestures and body language to better convey points. They tend to be more relaxed and flexible about time and punctuality than US people. Among them, not being on time is a socially acceptable behavior; they tend to be reserved about public speaking because of their heavy foreign accent.

**Hispanic Youth**

The 2000 Census, and the most up-to-date projections, indicate that Hispanics are the fastest growing youth population in the country. Projections indicate that by the year 2050 Hispanics will represent 29% of the youth population. Guzman (2001) and Chapa and De la Rosa (2004) report that more than one third are under age 18, as compared to about one quarter of non-Hispanics; they have much younger age distributions (median age of 26 years) compared to non-Hispanics (median age 36 years).
Hispanic youth as immigrants need to face their status as a minority group in the
US where they need to adapt to a new language, experience discrimination, and
overcome social problems that characterize them (Garcia Coll, Akerman, Cicchetti,
2000). For a better understanding of the process that Hispanics undergo to adapt to their
new environment as members of the US society, there is a need to describe acculturation
and assimilation. The distinction between these processes is based on the difference
between culture and society (Gans, 1997).

Acculturation is the degree to which Hispanics have adopted the attitudes, values
and behaviors of US society or rather an overly homogenized conception of it.
Assimilation, on the other hand, refers to the Hispanics’ move out of formal and informal
ethnic associations and other social institutions into the non-ethnic equivalents accessible
to them in US society (Gans, 1997; Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales & Hayes
Bautists, 2005; Suarez & Ramirez, 1999). According to Rosenthal (as cited in Gans,
1997), immigrants begin to acculturate fairly quickly, but they assimilate much more
slowly. Two reasons that explain why acculturation is always a faster process than
assimilation, is that American culture is a powerfully attractive force for immigrants
(children are easily enticed, particularly those coming form societies that lack their own
commercial popular cultures) and immigrants can acculturate on their own. In contrast
they cannot assimilate unless they are given permission to enter the “American” group or
institution, taking into account discrimination and other reasons, often leads to a denial of
this permission to immigrants.

Some researchers have stated that the more acculturated Hispanics are, the better
off they are for integration into US society (assimilation). According to Lara et al.
(2005), more acculturated Hispanics have higher rate of insurance coverage and access to health care. Nevertheless, negative effects of acculturation have been demonstrated, acculturated Hispanic adolescents are more likely to engage in problem behaviors and less likely to engage in health promoting behaviors than the less acculturated. Therefore, this shows that although Hispanics deal with barriers that could be associated with problem behaviors, there are aspects of the Hispanic culture that serve as protective factors and contribute to a healthy lifestyle (Elbin, Sneed, Morisky, Rotheram-Borus, Magnusson & Malotte, 2001).

**Education.** Hispanics have had much lower high school completion rates than blacks and whites since the early 1970’s (Williams, 2001). According to Brindis et al. (2002a), math scores of young students in all racial and ethic groups have improved since the early 1980’s. On the other hand, reading scores have remained fairly consistent. Between 1982 and 1999, the math scores of nine year old Hispanics rose by 4%, those of African-Americans rose by 8% and the scores of White non-Hispanic rose by 7% (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics [FIFCFS], 2002). These trends are not exclusively for younger students. They are also seen in middle and high school students as well. Regarding college enrollment, Hispanics have one of the lowest rates of college attendance of all cultural groups in the US (Hurtado & Gauvain, 1997; Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). Almost half (46%) of White non-Hispanics and 39% of African-Americans who graduated from high school attend college. In comparison, only 33% of Hispanic high school graduates go on to college (Jamieson, Curry & Martinez, 2001).
**Family structure.** As mentioned previously, the Hispanic culture has traditionally stressed the importance of family, placing a high value on marriage and children and on economic and social support among extended family members. Hispanic households are typically larger than those of African-American and White non-Hispanics. This is true for both married and single female-headed households. Thirty one percent of Hispanic households contain more than five people, compared to 21% of African-American and 11% of White non-Hispanic households (US Census Bureau, 1998). According to Ehrle, Adams and Touk (as cited in Brindis et al., 2002b), Hispanic teens are less likely than White non-Hispanic, but twice as likely as African-American teens, to live with both parents. Half of all Hispanics live with both biological parents, 14% live in blended or cohabiting families and 35% live with a single parent.

**Poverty.** In 2000, twenty seven percent of Hispanic children under the age of 18 lived in poverty; compared to 30% of African-American children and 9% of White non-Hispanic children (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). According to Hernández (1997), poverty rates among Hispanics vary by national origin. They range from a low of 16% for Cuban children to a high of 44% for Puerto Rican children.

Poor children are at greater risk than non-poor children for a host of negative outcomes. They are more likely to perform poorly in school, to become teen parents and to be unemployed as adults (An, Haveman & Wolfe, 1993; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997, 2000). In addition to facing greater risk of living in poverty, Hispanic children often face additional challenges such as language, cultural barriers, and stresses of adjusting to US society. There is a close relationship between education and poverty; the
lower rates of high school and college graduation in the Hispanic population translate into lower incomes for Hispanic families and higher proportions of Hispanic children living in poor families (Brindis et al., 2002c).

**Youth Programs**

According to Rodriguez and Morrobel (2002), despite the projections mentioned above youth development research has focused little attention to the research of Hispanic youth development demonstrated by a review of youth development research. To promote youth development among Hispanics, youth organizations must understand what their needs are and what competencies youth consider necessary for success. According to Garcia Coll et al. (2000), to implement an effective developmental program there is a need of an understanding of culturally specific values system, which includes knowledge about culture, family, and individual values.

Alba-Johnson (2003, p. 13) conducted a study that reported on a review of national youth organizations serving Hispanic middle and high school students. These programs represented a broad variety of emphases and services such as: after school, enrichment, arts, academic, leadership, employment, and mentoring. Outcomes reported by these organizations included: reduction of dropout rate level, higher measures, and a positive impact in youth’s self esteem, self image, and cultural awareness. Fourteen “best practices” were identified and are described below:

- Culturally sensitive and appropriate: help Hispanic youth navigate between different cultures and deal with challenges posed by racism and peer pressure. At the same time these programs impart a positive view of their own culture and respect for others. Some of the strategies/activities that they have used include: a) promoting accommodation without assimilation-helping them fit in a new culture without losing their cultural identity, b) providing bilingual bicultural services, c) employing staff with relevant backgrounds, d) promoting cultural values and cultural pride, and e) utilizing culturally driven curriculum.
- Resources to improve academic achievement: it is important to explicitly instruct Hispanic youth in the academic skills necessary to succeed in school. Some of the strategies/activities used are: a) providing formal instruction of academic skills necessary to succeed in school, b) developing well-planned and organized academic curriculum, c) providing tutoring and help with homework, and d) working toward impacting school practices.

- Responsive to the integral part of the individual: target each individual’s characteristics, as well as the characteristics of the environments in which young people live and function. The strategies/activities include: a) employing a holistic approach, b) approaching services comprehensively—recognizing that contexts such as family, schools, and community are important to consider and c) providing multiple services—be located where other services are also offered.

- Focus on the potential of the individual, not on the failures: provide value and support to youth by seeing and emphasizing their potential and assets. Also recognize and provide youth with positive feedback consistently.

- Positive role models: provide youth with role models and the support and nurturing of caring adults or older peers. Exposing youth to real and meaningful examples of success especially when adults are successful professionals or students and share the same ethnic background, has a positive impact on Hispanic youth. The strategies/activities include: a) helping youth develop positive relationships with adults, b) using real examples of success by having older peers and former participants work as mentors and tutors and c) engage staff, guest speakers, and parents as role models.

- Empowerment of youth and promotion of social responsibility: empower youth to take control of their life, to be able to resist negative influences, and to make a difference in their society. The strategies/activities include: a) placing students in responsible roles, b) providing opportunities for youth to participate actively in their community and c) including youth in the process of planning—youth contribute and participate in the design of civic and community activities.

- Provision of economic assistance and opportunities for career awareness: provide youth with economic assistance through stipends and scholarships that enable them to assist with household expenses and provide the means to go to college. The strategies/activities include: developing job skills and developing work and community based projects.

- Well defined program with high standards and high expectations: it is necessary to have clearly defined programs and service outcomes where the youth service providers are aware of the goals and take steps in the development, design, and management of their programs to measure progress. The strategies/activities include: a) conducting rigorous evaluation, b) promoting staff development and c) expecting participants to fulfill high standards.
• Introduction of participants to college culture: take time to advise and help youth on issues related to college such as admissions, financial aid applications, course requirements, and preparation courses; introducing Hispanic families and young people to the college culture. The strategies/activities include: a) providing field trips to colleges, b) externalizing hidden curriculum-teaching youth techniques that are key to academic success like test-taking, note taking and study skills, and c) promoting social and cultural capital.

• Safety and positive alternatives: create after-school opportunities for youth to participate in art, explore careers, provide services to others, improve their academic achievement, or simply have a place to be after school. The strategies/activities include creating a safe environment and providing positive alternatives and allowing for self-expression.

• Support and advocacy: emphasis on consistent, positive relationships and interactions between youth programs and supportive adults through low youth to staff ratios and one-on-one relationships. The strategies/activities include: a) providing close attention and true interest, b) advocating on behalf of participants, c) providing a continuum of care, d) creating family-like environments and e) building bridges between cultures-acting as mediators between Hispanic youth, their families and their schools.

• Sense of belonging: provide youth with a space where they can identify with a peer group and be recognized by others through public markers (notebooks, distinctive badges, or t-shirts) and promote voluntary associations where young people voluntarily decide to participate in a program.

• Encouragement of parental involvement: parents play an important role in the academic achievement, educational aspirations, and college planning behaviors of youth. The strategies/activities include: a) involving parents in the education of their children, b) maintaining close communication with parents, and c) encouraging involvement in all program activities.

• Establishment of partnerships: maintain solid connections and interactions with schools and communities where these collaborations foster the kind of support Hispanic youth and their families need to achieve their goals and improve their lives. The strategies/activities include: building partnerships with colleges and schools.

**Learning Styles**

According to Dunn and Griggs (1995), learning style is the way in which each person begins to concentrate on, process, and retain new and difficult information. Concentration occurs differently for different people at different times. It is important to
know many things about individual’s traits to determine what is most likely to trigger each adolescent’s concentration, energize his or her processing style, and intervene to increase long-term memory.

Research has recognized that teaching and counseling students with interventions that are congruent with the students’ learning style preferences result in their increased academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward learning (Acharya, 2002; Griggs & Dunn, 1996). Each cultural group tends to have some learning style elements that distinguish it from other cultural groups. Due to this, teachers, counselors and people who work with youth need to be aware of three critical factors: a) universal principles of learning do exist; b) culture influences both the learning process and its outcomes and, c) each adolescent has a unique learning style preference that affects his/her potential for achievement.

Griggs and Dunn (1996) stated that research on the learning styles of Hispanic-Americans in particular is limited. Within Hispanic groups, the majority of studies have focused on the learning styles of Mexican-American elementary school children. Several studies have compared various ethnic groups of students in elementary school through college level using a measure that identifies 21 elements of learning styles grouped into five categories.

- **Environmental learning style:** elements include sound, temperature, design and light. A cool temperature and formal design were identified as important elements for Mexican-American and Puerto Rican elementary and middle school students (Dunn, Griggs, & Price, 1993).

- **Emotional learning style:** elements include responsibility, structure, persistence, and motivation. A study reported that Mexican-American third and fourth graders were the least conforming of three ethnic groups studied.
• Sociological learning style: elements are concerned with the social pattern in which each student learns. Learning alone (as opposed to learning in groups) was preferred more by White non-Hispanic than by Mexican-American children. Mexican-American students require significantly more sociological variety as compared to African-Americans and White non-Hispanics. Mexican-American males are authority-oriented and the females are strongly peer-oriented.

• Physiological learning style: elements relate to time of day, food and drink intake, perception, and mobility. Puerto-Rican college students exhibit a strong preference for learning in the late morning, afternoon and evening. The time of day preferences of Mexican-Americans are less clear. White non-Hispanics prefer drinking and eating snacks while learning significantly more than Mexican-Americans. Hispanics’ strongest perceptual strength is kinesthetic, this means that they learn better through movement provided by practical and hands-on activities. Movement includes learn by doing, being involved in projects, discovery, role playing, real life activities, and learning standing up or using the large arm muscles to write as on flip chart or chalkboard.

• Psychological learning style: elements relate to global versus analytical processing. The construct of field dependence/independence is a component of this learning style. Field dependent individuals are more group oriented and cooperative and less competitive than field independent individuals. Research generally has indicated that Mexican-American and other minority children are more field dependent than non-minority children.

**Implications for counseling and teaching.** Counselors, teachers and 4-H agents can be aware that, Hispanic-Americans are a very diverse group and include distinct subcultures that differ significantly as to custom, value and educational orientation. For immigrant Hispanic adolescents, identity formation and individuation (process by which social individuals become differentiated one from the other) can be especially challenging and problematic. This is because their cultural values include strong family loyalty and allegiance, values that are in conflict with the behavioral styles of mainstream US adolescents who strive for self-expression and individuality. For Hispanic youth with identity related problems, group counseling with peers who are experiencing similar conflicts can be helpful (Griggs & Dunn, 1996).
Educators need to be aware of self-image problems of Hispanic-American students that may result from rejection of their ethnicity and from attempts to conform to the larger Anglo culture. To address these problems, educators can plan interventions that acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity when teaching and counseling Hispanic youth.

According to Jones, Reichard and Mokhtari (2003), increasing youth awareness of their own learning styles may be quite helpful for increasing control of their learning habits and strategies. This should, in turn, influence their academic performance. Since youth brings diverse personal experiences, knowledge bases, and learning styles to the classroom, their learning needs may require a mix of teaching and advising strategies. The best educators tend to be those who are able to use a range of teaching strategies and who use a range of interaction styles, rather than a single, rigid approach to teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Cultural Barriers

According to Zamboanga and Knoche (2003), understanding and addressing the needs of the Latino population is becoming increasingly important as the demographics of many communities in the US are changing. As previously mentioned, the changing demographics and distinct cultural factors relevant to Hispanics have prompted the necessity for culture-specific programming. In order to do this, people that aim at working with Hispanics have to be aware of factors such as:

- Education level: Hispanics tend to have less education than other ethnic groups.
- Language: the majority of American Hispanics speak Spanish at home. Bilingual staff are important to overcome this barrier.
- Poverty: the rate among all Hispanics was 22.6%, compared with the national average of poverty rate 12.4 percent.
• Lack of understanding of the American free enterprise system: language and cultural differences leave many Hispanics with little understanding of certain basic skills and concepts to operate businesses (i.e. marketing, tax laws and record keeping).

• Misunderstanding of cultural values: cultural values like personalism, familism, and machismo, must be understood and addressed.

Volunteerism

According to O’Connell and O’Connell (1989) the United States is a country where giving and volunteering is a pervasive characteristic of society. Research has shown that the typical adult volunteer is white, middle-aged and middle-class (Safrit, King, & Bursecu, 1993). According to Peterson, Bawden, Harrel, Hill, Mincy, Nightingale, Turner and Walker (1992), many of the critical issues facing contemporary urban communities directly affect non-white, limited resource, and younger and older adult populations. Consequently, Lopez and Safrit (2001) suggest that volunteer agencies and organizations should focus their efforts to identify and locate individuals within these population segments for targeted recruitment as program volunteers.

Fisher and Cole (as cited in Lopez & Safrit, 2001) suggested that regardless of Hispanic American’s long tradition of involvement in volunteer groups (trade and professional associations, and women’s and men’s clubs and unions) their numbers are underrepresented in contemporary volunteer programs. According to Hobbs (2000) in order to effectively and efficiently target and engage volunteers from the Hispanic community, volunteers programs must find ways to build relationships and establish trust within the community.

Research shows that Hispanics volunteer, but their contributions are not reflected in the various statistics gathered on volunteerism. Hispanics do not volunteer in the traditional American way. Their volunteerism first takes place within the family context
and secondly in the neighborhood and church as opposed to mainstream community
based organizations. In numerous Latin American countries, volunteering is seen as an
activity carried out by the wealthy on behalf of the poor. As result of that Hispanics do
not consider their contributions as volunteering (Hobbs, 2001). The success of volunteer
agencies and organizations in recruiting and retaining Hispanic volunteers depends on the
awareness and sensitivity to the cultural differences between the American society and
Hispanics.

**History of 4-H**

Through the 19th century, rural America set the social tone for the United States.
At the end of the century, young people were moving from the rural areas to the cities,
drawn by the potential for jobs. They saw no future in staying home and working in
agriculture. That is when people realized that young people needed skills to live and
work in their homesteads (N4H, 2006; Rasmussen, 1989). The first record of any known
4-H type activity was in 1898. Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell University inaugurated a
system of junior naturalist leaflets in rural schools and assisted in the organization of
nature study clubs (NDST Extension Service, 2005).

In 1902, a superintendent of Springfield Township Ohio rural schools named A.B.
Graham established the concepts of education in a club atmosphere in Ohio. In the early
1900’s he formed clubs that elected officers, focused on specific projects, held meetings
and kept records for their accomplishments (N4H, 2006; Seever et al., 1997). At the
same time, researchers that worked at the experiment stations of the land-grant
institutions and the United States Department of Agriculture realized that many farmers
were not interested in the new agricultural discoveries. Nevertheless, they found that
youth were willing to “experiment” with the discoveries and then share their experiences
with adults. In a way these clubs became a way to transmit the newest agricultural technology to the adults (Seever et al., 1997; Van Horn, Flanagan & Thomson, 1998).

The idea of rural clubs and educational demonstrations were popular and spread across the US and by 1905 the majority of the states had rural clubs. When Congress formed the Cooperative Extension Service with the Smith Lever Act in 1914, it included boys and girls clubs. These clubs were soon known as 4-H clubs (N4H, 2006).

**The 4-H Program**

Four-H is one of the current base programs of the CES, 4-H is the youth component that promotes the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of the school-age youth (Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 2006). The goal of the program is to help young people become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society (Collins, 1986; N4H, 2006). Four-H brings young people and their families together with volunteers, community members, and county level staff in a program that allows youth, families, volunteers and the community to learn and to grow. Youth acquire life skills and are guided by a concerned adult who is a volunteer leader. The 4-H members are actively involved in educational projects that are fun and that use quality curriculum that incorporate the most up-to-date research and knowledge available (N4H, 2006; Russell, 2001).

The 4-H program is characterized by the colors green and white. White represents purity and high ideals and green represents growth. The program also has a pledge to remind the 4-H’ers of the four areas that the program focuses on and emphasizes the significance of having the ability to develop life skills “*I Pledge ... My Head to clearer thinking, My Heart to greater loyalty, My Hands to larger service, and My Health to better living, For My Club, my Community, my Country and my World*” (N4H, 2006).
Four-H differs from other youth development organizations because of the method it uses when working with children. While recreation is important for youth and their development, 4-H employs recreation not as an end goal, but as one method of engaging youth in science based education. The history of 4-H has been defined by science based, nonformal educational activities that are family and community based. Four-H is science based not only with regard to the substantive content of the educational activity (such as science literacy, aerospace technology or animal science). It is also developmental science-based in its teaching methodologies that acknowledge the developing cognitive, behavioral, and social needs of children and adolescents. The curriculum is designed to be age appropriate, and to build and enhance skills over multiple years of involvement (Enfield, 2001; Van Horn et al., 1998).

According to Van Horn et al. (1998) 4-H was one of the first youth focused organizations to utilize nonformal education as a means of reaching youth. Nonformal education has some similarities to formal education, is based on a commitment to learning and knowledge acquisition, and therefore relies on carefully designed and scientifically sound curriculum and resources. Nevertheless, nonformal and formal education differ in the fact that one approach is based in a school building and the other one can take place anywhere in the community through clubs, camps, group meetings, sporting or arts activities, or youth led events (Table 2-1).

Nonformal education is developmentally beneficial because it involves:

- Personal choice: Activities that encourage youth to choose their programs and projects are important because they offer youth the flexibility and freedom to explore their interests. When youth can choose the activities in which they participate, they have opportunities to practice and develop decision-making skills. These activities also encourage youth to clarify their interests and values.
Experiential learning/Hands-on learning: Activities to foster the development of knowledge and skills. This has been a key characteristic of 4-H programs; the activities are designed to be engaging and interactive as they sequentially build skill sets. This active learning helps youth build confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Development of personal relationships: Not only among youth but also between youth and caring adults. Through interaction with multiple caring adults outside the family, young people receive guidance, direction, and feedback that reinforces or builds on the effort of parents and extended family. Finally, access to multiple adult role models in addition to parents benefits youth emotionally, scholastically and interpersonally.

The 4-H Delivery Methods

According to the 4-H 101 manual (N4H, 2006), 4-H uses a variety of methods for reaching youth with opportunities that help them grow and develop in positive ways. A brief description of the most commonly used methods is provided.

- Organized clubs: an organized group of youth with officers and a planned program that is carried-on through all or several months of the year.

- Special interest, short-term, or day camps: these delivery groups are usually short-term and consist of members organized to work on one project or subject matter area, which is not part of a school curriculum. They have an informal structure and do not elect officers or plan long-term projects. Special interest groups meet for a specific learning experience involving one or more sessions with direct teaching by the 4-H agent, volunteers, or teachers.

- Overnight camps: this delivery is a group experience that includes the youth participant being away from home at least one night in a resident, primitive, or travel camping experience. They are not restricted to members of organized 4-H clubs. They have a clear educational or youth development purpose and meet the curriculum criteria.

- School enrichment: these programs are coordinated with schools personnel and use selected 4-H learning materials as part of the school curriculum during school hours. They may involve one or more sessions and should involve teaching and/or other activities led by 4-H agents, volunteers, and teachers.

- Individual study, mentoring, or family learning: this includes individual youth who live in remote areas or prefer to work alone on a 4-H project experience. Mentoring activities include individual youth and adults working closely on a specialized project or activity that is not associated with a 4-H unit experience.
Family learning includes an organized curriculum or experience that is delivered by parents to only their children and family members.

**Urban 4-H Programming**

In the beginning, 4-H evolved as a way of involving farm youth in practical hands on learning of agriculture and home economics subjects relevant to their lives and community. Taking into account the complexity of economic, social and environmental issues 4-H has changed in several significant ways in the last 100 years (Kress, 2004). In addition, population shifts from rural to urban areas challenge extension to expand and redefine its traditional programs emphases to be meaningful to, and therefore supported by, a mostly urban audience (Schaefer, Huegel & Mazzoti, 1992). As a consequence, the need to develop urban 4-H programs has been recognized in several states.

Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) acknowledged the need to redefine their traditional 4-H programs in order to reach their urban population. During the 1990’s census estimates made it clear the need to examine educational programming in urban counties. According to the census, about 50% of the 16.8 million Texas residents lived in six counties: Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Bend, Harris, Terrant and Travis (Fehlis, 1992; Texas Cooperative Extension, 2006). As a result the 1990 Urban Initiative was created to provide urban counties with 4-H programs that focused on their specific needs. Currently Travis County has the Aerospace Camp that is a week-long summer camp. The Aerospace Camp began 12 years ago as a part of the Capital 4-H project. The 4-H Capital project is an effort to take 4-H programs to inner city youth. The main objective is to take 4-H programs to youth if youth does not engage in 4-H programs.

During the school year Capital 4-H carries out after-school programs/projects and as part of the outreach component the Aerospace Camp is held during the summer. The
Aerospace Camp is a science and technology camp that includes activities such as:
building rockets, solar cars and exploring global positioning systems. It also enables
children to explore astronomy through the star lab. Parents credit this type of program
with increasing their children’s positive development with statements such as “4-H
instills a sense of integrity, self reliance and community spirit while the children are
being educated and having fun.”

In order to reach urban underserved youth University of Minnesota Extension has
implemented a site-based youth development programming within the Minnesota Urban
4-H Youth Development. This type of programming is an innovative method that aims to
reach underserved youth with accessible, high quality, educational youth development
programming. Each site is a public or subsidized housing neighborhood with a
community center serving as the hosting location for the 4-H program. The site-based
youth development programs are developed from the community up rather than from the
program down. Residents of the community provide input into the program-development
process. As a result, the program reflects the community in terms of design, methods,
and curricula. (Skuza, 2004; University of Minnesota Extension, 2006). This type of
programming requires collaboration. A partnership was formed between Urban 4-H
Youth Development and housing agencies in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The housing
sites provide facilities, volunteer, and program supplies, as well as transportation through
their extended partnerships. Through collaboration, the reach and impact of
programming is increased without duplicating programs of increasing costs (Skuza,
2004).
Cornell University Cooperative Extension in New York City (CUCE-NYC) designs projects and brings together resources in their programs to develop competencies and skills through age appropriate activities. The programs try to strengthen the foundation skills of youth literacy, science, technology and math. It also tries to enhance the personal development of youth and build leadership skills. The CUCE-NYC works closely with partners to develop and implement educational programs that use innovative, science-based and hands-on learning strategies. One of the most successful programs is the Garden Mosaics and Urban Agriculture program. In the program, youth gain and demonstrate horticultural science and urban agricultural skills, while conducting environmental and community development projects that benefit their community. In 2005 more than 150 Bronx-based educators and youth learned about the Garden Mosaics program. Youth learned about the value of community gardens as neighborhood resources and gained an appreciation for the relationship between their local environment and their health and well-being (Cornell University Cooperative Extension, 2005).

**The 4-H Clubs**

According to the 4-H 101 manual (N4H, 2006), the 4-H club serves as the primary means of delivering youth development programming in 4-H. It has the advantage of providing long-term involvement with the support of “caring” adults. Youth are reluctant to take ownership in groups or establish relationships with leaders when they appear temporary. Four-H clubs are organized and supported to be there for youth throughout their developmental years. While the other delivery methods are effective, the more in-depth experiences occur in and through the club.

The goals and structure of the clubs vary according to the need of the members they serve. Some clubs offer a selection of projects delivered through project meetings held at
times outside the clubs. Some clubs have a singular focus such as community service clubs, or they target a specific audience such as tribal reservation clubs or after-school clubs or home-school clubs. But there are elements and characteristics that are common to all 4-H clubs and these are:

- An organized group of youth.
- A planned program that is ongoing throughout all or most of the year.
- Advised by adult staff or volunteers.
- Typically elects officers.
- May meet in any location.
- Includes opportunities to learn skills through a variety of project experiences.
- Offers opportunities for leadership, citizenship/community service, and public speaking.

Impact of 4-H

Many people describe what is learned in 4-H as ‘life skills.” In other words, 4-H teaches young people skills that will help them lead a productive life (Dubas & Snider, 1993). Parents, other adult volunteer leaders, extension agents, peers, and others associated with 4-H programs have a direct impact on the youth involved. Learning life skills through 4-H is a youth development process. Through learning life skills, youth are developing in areas such as leadership, citizenship, and community service.

The impact of 4-H has been recognized in several studies. Ladewig and Thomas (1987) conducted a national telephone survey of 710 former 4-H members, 743 former members of other youth organizations, and 309 non-participants in youth organizations. The goal was to compare youth organizations and their impact on youth development. Those who had joined 4-H and other youth groups were similar in personal life skills characteristics, but different from the non-participants. Four-H participants were found to have significant development in the life skills areas of knowledge and self-worth. Four-H alumni were significantly higher in the following areas than the other youth
organizations’ participant regarding: making decisions and freedom to develop skills. No significant difference between 4-H participation and other youth organizations participation was found in the following areas: planning activities and making a contribution. This study suggests that participation in 4-H and other youth organizations had a positive impact on life skill development.

Matulis, Hedges, Barrick and Smith (1988), conducted a study in Ohio, and mailed questionnaires to a random sample of 275 4-H alumni. The questions consisted of three areas of 4-H impact: self-awareness, career awareness, exploration, and selection; and work competency development. Alumni credit the 4-H program with increasing their self-awareness by identifying with the statements such as “I discovered things I enjoy doing” and “I discovered things I did well.” The impact of 4-H on career awareness, exploration and selection was assessed through statements such as, “I learned that things I enjoyed doing could lead to a career,” and “I expanded my knowledge of people or materials available to explore careers of interest to me.”

Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992), compared 4-H and non-4-H youth in their leadership life skills. The study sample consisted of 309 randomly selected Texas 4-H members between the ages of 13 and 19 and 558 non-4-H youth in randomly selected schools. The survey instrument consisted of 21 leadership life skills statements in five measurements scales. Results of the study found 4-H club members to be significantly higher than non-4-H youth in the level of attainment of all five of the life skills measurement scales: leadership, communicating, working with groups, understanding self, and making decisions.
Mead, Rodriguez, Hirschl, & Goggin (1999), conducted a two year study that focused on understanding the impact that 4-H club involvement has had in New York State. Among the findings of this study are: participation in 4-H has a positive effect in the development of life skills, youth do better in school, and they are more motivated to help others. Youth also developed skills in leadership, public speaking, self-esteem, communication and planning, and they are able to make long-lasting friendships. They also developed a positive relationship with caring adults such as parents, volunteers and extension agents. The participants also indicated that their clubs provided them with a safe environment, where they were able to spend time with their friends and work on the different projects.

Thomas (2004), conducted a study to determine if Florida 4-H participants were attaining positive youth development outcomes through their participation in 4-H. Five counties were selected and the sample youth were between the ages of 13 and 18 years. Independent variable measured were degree of participation, non-4-H time, and participant’s demographics. Dependent variables for measuring positive youth development outcomes consisted of the constructs of relationships, safe environment, belonging, service and leadership, self-development and positive identity. When correlated to the degree of participation all the constructs showed a positive correlation with belonging, service and leadership, self-development and positive identity showing a significant correlation. The study showed that 4-H members feel that 4-H provides them with positive relationships, a sense of belonging, a safe environment, an opportunity for service and leadership, for self-development, and it creates a positive identity.
Outreach to Hispanics

As previously mentioned, Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. For this reason CES has seen the need to encourage teaching, research, and outreach activities that can enhance the well-being and success of this population. The need to increase Hispanic enrollment in 4-H programs has been recognized in several states.

Oregon State University (OSU) Extension acknowledged the need to increase Hispanic participation and to design programs more accessible to them. In 1996 a survey was conducted among 4-H agents in counties with the most significant Hispanic population asking them why Hispanic youth was not participating in their programs. The main reasons were: agents did not speak Spanish and could not communicate with them, the lack of understanding of the culture and outreach is time consuming. These responses were taking into account and in 1997 OSU extension funded the Oregon Outreach Program, the program has been successful and today 13 of their 36 counties have Hispanic outreach efforts (Oregon State University Extension Service, 2006).

The key to OSU extension’s success in engaging Hispanics are that the 4-H agents are ready to make a long-term commitment to actively participate in outreach, extension administration’s commitment and support at all levels, and the support of the extension audience. Another factor that has contributed to their success is staffing for outreach this translates into hiring people who are bilingual/bicultural. Retaining the bilingual/bicultural staff is a challenge there needs to be constant communication among the staff, recognition by valuing their knowledge and experience and promoting a sense of community.
University of California Cooperative Extension 4-H developed in Santa Barbara County “Agua Pura” in collaboration with the County’s Project Clean Water. This project engages Hispanics and their families in watershed and water quality issues by integrating their needs, issues and concerns through hands-on educational experiences, and service projects. The project has involved approximately 3,500 youth, and it has reinforced the sense of family by having the parents train their children in working the land and having children train their parents in using computers. Among the accomplishments of the projects are that many youth participants have gone onto college education and elected majors such as business, technology and science related fields. The participants have expressed that their involvement in the project helped them developed new work skills and self-confidence (University of California Davis, 2006).

University of Illinois Extension formed a partnership with the Hispanic/Latino Coalition of Will and Grundy Counties (HLC) to develop programs that address the needs of the Hispanics rather than just one project with a limited audience. The HCL agreed to co-sponsor a summer camp for Hispanic children to expose them to extension 4-H youth development programs. The camp was designed for 5 days from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. based on a camp clover curriculum. The morning session, Monday through Thursday, focused on three specific topics: Que Rico-Latino Cultural Arts, Food Guide Pyramid Revisited, and Aerospace Adventures; the 4-H pledge was recited in English and Spanish. The afternoon program consisted of a variety of physical fitness activities, including soccer, volleyball, basketball, judo, and jump rope. The activities for Friday included a morning session of hands-on science and physical activities, with recognition and concluding ceremonies in the afternoon. The camp has demonstrated that extension
programs can be effectively carried out in Hispanic communities (Farner, Cutz, Farner, Seibold, & Abuchar, 2006)

**Summary**

This literature review chapter was comprised of: youth development and how it has evolved through time and what are the main characteristics of a good youth development program. It also describes what 4-H is, and what it can offer to youth through their core program. Finally it provides a broad overview of the current situation of Hispanics and especially youth in the United States. Literature documents that taking into account Hispanics current demographic and their status as a minority is important when developing youth development programs. Four-H could be a good alternative for Hispanics to participate in youth development programs, since it can provide Hispanic youth with a safe environment and allow children to socialize and get involved in valuable after-school activities.

### Table 2-1: Formal versus nonformal education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal Education</th>
<th>Nonformal Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committed to learning</td>
<td>Committed to learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefully planned curriculum</td>
<td>Carefully planned curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes place in a physical building</td>
<td>Occurs anywhere in a community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on standards for knowledge</td>
<td>Based on community/youth interests and needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified teachers</td>
<td>Training professionals and volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth are tested and grades</td>
<td>Youth accomplishments are recognized and celebrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Russell (2001)
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology used to accomplish the objectives of the study will be explained. The three objectives for this study were to describe the perceptions and impacts of traditional 4-H clubs among Hispanic members and their parents, to describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of traditional 4-H clubs in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County, and to describe the perceptions of 4-H professionals regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County. The research design, target population, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis will be explained.

Research Design

This is a descriptive study, in that it is describing the Hispanic 4-H members and their parent’s perceptions regarding their participation in traditional 4-H clubs. It also describes the perceptions of non-4-Hers and their parents regarding 4-H programs offered in Miami-Dade County. The study also describes the perceptions of 4-H professionals regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County. This study used focus groups and interviews with 4-H agents to accomplish the objectives of the study.

The researcher developed four different interview guides for the focus groups and a structured interview guide for the 4-H agents. The interview guide was designed for current Hispanic 4-H members of a traditional 4-H club. The second interview guide was for parents of current 4-H members of a traditional 4-H club. The third interview guide was designed to collect information from non-4-Hers that reside in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County. The fourth interview guide was for parents of non-4-Hers.
Given that this study was primarily descriptive, qualitative methods were utilized for the data collection. With qualitative methods participants are interviewed and observed in their natural settings. The researcher is able to get a firsthand look at the settings as the participants describe them. It also allows participants to raise topics and issues the researcher did not anticipate but yet be important to the study. The participants are allowed to express their feelings and perspectives and clarify any information that the researcher does not understand. Qualitative data collection provides an environment where the researcher and the participants are directly involved and where the information gathering techniques can become a learning process for both parties (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Myers, 1997).

The researcher accomplished objectives one and two by using focus groups. The advantage of using focus groups is that this method possesses elements of the two major techniques used by researchers to collect qualitative data that are participant observation and individual interviews. Basically focus groups are a way of listening to people and learning from them (Morgan, 1998). Focus groups create multiple lines of communication; the group setting offers participants a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs and attitudes among people from their same background (Madriz, 2000). The third objective was accomplished through interviews; this method is one of the most widely used for obtaining qualitative data. Interviews enable the researcher to gather information from the participants regarding their opinions, beliefs, and feelings about the situation in their own words (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002).

**Population**

This research relied on a nonprobability sampling technique called purposive sampling, where the researcher selected the participants based on the objectives of the
study and the potential contributions of the participants. This study consisted of five populations of participants: a) 4-H members of a traditional 4-H club in Miami-Dade County, b) parents of current 4-H members of a traditional 4-H club in Miami-Dade County, c) non-4-Hers of the southwest area of Miami-Dade County, d) parents of non-4-Hers of the southwest area of Miami-Dade County and e) 4-H professionals of Miami-Dade County. The researcher purposely selected the southwest area of Miami-Dade County because of the high concentration of Hispanics in that area.

**The 4-H Members**

The participants for this focus group were recruited by contacting the 4-H agent in Miami-Dade County. The agent and the researcher worked closely to select a club that primarily consisted of Hispanics. Due to the low participation of Hispanics in traditional 4-H clubs in Miami-Dade County, the researcher was not able to work with a traditional club that was made up only of Hispanics. The club selected for the study was very diverse and the one that had the highest Hispanic participation. Eleven members of the club voluntarily and with their parent’s permission participated in the focus group. Out of the eleven participants six were Hispanic, three were African-American and two were White. Regarding gender, three were male and eight were female. The focus group was conducted entirely in English.

**Parents of 4-H Members**

The participants of this focus group were recruited by contacting the 4-H agent in Miami-Dade County. Since the parents had to be contacted to request permission for the children to participate in the 4-H focus group, they were also presented with the idea of participating in the study. A total of ten parents voluntarily participated in the study. Out of the participants eight were Hispanic and two were White. More than one parental
member of two of the Hispanic 4-H members participated in the focus group. Regarding
gender five were male and five were female. The focus group was conducted in English
and Spanish because some participants were not fluent in English.

**Non-4-H Members**

In order to recruit the participants for this focus group, the researcher contacted
various schools and Hispanic churches in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County.
Finally the researcher was able to establish rapport with a youth pastor of a well establish
Baptist Church in the area. The researcher went on to explain to the pastor the purpose of
the study and solicited support to recruit participants. The pastor contacted the principal
of a nearby school and asked if they would be willing to participate in the study. The
principal and the researcher worked closely to select the participants. A total of eleven
students voluntarily and with their parent’s permission participated in the focus group.
Out of the eleven participants all were Hispanic and regarding gender three were male
and eight were female. The focus group was conducted entirely in English.

**Parents of non-4-H Members**

These participants were recruited at the same time as the non-4-H members. Since
the parents had been contacted through the youth pastor and the principal of the school to
request permission for their children to participate in the non-4-H focus group, they were
presented with the idea of participating in the study. A total of nine parents voluntarily
participated in the study. All the participants were Hispanic; five were female and four
male. The focus group was conducted in English and Spanish because some participants
were not fluent in English.
The 4-H Professionals

The researcher automatically selected two 4-H professionals of Miami-Dade County. The researcher interviewed a 4-H agent and a program assistant, and they were both females. Regarding race one was White and the other one was Hispanic. Even though both participants were fluent in English one interview was conducted Spanish. The participants felt more comfortable conducting the interview in their mother tongue.

Instrumentation

In order to collect the necessary data to complete the study, the researcher developed an instrument for each group of participants: 4-H members, parents of 4-H members, non-4-H members, parents of non-4-H members and 4-H agents. The researcher developed these instruments after reviewing The Focus Group Guidebook (Morgan, 1998). The questions for the focus groups consisted of five types of questions as noted in Table 3-1.

The researcher developed a moderator’s assent text for focus groups with participants under eighteen and one for the adults. The assent basically outlined the moderator’s introduction; it gave a brief explanation of the study and established the ground rules that were going to be followed during the session (Appendix B & C).

4-H members. The researcher developed an interview guide that collected data from 4-H members in reference of their perceptions of 4-H, their perceptions regarding the benefits of participating in a 4-H club as well as their perceptions on how 4-H can increase their enrollment in 4-H clubs (Appendix D).

Parents of 4-H members. The researcher developed an interview guide that targeted parents of 4-H members. It was used to collect information regarding the
participants overall perceptions of the program, what is effective and ineffective as well as how they think their children benefit from the program (Appendix E).

**Non-4-H members and parents of non-4-H members.** The researcher developed an interview guide for non-4-H members and another set for parents of non-4-H members. These instruments were designed to collect information from non-4-H members and their parents. They were utilized to gather information about their knowledge of 4-H, their degree of desire of participating in a youth program like 4-H, as well as, the elements a 4-H club should have in order for them to become members (Appendix F & G).

**4-H professionals.** A structured interview guide was developed for 4-H professionals. It was used to collect information about current programs they offer within the county, perceptions regarding Hispanics, as well as the barriers and obstacles they foresee working with this group (Appendix H).

Given that this is a qualitative study, validity, credibility, transferability and dependability were taken into account by the researcher. Validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure (Ary et al., 2002). For this purpose, a panel of two experts from the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication and one expert from the Family, Youth and Community Sciences Department at the University of Florida reviewed the five instruments developed.

Credibility is known to be how well the researcher has established confidence in the findings based on the research design, participants, and context (Ary et al., 2002). In order to enhance the credibility of the study the researcher used the method of referential or interpretive adequacy. According to Johnson and Christensen (as cited in Ary, et al.,
this method refers to “accurately portraying the degree to which the participant’s viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood and portrayed.” The two strategies used by the researcher to enhance referential adequacy were the following:

**Member checks.** This is basically participant’s feedback. At the end of the data collection period, the researcher shared her interpretations of the data with the participants. This enabled the researcher to clear up any miscommunication, identified inaccuracies, and obtained additional data.

**Low inference descriptors.** It is the use of direct quotations that is described as exactly what the participants said; it is extracted from the field notes. This will help the reader experience the participant’s world.

Transferability is defined as the degree to which the results of the research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Trochim, 2000). The researcher addressed this by providing great detail and description of the context of the study to allow future researchers the ability of deciding to “transfer” the results to a different context.

Dependability is known as when the consistency is examined as to the extent to which variation can be tracked and explained (Ary, et al., 2002). The researcher addressed dependability by using a strategy audit trail. The audit trail contained the raw data gathered through the focus groups and interviews.

**Data Collection Procedure**

A review of the study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) preceded the data collection. The IRB-02, located at the University of Florida, reviews non-medical research proposals for ethical soundness. The IRB approved the research proposal and
assigned an IRB protocol number (2005-U-805) for the study. The researcher presented each participant with an informed consent form letter prior to each focus group and interview, an example is provided in Appendix I. The informed consent described the study, the researcher, and any potential risk associated with participating in the study would require, and they were informed there was no compensation for their participation. Participants decided to participate voluntarily in the study and by signing the form that they confirmed their acceptance of the terms. The data collection occurred during the months of March, April and May 2006. The focus groups lasted from 1½ to 2 hours and the interviews from 30 minutes to an hour. Formal review of the data occurred during June through July 2006.

Prior to hosting the focus groups with 4-H members and their parents the researcher worked closely with the 4-H agent, 4-H leader and parents. In order to establish trust and rapport the researcher provided the 4-H agent and 4-H leader with a copy of the proposal of the study outlining the study objectives and the procedures in addition to a copy of the instruments. Providing the 4-H agent and 4-H leader with a copy of the proposal allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the adults and was able to answer any questions they had regarding the whole process before involving the children in the study.

Then the researcher proceeded to explain that the 4-H member focus group and the parent’s focus group were going to be held on different days. The focus groups were held on different days because the researcher wanted to create a more comfortable environment for the participants. Once the adults had agreed to participate in the study and also allow their children to do so, they continued to establish the dates and time each focus group was going to take place. It was agreed that the 4-H members focus group
was going to be held after one of their monthly meetings. The parents focus groups were held three weeks later. A pizza party was hosted before the parents focus group, this was done so adults, children and the researcher could socialize and create a friendly and comfortable environment.

On the days the focus groups were hosted the researcher arrived 1-1 ½ hour ahead of time. She met with the 4-H agent and 4-H leader to go over the process that was going to be followed. Being there ahead of time allowed the researcher to socialize with the children before starting the focus group. It also permitted her to determine the layout of the equipment for the room. Prior to the club’s monthly meeting the researcher was introduced by the 4-H leader to the children. The researcher introduced herself and gave the children an overview of the study and what the focus group was going to consist of. She also made it very clear that participation was completely voluntarily and that they could withdraw from the group at any point in time without an explanation.

Following the monthly meeting held by the 4-H club, only the children that wanted to participate in the study stayed. Before starting the focus group the researcher introduced the observer, explained to the children the dynamics of a focus group, and informed them that they were going to be recorded. The researcher explained to the participants that they were going to sit around a table, and that each of them was going to pick out a nickname so they could have confidentiality while being recorded. As a result of selecting nicknames the children were more at ease because it was clear to them that there were no right or wrong answers and that they were not being evaluated. Furthermore, the researcher explained to the children that they had to raise their hand and
say their nickname before answering a question. Finally the researcher explained and went over the informed consent with the children.

The same process was followed with the focus groups of non-4-H members and their parents. They differed in the fact that the researcher made contact with a pastor of a church. Through the pastor the researcher was able to contact the principal of a Christian school and coordinate a meeting. The fact that the pastor was involved in the process gave credibility to study. Consequently, the principal and the parents were more willing to participate and collaborate with the researcher.

**Moderating the focus group.** At the beginning of each focus group, the moderator established rapport immediately by thanking the participants for coming and letting them know that without them the study would not be possible. Once the participants and the moderators had picked out their nicknames, the moderator went ahead and established ground rules and showed them where the refreshments and the restroom were. After the introductions and general purpose of the focus groups was reiterated, warm-up questions were asked in order to facilitate discussion. As participants became more comfortable with the discussion, the moderator became more specific. When the stipulated time period was almost up, the moderator began to wrap up the session by summarizing the discussion to make sure she had interpreted correctly what the participants had said. Finally the moderator provided a significant closing statement, thanked the participants for their time and assured them that their responses were going to be completely confidential. The researcher also gave participants thank you notes and souvenirs from her home country to show them her gratitude for their participation in the study.
The researcher coordinated and scheduled the interviews with the 4-H professionals according to their work agenda. The interviews were done in places where both the participants and the researcher were comfortable and at ease. This made it easier for the researcher because it was more like a conversation rather than an interview.

**Data Analysis**

The focus groups and the interviews were taped (audio only) then they were professionally transcribed by Document Express. The researcher used domain analysis to analyze the data. The first step that followed was the translation of conversations that were held in Spanish to English. Subsequently the researcher read through the transcripts and colored-coded (marker technique) each question and the discussion that was associated with each question. The use of the marker technique allowed the researcher to identify when there was a topic change in the transcript. Next the researcher conducted an initial coding by generating numerous category codes reading over the transcriptions. Since the codes are not always mutually exclusive, a piece of text might be assigned several codes. After the initial coding the researcher moved on to focused coding by eliminating, combining or subdividing coding categories. The researcher looked for repeating ideas and major themes that connected codes. This classification was possible with the help of the marker technique in which similar responses are highlighted with a marker of a certain color which represents a certain code.

Once the data was coded the researcher went on to arrange the data according to the study objectives using the cut-and-paste methodology (Stewart & Shamdasami, 1990). This method allowed the researcher to distribute and organize the data collected under each objective. Major themes emerged under each objective and conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the data.
Summary

This chapter described the study in terms of the research design, the population of the study, the instrumentation, and data analysis procedure. In summary, this is a descriptive study that provides an insight of the perceptions and the impacts of traditional 4-H club among its members and their parents. It also describes the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest among potential Hispanic members, and it finally describes the perceptions of the 4-H extension agent in Miami-Dade County regarding Hispanics. The populations under study included 4-H members and their parents; non 4-H members and their parents as well as the 4-H extension agents. The primary methods used to gather the information for this study were focus groups and interviews. The results of the study were analyzed using the domain analysis method.

Table 3-1: Categories of question for focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Designed to be answered quickly and identify characteristics participants have in common. Participants get acquainted and feel connected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>Introduce the general topic of discussion and/or provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on experiences and their connections with the overall topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Move the conversation toward the key questions that drive the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Drive the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending</td>
<td>Bring closure to the discussion; enable participants to reflect on previous comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Morgan (1998)
The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of Hispanic parents and youth about 4-H programs offered by the Cooperative Extension Service Miami Dade County. Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups, were used to collect data in answering the objectives identified in Chapter 1. The objectives were to:

- Describe the perceptions and impacts of traditional 4-H clubs among Hispanic members and their parents.
- Describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of 4-H clubs in the Southwest area of Miami-Dade County.
- Describe the perceptions of 4-H professionals regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County.

**Participants**

This study consisted of five different groups of participants (a) 4-H members, (b) parents of 4-H members, (c) non 4-H members, (d) parents of non 4-H members, and (e) 4-H professionals. Each group of participants had certain characteristics regarding age, race, gender and year of involvement in 4-H.

Four focus groups were conducted; demographic data collected was limited due to the confidential nature of the focus group environment. Tables 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4 present the known demographic information of participants in this study. The focus groups consisted of: a) 4-H members, b) Parents of 4-H members, c) Non 4-H members;
and d) Parents of non 4-H members. In addition, interviews were conducted with two 4-H professionals.

4-H members. Overall three males and nine females participated in the focus group. Ages ranged from nine to 15 years of age, and their involvement in 4-H clubs ranged from four months to eight years. Out of the eleven participants, six were Hispanic; three were African-American, and two were White.

Parents of 4-H members. Overall five males and five females participated in the focus group discussion. The participants involvement in the 4-H club with their children ranged from two years to 12 years. Out of ten participants eight were Hispanic and two were White.

Non-4-H members. Overall three males and eight females participated in the focus group discussion. Participants’ ages ranged from eight to 13 years, and school grade ranged from third to seventh grade. All the participants in this group lived in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County and were Hispanic.

Parents of non-4-H members. Four males and five females participated in the focus group discussion. They all lived in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County and were Hispanic.

4-H professionals. Two females participated in the semi-structured interviews, one was Hispanic and the other participant was White. Both had been involved with 4-H (as a member or professionals) for at least 15 years. One was an extension agent and the other one was a program assistant.

Objective 1

Objective one was to describe the perceptions and impacts of traditional 4-H clubs among Hispanics members and parents. In order to achieve the objective, two different
focus groups were conducted; one with the 4-H members and the second one with the parents of 4-H members. In the focus group with 4-H members, six themes emerged, and in the focus group with the parents of 4-H members four themes emerged as described in Table 4-5.

4-H Members Perceptions and Impacts of 4-H

At the beginning of the focus group discussion, participants were asked to define 4-H. Once it was defined the researcher went on to uncover how they initially found out and how they got involved in the 4-H club. Then the researcher continued to determine what the participants thought about participating in the 4-H club and whether their participation in the club had any positive or negative consequences. The participants were also asked to reveal what they thought that their 4-H club needed to be a perfect 4-H club. Finally the participants advised the researcher on how to encourage other children to participate in a 4-H club. The major themes that were identified among the children were as follows:

4-H is agriculture and fun

When the participants were asked to describe what 4-H was to them, participants linked 4-H to agriculture and fun activities. They also described how being in 4-H has allowed them to develop an appreciation for agriculture even when they live in an urban county. Some of the participants expressed that before joining the 4-H club they had never had contact with farm animals or agriculture. The majority of participants do not live on a farm. Participating in the 4-H club has given them the opportunity to have contact with nature and learn about the anatomy of animals.

Simultaneously, they have established relationships with other children and adults. Being part of a 4-H club had provided the participants an opportunity to learn about other
cultures as well as given them a chance to learn about hard work and the benefits that agriculture has for everyone. Some of the statements provided by the participants when asked the questions “When you hear the word 4-H what come to mind?” and “Tell us what you think the purpose of 4-H is” are as follow.

- I think about agriculture and people wanting to learn about it as well.
- At 4-H we meet friends, you get money and we gain an animal friend.
- I think about the unity you know how everyone comes together.
- The purpose of 4-H is having fun with the animals that you choose.
- The purpose of 4-H is that you learn a lot about the animals and the different breeds and all that.
- I think 4-H is about an after-school program where you can come and you can learn about something that you like and you want to understand more.
- The purpose of 4-H is for people of all around to come together and get smart about many different things.
- 4-H in my opinion is for kids to have fun, stay out of trouble and for communities to come together and for kids to learn more about their community and environment around them.
- What I like about 4-H is that we get to meet new friends and their animals. You have fun with the animals too and we get to earn money and prizes when we go to the fair.

**Learning about 4-H**

The participants were asked the question “Let’s talk about how you first found out about 4-H.” The majority of the participants found out by word-of-mouth. Participants revealed that in some cases their friends told them about the 4-H club. Other participants learned about 4-H because their cousins or other family members were already involved with the program. According to some participants they found out about 4-H by accident because they were not seeking information about the 4-H program. Several participants learned about the 4-H program through the county fair. They were visiting the fair and
saw children working with animals and competing for prices. This situation caught their attention, and they decided to approach the extension agent to find out how they could be involved in similar activities. Some of the statements provided by the participants were:

- I found out about 4-H ‘cause my cousin. My first time I went with him he took me here (4-H meeting) and I just started getting involved with 4-H.
- I found out because my sister was in 4-H and then she took me here (4-H meeting).
- My friend told me about 4-H.
- My uncle told me about 4-H and I decided to participate.
- Six years ago or I should say seven, I was at the youth fair and I saw a lamb giving birth, and I saw a bunch of kids working with animals and I wanted to know how to do that and that’s when I found my 4-H leader and I’ve been in it ever since. It’s quite addicting.
- I found about the club when I went to the fair with my parents.

**Youth involvement**

Overall the participants have been involved in the 4-H club from four months to eight years and the majority of them were involved in at least one more program or activity besides the 4-H club. Many of the participants were part of a program called “5,000 role models of excellence” which is a dropout prevention and intervention program for minority young boys “at-risk” of dropping out of school and/or choosing a life of crime. It is sponsored by the Miami Dade County School Board.

Other participants were part of the “Leadership for Excellence” program in school. Children in this program give talks to other children on how to focus on positive rather than on negative activities. Furthermore, some participants volunteer in Marine Animal Rescue Society (MARS), an organization dedicated to the conservation of marine animals through, rescue, rehabilitation, research, and education.
Several participants were involved in sports, dance, and acting clubs. Other participants have also been camp counselors, members of a judging team, and leaders of their 4-H club. All the participants are actively involved in the fair activities in Miami Dade County. The participants help each other out with their projects to show in the fair, which allows them to develop teambuilding skills as well as the importance of cooperation. Some of statements provided by the participants were as follows:

- I’m the president and I’m also in the judging team.
- I’m part of 5,000 role models of excellence.
- Next Wednesday I’m going to a club and talk about animals. I give presentations to the different 4-H clubs and talk about animals. I help at the fair and I help out basically where the Clovergirl (extension agent) needs me at that point in time.
- In school; I’m part of the Leadership for Excellence group that my counselor helps and what we do is like we talk about kids doing bad stuff and what they should do, the good stuff.
- I’m in a dance team in my high school and I do acting class in John Robert’s Followers.
- I’m in the soccer team at school.
- I’m an active volunteer with the Marine Animal Rescue Society, which rescues, rehabilitates and releases whales and dolphins for the most part, but marine animals of all sorts. Then I’m also an active volunteer of species of wildlife, which is wildlife sanctuary, which takes in lions, tigers, bears, you name it. I’m also a camp counselor.

**Development of life skills**

Participants were asked to describe the benefits of their participation in 4-H. After analyzing the results and transcriptions the researcher identified the following benefits described below:

**Development of life skills.** The majority agreed that 4-H has helped them develop life skills. Overall the participants stated that working with the animal projects has helped them to become more responsible, disciplined and dedicated. This is a direct
result of the fact that the participants are in charge of feeding, bathing, showing and selling their animal each year.

Development of public speaking and leadership skills. Participants agree that sharing information with the general public on their animal’s weight gain, breed and the different benefits of raising an animal have enhanced their skills.

Learning and accepting diversity. Participants agree that participating actively in the 4-H club has facilitated them to be more aware and at ease with the diversity of their community, it has also taught them about different cultures and being able to do teamwork.

Establishing long lasting relationships. Some of the participants stated that in the clubs they had really good friends and this provided them with a good supportive group. Their friends help them solve their problems or at least give them ideas. Some of the statements provided are as follows:

- We have all sorts of different backgrounds in this club and I love all my members and they’re all my good friends and I couldn’t live a day without them.

- The benefits of 4-H is going out to show your animals and make people understand what 4-H is.

- Sometimes you find people that will tell you that you can’t do something and when you come to 4-H there is a supportive group of people that tell you can do it, that’s cool.

- Sometimes I can’t solve my problems and here you have people that can help you solve them, not solve them for me but they help me out.

- The advantage of 4-H for me is that it is teaching me responsibility, dedication towards something whether it be a project or an animal. Leadership skills, I’m the president of my club and meet friends.

- 4-H allows us to take like the negative things that happen in life and learn from them. I have a lot of friends that are starting to have sex or drugs, when I look at them I think I’m glad I’m in 4-H cause I could be just like them.
• 4-H helps to discipline yourself and it also helps you become a better person because you get to interact with people and you know it gives you strategies you can use for the rest of your life.

• 4-H helps you get used to like different races and different sexual orientations, different types of people, so it’s really cool because we have a variety of people in this club. I’m like the only white person in here and I still don’t know Spanish.

• We get to practice our public speaking skills. We also get to like communicate with others on different other things like animal and drafting. We also get to compete like go to other place. Like if you win at one spot, you get to onto a higher level and practice more what you’re trying to achieve.

• What I like about my project. They teach me responsibility, dedication even though they do stuff on me and hurt me from time to time its still worth it and I love every minute spending time with them, bathing them, showing them is lots of fun. You get to make lots of different new friends and that’s about it.

**Start small, offer diversity, recognition and have a good leader**

Another question focused on what would be a “perfect” or ideal 4-H program for participants. In order to achieve this, participants discussed the elements and resources needed for the “ideal” program. After analyzing the responses five principles were identified and are described below:

• Participants pointed out that the program should offer food; that way children would be more willing to attend.

• The availability of facilities that offer children a diverse range of animals for projects such as, rabbits, dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs and others types of animals. All the participants agreed that the program should offer different projects other than their animal projects. The program should offer projects such as artistic like drama, music performance, painting and photography, crafts and sports; that way children who do not enjoy working with animals could still have the opportunity to join 4-H clubs.

• Participants recognized that the program should be able to provide family friendly environment, where parents can also be involved in the projects.

• In addition participants feel it is important the 4-H programs provide recognition of their accomplishments at the county, state and national level.

• Finally, participants believe that an “ideal” program should have a good leader. The characteristics of the leader should include: to be a fun person, responsible,
willing to help others and someone who understands the Hispanic culture. In addition the extension agent should be fun, energetic, and knowledgeable.

Some of the statements provided for this question were as follows:

- Food!
- For the little kids you could give them crafts to do.
- All the project representative of 4-H can go all over the country meeting senators, meeting presidents doing whatever.
- I would have like a national field day or some day that would represent the 4-H.
- I think you should have a variety of animal projects for the kids to choose from and I think you should start out small because that would be your best choice because it would be easy to maintain and to handle.
- Animals so kids can have some to choose from and small like dogs, rabbits, cats, hamster, guinea pig, chicks, chickens anything that’s small, all sorts of animals. And a bird too.
- I think you should have a variety of activities for your kids. Say if one kid doesn’t like animals you could have drama or something. And it should be lots of fun and it should keep kids interested, lots of animals and make sure it’s a family friendly environment.
- The ideal thing for me would be either animal husbandry or like working with all sorts of different animals and training them and learning about their behavior or going around to different theaters and seeing Broadway productions and going behind the scenes and meeting all the actors.
- She’s (extension agent) constantly happy. She’s brings joy to the club every time she walks through the door.
- She’s (extension agent) funny. She’s cool. She’s energetic. She has a lot of instincts.
- She loves animals, she know how to handle kids and she’s a great leader.
- She’s (leader) very helpful when you’re in need or if something needs to get done, she reminds you a lot. She’s very responsible and she gets the job done.
- She’s (leader) a very wonderful woman. She’s somebody you can count on, some body you can depend on.
- She’s (leader) nice and she sound funny when she talks Spanish.
Join our club! Its fun and we accept everyone

The researcher wanted to determine how the participants would promote their 4-H club and how would they recruit new members. The first observation made by the participants was the importance of the parents’ involvement. According to the participants many of their friends did not participate in the club because their parents do not have time or thought it was not worth their time (parents do not know what 4-H does). After reviewing the results and transcriptions four strategies were identified to recruit new members:

- Tell other kids and friends how much fun they could have with the animals and how much they could learn.
- It is crucial to tell kids that besides having fun and making friends they could earn money with their 4-H projects.
- Let potential members know that 4-H clubs do not discriminate against race, sex, color or religion.
- Share with them that they will be able to help others in the community and in the club.

Some of the statements provided by the participants were as follows:

- My friends were going to come, it’s just they have other activities to do and their mothers and fathers didn’t have time to take them.
- I told my friends to join, but their parents don’t want to just take the time to come over here while the kids have time to study they have to come over here and it’s just not in their budget.
- I would tell my friends that’s it fun. You get to go to the fair. You get to meet new friends and at the end of the year you earn a lot of money.
- I would tell them 4-H is a wonderful experience because you learn how to speak in public, interact with others. You get to study in your field on what you want to be or if you’re interested in animals you get to deal with them and help with them.
- You get to play with the animals and go to competitions. You get trophies and medals and stuff.
I would say to people that 4-H accepts everybody. You can be African American, Hispanic, you can be from Puerto Rico, Mexico, we accept everyone. 4-H is here for everybody and 4-H is like a club. It’s a club for helping people, for going to the fair, helping and everything.

I would tell people that it is very fun and rewarding. It’s something to do. It keeps you out of trouble and it’s a great environment and besides the fact that you make a lot of money.

Parents of 4-H Members

At the beginning of the parent’s focus group discussion, they were asked to define 4-H. Once the participants had defined it, they went on to uncover how they found out about the program. In addition, they were also asked to describe if they thought that the club has had an impact on their children. Finally, participants shared with the researcher what they thought would be a “perfect” or “ideal” 4-H program and how they would encourage other parents to get their children involved in 4-H clubs. The major themes that were identified by the researcher on this group were as follows:

4-H is agriculture, friends and community

When participants were asked to describe what 4-H meant to them, most parents in this group related 4-H programs to agriculture. According to parents, the 4-H clubs are a place where their children learn to appreciate agriculture and animal production mainly. After examining the result and transcriptions four major benefits of enrolling children in 4-H clubs were identified:

- Children are able to establish relationships with other children as well as with adults.
- Children have fun.
- Four-H’ers have a better understanding of the diversity and the needs of the people in their community as a result of participating in community service projects.
• Children learn responsibility as well as the ability do team work. Parents also pointed out that they are learning about agriculture through their children. Some parents were not knowledgeable about agriculture but as a result of their children’s participation in 4-H they have learned of its importance.

Some of the descriptions provided by the participants are as follows:

• 4-H is about farm animals.
• Commitment.
• I think friends and community comes to mind.
• Adventure for kids.
• Activities. Events for the kids.
• Learning about responsibility, nurturing and caring for an animal and learning all about them.
• Teamwork and adult teaching kids and kids teaching other kids, working together and learning responsibility, having fun.
• I learn from them, right now I’m learning a lot about baby goats and I’ve been college educated as well about animals. Well, I had no idea even though we raised chickens as a kid, but I wouldn’t have known all the things I know now.
• City kids get to find out about animals when usually other kids can’t find out about cows and deer and all that. ‘Cause when you’re in the city you don’t have much contact with them.

Learning about 4-H

The majority of the parents learned about 4-H through the county fair, they visited the fair and saw children working with animals. Other parents knew about 4-H because they owned a ranch and had contact with the local extension office. Regarding the accessibility of the club, the majority of participants said that the location was too distant for the majority of the members. Nevertheless, parents expressed that driving a longer distance was worth the benefits of participating in a 4-H club. However, some parents
expressed they had searched for a club closer to their home but were not able to find one.

Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follows:

- Last year we went to the fair and we saw how a 4-H member was taking care of animals and my daughter wanted to do the same thing she was doing. We talked to the 4-H leader and she told us about it, and ever since she has been involved in 4-H.

- We were at the Dade County Fair one year, we had never heard of 4-H at all and our daughter saw a lamb being born and she saw kids in there with it and she’s like I want to do that. How come they can get to be in there and everything? So, we talked to….. She was there and she said that we could start the following year so we started and I guess we’ve been here for six or seven years. My daughter loves it.

- I own a ranch and I work with the extension agent and he told me about 4-H, that is how we found out about it.

- We visited the Amelia Earhart park and saw a kids working with animals, we asked the person in charge and she explained that it was a 4-H club that was getting ready for the fair, that’s how we found out.

- For me it is very far from my home, I come from Broward, it is kind of a hike, but we love the club so much it’s worth it.

- It’s a long way for my daughter but she likes it so we drive all the way here.

- I looked for clubs closer to home until we found this one, and we have been involved in 4-H about five years.

**Development of life skills**

According to all the parents the major benefits of participating in 4-H has been the acquirement of life skills. Through the projects, the children have learned to be responsible and learn to work out problems with their projects since the kids are responsible for looking after their animals. Furthermore, kids have also learned how to work in a team and help each other. Some parents pointed out that their children used to be very shy and are now more sociable, self confident and outspoken as a result of participating in livestock shows in the county fair and other events.
More children are also exposed to real life experiences like competition; which teaches kids how to face life situations like winning or losing and dealing with the feeling that come with being involved in group activities and competition. Overall 4-H has provided their children with skills they usually do not learn in school and it also helps them to focus on educational activities and programs that keep them out of trouble. Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follows:

- They are learning responsibility, nurturing and caring for animals and learning all about them.
- They learn teamwork and adult teaching kids and vice versa.
- They gain knowledge, not something they learn in school, but something that could help them in the future and teaches a lot of responsibility.
- They learn how to deal with other people and being able to work and help each other out and not just be an individual, they can help everybody else in the club.
- It teaches them competition, so they learn early like how to deal with it. When the kids lose and they see someone else win, maybe their friends then they have to go to that person and praise them for winning. That’s a big challenge.
- It is a form of premier leadership and personal growth.
- My daughter was really shy before the club, now she is not afraid to speak in public, she has learned to be responsible because she needs to take care of her animal.
- My son is more self-confident, being able to speak in public.
- My daughter had a class and she had to stand up and speak in front of everybody and she felt comfortable.
- The majority of the kids volunteer because also they realize the benefits and this builds up confidence.
- There is acceptance in the club and I think that it teaches the kids acceptance and that diversity is a good thing.
- It kept him out of the street, doing other things and this is a very healthy environment.
A good program is a collaborative effort

Overall participants described a good 4-H program as a collaborative effort between extension agents, leaders and parents. The parent’s involvement is a must for the success of the program. Parents expressed they need to encourage the children and get involved with them in the activities so the experience is more rewarding, it should be a family event. In addition, programs should be year round and have more community service, so the children could give back to their communities. Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follows:

- Without adult support and drive you don’t get the kids motivated and that’s what you need.
- Adults need to be participating as much as the children because you’re like a mentor, you are teaching them.
- It’s something the whole family can enjoy and do and be proud of it.
- I think it’s good for the adults, right know I’m learning a lot and I’ve been educated, I wouldn’t have known all the things I know about goats, heifers, hogs or rabbits.
- Involved in more community service.
- Have it year around.
- More people doing community service.

Overall the children and parents had the same perceptions about 4-H and agreed that participating in the club has impacted them in a positive way as noted earlier in Table 4-5.

Objective 2

Objective two was to describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of traditional 4-H clubs in the southwest area of Miami-Dade
Non-4-H Members

At the outset of the focus group discussion, non-4-H members were asked about youth programs in their community and specifically about 4-H. The majority of the participants were not aware of the existence of youth programs and had never heard about 4-H. Out of the ten participants only one knew about the existence of Boys and Girls clubs and YMCA. This participant said that he/she had noticed three different locations in less than five miles from his/her house. Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follows:

- I don’t know what that is.
- It sounds like math or something like that.
- It sounds boring to me.

The participants were asked to provide their perceptions about 4-H programs, their willingness to participate in a youth program like 4-H, and to list the components a youth program should have based on their experience. The majority of the participants said they would participate in a 4-H club because it sounded like a fun activity where they could spend time with friends and meet other people. In addition, non-4-H members said they would like to have clubs focused on other topics like: sports, dancing and learning from different cultures. The participants pointed out that they would like their parents to be the 4-H leaders, and if that was not possible they would like to see a person who was sociable, fun and that liked kids. Some of the statements provided by participants are as follow:

- 4-H sounds fun and I would like to be in it.
• I would participate in it if my parents can be a part of it, ‘cause my parents are fun and other kids can have fun with them.

• I would participate cause I can meet other kids and besides I have nothing else to do.

• I would like it because I can hang out with my friends and talk about what is going on in our lives.

• I would like a multicultural club, like have a bunch of people hanging out from different places.

• I would like to learn how to dance like salsa, merengue, and reggaeton different traditional dances form other countries.

• I would like to learn how to play soccer.

• Field trips would be cool, we can learn about dolphins.

• We can learn how to make t-shirts.

• I would like to make good friendships with different people. How do you say that? Like multiculture. Like have a bunch of different people hanging out like she said and hanging out and going out to different places.

• I would like a club like every time we meet we would have different like a day to learn about Colombia and their food, music, everything. They next time it would Nica (referring to Nicaragua), another day Boricua (referring to Puerto Rico) and stuff like that. Like we can learn about each other and like where we are from. Like me, I was born here but dad is from Brazil and my mom is from Colombia.

• If my dad goes with me, it would be more fun.

• If my dad or mom were part of the clubs my brother and sister would be in too. My cousins would go too.

The participants were also asked how they would recruit other Hispanic children to join a 4-H club. According to participants the first thing that should be done is to visit communities and to learn the interests of the kids in that society. Several kids expressed that recruiters should go to schools, attend meetings where they can explain the 4-H programs and discuss ideas people have about what kinds of clubs are available. All participants said these meetings should provide food and music so people feel motivated
to attend. Kids said they would tell potential participants that being part of the club is fun and that they can complete projects in different subjects or topics and as an added bonus they can earn money with their projects. Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follow:

- I would go around the community and get to know the kids, like just to find out about the people there and what they like, ‘cause they wouldn’t want to come if it has nothing to do with them.

- I would tell them that it’s a lot of fun, like you go, you hang out with your friends, you play games and like just a place to hang out and relax.

- I will tell them to come because there is like a lot of sports to do and you can get skinny and strong.

- I will tell them about all the good and fun things we are doing out there and how much fun it is to do what we are doing and how much we love it.

- I would tell them they are going to experience new things and meet new people, so come and join the club.

- I would go to schools because like we have a lot of Hispanics, I would tell them to like come and check it out for themselves and see if they like or not. Like everyone could bring in like their own ideas.

- I would invite them and like have reggaeton, salsa, merengue. I’m serious I would also have Cuban food, have a lot of food so they can feel comfortable.

**Parents of Non-4-H Members**

First topic discussed with parents was different youth development programs in their communities. Overall parents identified as youth development programs: Girls and Boys Scouts, YMCA, Sunday school, after school programs like sports, band, dancing and acting. According to the participants the only youth programs their children attend is Sunday Bible School and that their kids do not participate in other programs like YMCA or Girls and Boys Scouts because they do not have time to transport them to these programs during weekdays. The majority of kids attend after school programs and are
usually picked-up from school between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. According to the parents the teachers make sure the children do their homework and study during after school programs. Some of the statements provided by participants are as follows:

- I’ve seen the sign of YMCA when I drive home.
- I know there is a club of girls scouts by my house, they always come over and sell cookies, that’s how I know.
- Well, my children go to Sunday Bible School, that’s where they learn about God and the youth pastor talks to them about behaving good and the difference between right and wrong.
- Well, I don’t know if this counts, but my son stays in school until 6:00 pm, I pay extra and he stays here and the teacher helps him out with homework and they make sure he studies.

The majority of the participants had never heard of 4-H and did not know what it was. Out of the nine participants, two knew about 4-H and they stated they did not like that program because it was only agriculture and they were not interested in that. The other participant stated that he knew what 4-H was but they had no interest in working with them (Hispanics). According to him it was only about cows and they had no intention of changing it or making a program more attractive to Hispanics.

- I don’t know what that is.
- I have no idea what 4-H is.
- I have seen it at the County fair, they only have animals there.
- They only talk about cows.

The second part of the focus group was used to provide non-4-H parents a clear and concise explanation of 4-H programs so that they could understand the diverse nature of the programs outside agriculture. In addition, participants were asked if they would allow and encourage their kids to become 4-H members and to provide feedback on ideas for establishing future 4-H clubs. Overall participants believed that they would
encourage their children to participate in 4-H clubs. Participants expressed it was essential that clubs meet during the weekends, since both parents on most households in this group have full-time jobs. Regarding the content of the programs they would like their children to learn, the parents included: how to embrace their background and appreciate the sacrifices they have done as parents so they could have a better future. Another aspect is to provide an environment where children get the chance to socialize and relate to other children from different backgrounds, acquire skills such as self-confidence, responsibility, communication and leadership. Finally the participants pointed out that they would like a program that encourages children to attend college and higher education since most children do not see the importance of education on their future, and most children aspire to be professional athletes or rappers. Some of the statements provided by the participants are as follows:

- I would like my children to participate in 4-H.
- The program should teach children things they are not able to learn in school.
- I want my son to relate more to other children. To simply learn new things that they don’t teach in school that might help them and skills, special skills and just to have something to do that just not being at home and watching T.V. or something like that.
- The program should be flexible, because sometimes you have problems with schedule and/or some days you can’t always go to some of the meetings.
- I would like my children to appreciate all the sacrifices we have made so they could have a better life than we did back home.
- It would nice if someone can talk to the children about going to school, right now they just want to be professional athletes or rappers and I want them to have the education I didn’t.

Finally the participants were asked to describe what would be the best way to inform parents about 4-H. They were also asked to describe what would be the best place to start a 4-H club in their communities so it could be accessible to most residents.
Regarding information about 4-H, several of the participants thought that flyers in Spanish could be handed out in the grocery stores and use Spanish radio stations to promote programs. Usually the Spanish radio stations provide the communities with information regarding immigration, jobs and other services aimed at Hispanics. They also mentioned that they would promote the clubs through churches; the priest or the pastor usually makes announcements at the end of the service and encourages members to explore this programs. Out of nine participants, two suggested offering information through the Internet. Overall the participants agreed that they would be interested in being a 4-H leader as long as the club met on weekends and preferably on school grounds, churches, or on public parks. Several of them pointed that they could be 4-H leaders as long as clubs were not only focused on agriculture. On the other hand, three participants were open to the idea of having animal science clubs because they could learn together with the children about agriculture. The only obstacle they saw was that they didn’t have a farm because they lived in the city. Some of the statements provided by participants are as follows:

- I would ask the pastor of my church to encourage the community to participate in 4-H, we usually listen to him.

- Why don’t you use the radio? When I go to work the radio usually is letting people know how to deal with the immigration stuff especially right now. They also announce different services offered to us.

- I would be a 4-H leader if the club is not about agriculture, I don’t know anything about it.

- I would not mind being a 4-H leader for an agriculture club, I could learn about it with kids, besides I did some farming back home. The only problem I see is that we live in the city.

- The clubs could meet at church, or we could ask the principal if we could meet here, that way it would be accessible to all of us.
• What about the park? That would be good. The whole family can go and that way we can get some exercise.

**Objective 3**

Objective three was to describe the perceptions of 4-H extension agents regarding Hispanics in Miami-Dade County. In order to achieve the objective, interviews were conducted with a program assistant and a 4-H extension agent.

At the time of the research there were only two 4-H agents for the entire county, in other words they were understaffed. Overall both interviewees have been involved with 4-H over 15 years as either a 4-H member, volunteer, leader or extension agent. Both were familiar with the 4-H culture, they are true believers that 4-H can make a difference in a child’s life; consequently they are very passionate about their work.

The researcher aimed to uncover the following information: current programs, types of clubs, volunteer recruitment, requirements of being a 4-H leader, barriers of working with Hispanics and alternatives on how to increase Hispanic involvement.

**Current Programs and Types of Clubs**

The participants indicated that the major programs they are currently working on in Miami-Dade County are as follows:

- **Youth leadership program**: basically youth get together to plan community service projects for the county.

- **Youth and Governance**: This is a government club, which prepares children for the legislature experience. They meet six times in the year and conduct field trips to legislative offices.

- **Community and Project Clubs**.

- **Coordination of county and district events**, specifically public speaking events.

- **After school programs**: Through a partnership with different youth organizations such as Boy’s and Girl’s clubs. These include after school programs in areas 4-H would not be able to reach.
• School enrichment programs
• Camps

In Miami–Dade County four types of 4-H clubs are utilized:

• Community clubs: These are characterized by their geographical area and can explore a wide variety of topics such as: clothing, clowning, rabbits, sewing, marine science, food and nutrition, health and safety, and nutrition.

• Project clubs: These focus on a specific project or subject matter. Some topics include marine science, animal science or shooting sports. The members are usually very passionate about animals or shooting sports, they travel long distances for the meetings.

• After-school programs: Are usually held on a community center and meet only during the school year.

• In-school club: These clubs are led by teachers during school hours and are only during the school year.

Participants also elaborated on how they determine the content of their programs. Many of them are already structured such as the school enrichment program. They follow a guideline that is provide by the University of Florida 4-H program, where they have to at least spend six hours working with the teacher and the students. In contrast the content of the community and project clubs are more flexible and most of the content depends on the leader’s initiative. Nevertheless they have certain standards they have to achieve such as: a) apply for a club charter and on that club charter they are asked to obey by the county, state and national policy, b) they have to do a community service project and c) the key leader has to be screened. The extension agents make sure leaders provide a safe environment for the children that is warm and friendly to everyone. Agents also remind leaders that in clubs all the members must have a say in the decisions, that way the club members retain ownership of their program.
4-H Members

According to the participants their county is like a melting pot because they have so much diversity among the members of the community. The participants indicated that in Miami-Dade County at least 55% percent of the population is Hispanic, 30% is African American, and probably less than 20% is White. When looking at those numbers, people would assume that the Hispanic participation in 4-H would be the highest one. According to the participants, 48% of the children they reach through 4-H are Hispanic. The participants explained that they roughly reach 9,000 children; nevertheless only 1,000 of them are involved in a community/project club. The participants agreed that the community/project clubs are the programs that have the best effect on children. The participation in this type of club helps children develop social, communication and leadership skills. According to the participants, out of 1,000 active members in a community/project club more or less seventy percent are White.

The participants explained that the 48% of Hispanics reached was due to after school programs and school enrichment. They see a need to increase Hispanic involvement in community/projects clubs, so they can also have access to the benefits mentioned above. According to the participants one of the reasons for the lack of Hispanic participation is that, 4-H has its roots in rural White America, and this makes it difficult to attract minorities in general. Another factor is the fact that 4-H is not known by the Hispanic culture and they do not necessarily have a way to bridge into that. Furthermore, these clubs are very volunteer intensive and not all families are able to commit the time necessary. In many situations Hispanics families do not have the luxury of time.
The participants indicated that in order increase Hispanic participation they have to establish relationships, and this takes time and effort. The lack of personnel in their county complicates that. There are only two 4-H extension agents for the entire county, and neither of them speaks Spanish. There is a clear need to hire or partner with people who are fluent in Spanish so they can start establishing the relationships needed to bridge that gap and getting the word about 4-H dispersed among Hispanics. According to the participants there is a need to promote 4-H among Hispanics, since the community/project clubs in Hispanic communities is rare. Four-H can be very beneficial to Hispanics since it can facilitate their transition or adaptation to the American culture.

Some specific strategies suggested by the participants are as follow:

- Partnership with the city parks department and have them hire a 4-H staff member, and that way we can have a 4-H club in each park and make the clubs more accessible to the communities.
- Partner with other organizations that serve Hispanics.
- Have fields days during the weekends in places like “La Pequeña Habana” and Hialeah, invite the parents with their children so they can learn about 4-H and make sure to emphasis that it is a free service, all it takes is some time and commitment.
- Post flyers in laundry mats in Hispanic Neighborhoods.
- Hire more staff fluent in Spanish.

**Successful 4-H Clubs**

A crucial element of 4-H clubs are the volunteers. Participants expressed that they do not recruit 4-H leaders, because of the lack of time available. The majority of the 4-H club leaders were either 4-H’ers themselves and by random chance. Many of the 4-H leaders have seen the 4-H display in the county fair and want to get involved. The participants expressed that the main characteristics they look for in a 4-H leader are:
responsible, communication skills, being understanding, having compassion, open-minded and fair.

According to the participants a common trait among successful 4-H clubs is that the extension agent has to hand-hold them during the first year; that includes calling the 4-H leader, following up and asking the following: How are you doing? Do you have any questions? How can I help you? Do you need a guest speaker? Are you getting burned out? Would you like me to come to your club meeting? In conclusion really hand-holding and being there for the first year is what makes a club successful. Currently the 4-H leaders receive fall training every year, where they are given fun hands-on activities, they are taught games that can be done with the club, different ideas on different projects, and they are also provided with a calendar that includes all the 4-H activities during the year. According to the participants this is not enough, they need more financial and staff support from extension, and they are currently developing a handbook specifically for leaders to make their jobs easier. They are also planning to have another training during spring 2007. The training aims to provide 4-H leaders with alternative strategies to recruit potential 4-H members, youth development and club leadership, increase family involvement and a more detailed understanding of the clubs reports and paper work.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. Findings were organized and presented by the following objectives: 1) Describe the perceptions and impacts of 4-H clubs among Hispanics members and their parents, 2) Describe the perceptions of 4-H and areas of interest of potential Hispanic members of 4-H clubs in the southwest area of Miami-Dade County and 3) Describe the perceptions of 4-H extension agents regarding
Hispanics in Miami-Dade County. Chapter 5 will present a more detailed discussion of these findings, as well as implications for the findings for the groups studied.
Table 4-1: Four-H members focus group participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years Involved with 4-H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LZ</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taz</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphaba</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Cheeks</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freddy Krueger</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinkerbell</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bubbles</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alias names selected to maintain the confidentiality.

Table 4-2: Parents of 4-H members focus group participants

<table>
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<th>Alias</th>
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<th>Race</th>
<th>Years Involved with 4-H</th>
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<tr>
<td>CJR</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>CRS</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>IVT</td>
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<td>White</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRY</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JLU</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRA</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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*Alias names selected to maintain the confidentiality.

Table 4-3: Non-4-H members focus group participants

<table>
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<th>Alias</th>
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<th>Race</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
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<td>7th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop star</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaquille O’neal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UU2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillary Duff</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alias names selected to maintain the confidentiality.
Table 4-4: Parents of non-4-H members focus group participants

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<th>Alias</th>
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<td>IA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alias names selected to maintain the confidentiality.

Table 4-5: Themes emerged from focus groups with 4-H members and parents of 4-H members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-H is agriculture and fun</td>
<td>4-H is agriculture, friends and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about 4-H</td>
<td>Learning about 4-H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth involvement</td>
<td>Development of life skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of life skills</td>
<td>A good program is a collaborative effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start small, offer diversity, recognition, and have a good leader

Join our club! Its fun and we accept everyone
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations drawn from the findings of the study. Additionally, it provides suggestions for further research that can contribute to increase Hispanic enrollment in traditional 4-H club within Miami-Dade County.

**Discussion of Key Findings**

**4-Members and Parents of 4-H members**

Result of our study reported that 4-H members and parents of 4-H members had positive perceptions regarding 4-H as a youth development program. Both groups linked 4-H to agriculture and fun activities, where they were able to meet and establish relationships with other children and adults. One can make the assumption that the 4-H club format allows club members and adults to engage in different activities that promote socializing.

Our study indicated that the majority of the 4-H members and parents of 4-H members felt that the club members had developed life skills that will help them throughout their lives. Participants reported multiple gains in terms of public speaking, leadership skills, communication skills, responsibility, self-confidence, respect for and from others; and real life experience from their projects. These findings support the research by Astroth & Haynes (2001); Astroth (1996); Boyd et.al, (1992); Fox, Schroeder & Lodl (2003); Heinsohn & Cantrell (1986); Ladewig & Thomas (1987); and Mead et al.,
(1999), which found that 4-H members perceived they had developed specific life skills through the 4-H experience.

Contrary to what Allen, Iyechad, Mayeske, Parson, Rodriguez, Singh, Swiney, Tolley and Butterfield (1988) stated that competition decreases self-esteem and fosters individualism rather than cooperation, in this study the majority of adults reported that 4-H involvement has enabled the children to deal effectively with emotion, especially with situations like winning or losing that come with being involved in group activities and competition. Additionally, as mentioned by other authors (Mean et al., 1999) club members and parents reported that 4-H club membership had allowed them to interact with other people and establish long lasting friendship with other children and adults and has also helped children to understand and embrace diversity.

Most parents of 4-H members who participated in the study believed that the success of a 4-H club was related to a true commitment from parents, 4-H leader and extension agent. Participants cited that the adult’s commitment to the club enables children develop positive relationships with other adults besides their parents. This is in a congruence with various studies that have demonstrated that one key factor in a youth’s life is a supportive mentoring relationship with a non-related adult (Bogenschnieder & Olson, 1998; Seita, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992).

In addition, like the study conducted by Perkins and Butterfield (1999) our study shows that the 4-H club has provided participants the opportunity to interact positively with an adult leader who cares about them; this interaction has positively impacted the children because they feel important. In this regard Russell (2001) stated that through interaction with multiple caring adults outside the family, youth receive guidance,
direction, and feedback that reinforces or builds on the effort of parents and extended family. In conclusion, access to multiple adult role models in addition to parents benefit youth emotionally, scholastically and interpersonally (Walker, 1998).

The findings of our study reported that the majority of 4-H members were involved in other youth organization besides 4-H. This supports the researcher by Ladewig & Thomas (1987) and Astroth & Haynes (2001) which found that 4-H members are more likely to be involved in all types of after school programs than other youth. Furthermore, 4-H members and parents of 4-H members expressed the need to diversify the 4-H program in order to increase Hispanic enrollment.

**Non-4-H Members and Parents of Non-4-H Members**

Limited exposure to 4-H programs was characteristic of the non-4-H members and the parents of non-4-H members; only two adults had seen or heard about 4-H. Furthermore, support services, sources of information and access to 4-H is almost non-existent to this group of participants. Therefore not surprisingly, the participants perceptions of 4-H were shaped by the limited access to such services. Parents of non-4-H members erroneously associated 4-H only with cows and agriculture. This association led the participants to perceive that 4-H was not interested in working with Hispanics.

The findings of our study showed that Hispanics (children and adults) are very interested in participating in youth development program, like the 4-H traditional club. Both groups were eager to participate in a program that will allow them to socialize and develop new friendships (Farner, Cutz, Farner, Seibold & Abuchar, 2006). Although the adults pointed out that location and access was important, it is not an overwhelming constraint on participation. The participants expressed that as long as the club meetings were held on weekends, they would encourage the children to participate in 4-H.
In terms of the content of 4-H clubs to be offered, non-4-H members express they would like the focus to be on sports, dancing and learning from different cultures. This supports research by Hobbs (2004) which found that Hispanic members expressed interest in nontraditional projects such as soccer and cultural dance. On the other hand, parents of non-4-H members would like a club that teaches children things such as: how to embrace their background and appreciate the sacrifices parents have done so they could have a better future. Additionally adults would like the club to provide an environment were children get the chance to socialize and relate to other children from different backgrounds, acquire skills such as self-confidence, responsibility, communication and leadership. Most importantly parents would like a program that encourages children to attend college and higher education. This finding supports the research of Alba-Johnson (2003), which found that effective youth programs serving Hispanic youth consider the needs, demographics, and cultural characteristics. Furthermore they provide a focused, supportive, and culturally sensitive environment that fosters the development of Hispanic youth.

The findings of our study suggest that Hispanics are more willing to participate in 4-H programs, if urged to do so by others whom they trust such as priests and pastors (Escobar-Chavez, Tortolero, Masse, Watson & Fluton., 2002; Farner, Rhoads, Cutz & Farner, 2005). This highlights the importance for extension to establish or strengthen relationships with respected local groups and organizations. In this regard, Delgado (1999) stated the importance of initiating work or research with co-sponsoring institutions that are visible and locally to the community to give the program or project legitimacy. In addition he cited that having several institutions sponsor the research or
program will help ensure the project or program meet minimal resistance from the community; given that the institutions have a positive relationship with the community of interest. As stated by Farner et al., (2005) extension has the potential to provide Hispanics with youth development programs that address their current needs.

This study reveals the importance of developing and maintaining good relationships with Hispanics, in order to increase their participation in 4-H programs (Albert, 1996; Skaff, Chelsea, Mycue & Fisher, 2000). In this regard, Escobar-Chavez et al., (2002) experienced during a research study that in order to retain the participants researchers had extensive contact with them to establish trust and rapport. The study also used bilingual, bicultural staff and found that working with community members was helpful in retaining participants.

4-H Professionals

The findings of this study reveal that the 4-H professionals consider Miami-Dade County a melting pot as the result of the diversity among the members of the community. The participants expressed that approximately 55% of the population in Miami-Dade County is Hispanic (US Census Bureau, 2003). As stated by Schaubер and Castania (2001), meeting the needs of the growing Hispanic population seemed to be foremost on the minds of the participants of this study. According to the participants one of the biggest challenges for 4-H is how to reach Hispanics and how to deliver programs that are cultural sensitive (Zamboanga & Knoche, 2003).

One factor that has contributed to the low enrollment of Hispanics in traditional 4-H clubs is the lack of personnel in general, as well as the limited bilingual 4-H agents in the county (Farner et al., 2006). In this regard, Schauber and Castania (2001) have stated that in many states, extension’s financial resources are shrinking, the demands of their
traditional audiences are strong, and extension wonders how it can move in new directions to work with culturally varied audiences and remain solid financially. In addition, both participants expressed that the other two factors that hinder Hispanic enrollment in traditional 4-H clubs are (1) Hispanics are not aware of the 4-H program and other extension programs, and (2) the lack of Hispanic volunteers. In this regard, Hobbs (2001) stated that Hispanics do not think of their contributions as volunteering; they associate volunteering with a broader community, involving mainstream organizations with which they have little in any connection. Being a volunteer, then, is not the realm of their experience.

Results of our study indicated that 4-H professionals within Miami-Dade County are aware that understanding and addressing the needs of the Hispanic population has become increasingly important in their county. Both participants indicated the need to establish long-lasting relationships with Hispanics and local organization, and those take time and effort. This supports research by Hobbs (2001) that stated that extension must first commit to a long-term relationship with the Hispanic community; especially because this community is often suspicious of new organizations coming in and offering services. A second factor to take into consideration is that outreach work is time consuming. Lastly both participants pointed out that involving Hispanics in 4-H programs must be a part of what extension does, not a separate program.

Finally, an unexpected finding was that all the participants of the study (4-H members, parents of 4-H members, non-4-H members, parents of non-4-H members and 4-H professionals) did not think that 4-H agents or 4-H leaders must be Hispanic. More important for them was that the 4-H agent and 4-H leader were willing to understand and
relate to their culture. Additionally they pointed out that the agent and leader had to have a good relationship with the children.

**Conclusion**

Even though the numbers of participants was small, the study presents evidence that the involvement in traditional 4-H club does affect the development of life skills among Hispanic youth. In addition, the findings of the study reveal that non-4-H members and parents of non-4-H members are eager to participate in 4-H programs. Four-H has the potential to provide the Hispanic population in Miami-Dade County with youth development programs that focus on providing youth with skill to become capable and competent adults. Four-H can provide an opportunity to enhance positive family interaction among Hispanics. Extension should try to develop and implement programs that contribute to this positive interaction between parent and youth. Four-H experiences that combine the skills and interests of both parents and children will help them grow as individuals and as families (Collins, 1986). The participation of Hispanic volunteers in 4-H will strengthen the programs and will broaden the audience being reached. It will also positively impact the community from the resulting increase in access to a wide range of programs that promote youth and community development. Finally, the results of this study exposed the need to hire more 4-H agents, to be able to reach minorities and increase their enrollment.

**Recommendations**

Based upon the findings of our study, recommendations are provided for current extension and other organizations that promote youth development among Hispanic youth and their families.
**Bilingual/bicultural staff.** Having bilingual/bicultural staff is important. In many cases the parents of the children are not fluent in English and can only communicate in Spanish. Extension staff should be able to relate to the background and experience of 4-H members and their families; this will help extension to establish rapport within the community.

Hiring bilingual/bicultural staff is particularly problematic. According to Hobbs (2005) there are few bilingual/bicultural individuals that work in a youth development and this makes it harder to find the adequate staff to work with diverse audiences. Other key characteristics relating to staff is that they have to be aware that they will need to develop a relationship with the families and establish trust. In order to achieve a relationship and rapport with the families; the personal goals the individual hopes to accomplish are very important and have to be taken into account. Furthermore, it would be ideal to hire individuals who already have a connection with the local community and are endorsed by community leaders.

After hiring an adequate staff, a challenge that extension often has to deal is being able to retain its staff. In order to retain staff and promote multiculturalism, extension could reflect and promote multiple cultures, including the Hispanic culture in their county offices. This can be achieved by decorating with appropriate posters for walls and display artifacts of the different cultures within the communities and workplace. Also, communication must be ongoing and working relationship must be developed among extension agents, administrative staff, communities and volunteers. Extension has to encourage staff to respect differences including those related to work style and
communication preferences. New and current staff should be encouraged and made to feel comfortable to try new ways of doing things in the field and in the office.

Recognition is another aspect extension has to consider regarding hiring and retaining staff. It is important to reward staff by valuing their knowledge and experience. This could be accomplished by recognizing their accomplishments in news-letters, staff meetings and community events. Another important aspect is to create a sense of community among the staff by holding quarterly meetings where people can see themselves as part of a greater group, and having time to meet and talk about their work. Staff can help each other out in accomplishing their goals, by sharing what strategies have worked or not worked for them in their different areas of specialization within extension programs.

In order to facilitate a multicultural approach in extension, there is a need to engage staff in intercultural staff development training. Multicultural work places and communities are becoming a reality in extension across the country. Intercultural training seeks to teach people the knowledge, skills and motivation to communicate effectively in a wide variety of cultural contexts. It also aims to teach participants to respects various collective and individual identities of their coworkers’ as well as the targeted audiences’. It also enables them to understand the benefit of the different talents and experiences these diverse identities could bring into an organization like extension. If extension agents feel they can express freely within the organization, they may feel a greater incentive to achieve their goals within the communities. On the other hand, if the targeted audiences feel they can speak and relate personally to extension staff; they would be more willing to participate in extension programs in general.
Holistic approach and diversification of projects. An effective way to retain youth is to provide a variety of programs that consider all the areas of youth development. Four-H programs should provide activities to enrich youth’s academic, social, emotional and physical development. Offer projects or activities that include art, sports, field trips, and career and college exploration. Additionally, 4-H should have projects that promote cultural awareness and teach children how to embrace their culture and other cultures within their communities.

Family involvement. Taking into account that the Hispanic culture is family-focused, the programs offered should involve both parents and children. Even though the 4-H program is aimed at youth, Hispanic parents want and expect opportunities for learning about what is happening in the program along the way (Oregon State University, 2006). The family should be involved in the program development process where their input regarding place, time and subject is taking into account. This will develop a sense of ownership of the program among the Hispanic families and could translate into a successful program.

Build relationship/partnership with the Hispanic Community. In order to increase Hispanic enrollment in 4-H programs, relationships must be built with individuals like community leaders, teachers and pastor/priests. Furthermore, with organizations such as: school boards, churches, community centers, and organizations that works specific with Hispanic communities. There is a need to build relationships with youth based on respect, acceptance, caring and trust. Extension needs to recognize that community partnerships exist in layers, and though it may not be directly involved in
a particular partnership the strength of that partnership may impact one with which extension is directly involved (Farner et al., 2005; Oregon State University, 2006).

Building a relationship with the Hispanic community and establishing trust and rapport is the way to start having a presence within the community. It usually takes time, but it is necessary in order to reach Hispanics. Hobbs (2000) suggests certain steps to follow in order to start building a relationship and trust with the community, they are as follows:

- Spend time learning about the community and individuals.
- Get involved with community organizations and events within the community.
- Request support of elders, community leaders, and established organizations that have a positive reputation with the community.
- Show respect for the Hispanic culture and be patient.

**Promotion of 4-H.** Advertise the programs in local churches, where services are held in Spanish. Have parents or pastors/priests promote the program during the Sunday services. In addition, advertise the program in grocery stores, as well as on Spanish radio and television stations. In schools have current 4-H members talk about the program and the positive personal experiences of their involvement.

**Target Hispanics among the lower socio-economic status.** Four-H programs can offer this specific audience with the opportunity to develop new skills, learn group cooperation, leadership, and improve citizenship through the approach of “learn by doing.” It can also provide them with a sense of accomplishment through recognition. Four-H also fosters the development of personal relationships, not only among youth, but also with caring adults. This enables youth at-risk to receive guidance, direction and
feedback that strengthens or builds on the efforts of parents and extended family (Walker, 1998).

**Training/recruiting volunteers.** Provide adequate training for volunteers so they can have an effective and enjoyable experience. According to Hobbs (2004), there is a need to provide separate training for Hispanic volunteers in areas such: American culture, expectations of a successful young person in the American society, the benefits of volunteerism and youth development. Another reason to provide separate training to Hispanics is their lack of their fluency in English. The training might have to be offered Spanish.

Given extensions’ need to recruit Hispanic volunteers there are three stages that should be taken into consideration in order to engage them (Hobbs, 2000). The first stage is identifying potential volunteers. Potential volunteers could be college students that need to fulfill practicum and community services requirements. Another option for volunteers could be senior citizens that have available time. Also established professionals could be potential volunteers because they have predictable work schedule and generally they have a better understanding on the American culture. It is important to consider that many people will volunteer if the program provides them a chance to pass along the traditions of their culture to younger community members.

The second stage is inviting people to participate. Many Hispanics do not volunteer because they have never been asked to do so. Therefore in many occasions just asking will significantly increase their participation. Considering that in the Hispanic culture, personal relationships are the foundation of the community, the majority of
invitations should be done on a one-to-one basis through personal visits. Some strategies that could help increase their volunteerism are as follows:

- Supplement personal invitations with print information in Spanish and/or English.
- Make use of Spanish radio spots.
- Hold meetings in times and locations accessible to the majority.
- Offer food, door prizes, and possibly music.
- Explain how 4-H benefits families and the community.
- Emphasize how volunteering will benefit families and the community.

The third stage is supporting the volunteers, this refers to the review of organizational structures, policies, and practices to identify what can obstruct the volunteer’s participation. Extension’s support for Hispanic volunteers is essential for their retention. Following are several ways extension can provide support:

- If volunteers are only fluent in Spanish, have Spanish speaking staff available to answer any questions.
- Avoid out of pocket expenses for the volunteers.
- Simplify paperwork and give clear explanations of what the paperwork is for.
- Ask for input and take into account the volunteers ideas.
- Provide a diverse selection of programs that might interest the volunteers.

**Training for extension staff to value diversity.** Understanding cultural differences, especially those related to preferred style of communication are important when working with Hispanics. Extension professionals need to be aware and conscious of values in their own culture, as well as sensitive to differences in other cultures. Training should emphasize (Guion & Brown, 2005; Schaub & Castania, 2001) the following aspects:
• Extension agents should have an understanding of historical power differences (i.e. social economic status, opportunities available and mindsets).
• Present-day behaviors that are a consequence of the history of the group’s survival.
• Ability to empathize cross culturally.
• Being able to accept multiple perspectives.
• Being able to observe mindfully without passing judgment.
• Being able to adapt ones communication style to others.

It is essential that extension professionals become more culturally aware, responsive and competent because of the increasingly diverse populations in the county (Guion, Chattaraj & Sullivan-Lytle, 2005). Florida extension should take advantage of the “Strengthening Programs to Reach Diverse Audiences” online course (Guion, Broadwater, Caldwell, Chattaraj, Goddard & Sullivan-Lytle, 2003). This course was designed to provide extension and other community-based educators the basic skills to begin creating more effective and culturally relevant programs. It also focuses on increasing an educator’s cultural competence in three areas: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. In other words the course addresses the following: what a person knows, what a person feels and how a person acts in regards to diversity. This online course consists of six units.

• Unit 1: Understanding diversity to design programs.
• Unit 2: Planning programs to break down cultural barriers.
• Unit 3: Marketing programs to diverse audiences.
• Unit 4: Maximizing assets of diverse communities to enhance programs.
• Unit 5: Effective instruction with diverse audiences.
• Unit 6: Working with diverse audiences over time.

**Future Research Needed**

Additional research needed to increase Hispanic enrollment in traditional 4-H clubs should include:
• Multi-method research that demonstrates the impact a traditional 4-H club has on Hispanic youth.
• Factors that can contribute to promoting voluntarism among Hispanics.
• Development of culturally appropriate programs for Hispanic youth.
• Impact of culturally appropriate programs in the enrollment of Hispanic youth.
• The effect of building partnerships/relationships with Hispanic community.
• Establishment of traditional 4-H clubs in the southwest of Miami-Dade County.

Summary

Chapter 5 provided the discussion of the key findings and their relation to other studies, recommendations drawn from the conclusion of the study and future research needed. The remainder of the document includes the appendices and the structured interview guides for the participants.
APPENDIX A
THE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Empowerment | 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. |
|             | 8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community. |
|             | 9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. |
|             | 10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. |

| Boundaries & Expectations | 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts. |
|                          | 12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. |
|                          | 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior. |
|                          | 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adult models positive, responsible behavior. |
|                          | 15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior. |
|                          | 16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. |

| Constructive Use of Time | 17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. |
|                         | 18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. |
|                         | 19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. |
|                         | 20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week. |

| Commitment to Learning | 21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school. |
|                       | 22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning. |
|                       | 23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. |
|                       | 24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school. |
|                       | 25. Reading for pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week. |

| Positive Values | 26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people. |
|                | 27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. |
|                | 28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. |
|                | 29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.” |
|                | 30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. |
|                | 31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. |

| Social Competencies | 32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. |
|                    | 33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. |
|                    | 34. Cultural competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. |
|                    | 35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. |
|                    | 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. |

| Positive Identity | 37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.” |
|                  | 38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. |
|                  | 39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.” |
|                  | 40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. |

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APPENDIX B
MODERATOR’S ASSENT TEXT FOR THE FOCUS GROUPS WITH PARTICIPANTS UNDER 18

Good evening/afternoon, I’m very glad that you were able to join us. My name is Gina María Canales, I am a student from the University of Florida. I am doing a study about 4-H, and would like for you to help with it. If you don’t know what 4-H is, I will explain to you what it is and then we will talk about it, and we will discuss whether you would like to be a part of it or not.

You do not have to answer any questions you don’t feel like answering and you can leave the group discussion at any time. I want you to know that is up to you to participate or not and this has nothing to do with school and your grades. So, would you like to participate?

Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. (This is a research project and there are no sales involved. You will not be requested to volunteer or attend any future events or programs). Please speak up with only one person speaking at a time. We are tape recording the session because we do not want to miss any of your comments. If several are talking at the same time, the tape will become garbled and we will miss your comments. We will be on a first name basis today, and in our later reports, there will not be any names associated with your comments. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

Our session will last about 1-2 hours. We will not be taking a formal break. The rest rooms are ______ and refreshments are ________. Feel free to leave the table for either of these, or if you wish to stretch, but please do so quietly. We have placed name cards in the table in front of you to help us remember each other’s names.

Today we will be discussing your thoughts, opinions, and experiences about your participation (or not) in 4-H traditional clubs. We are interested in all your ideas and comments and there are no right or wrong answers but rather different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others have said. Please keep in mind that we are interested in negative comments as well as positive ones, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

I am going to ask the first question differently from the remainder of the questions. I will ask the first question, then pause to allow you to form your thoughts. Then I will ask each of you to respond to the first question. After this, anyone may respond to any question or discussion at any time.

Let’s begin with the first question.
APPENDIX C
MODERATOR’S INTRODUCTORY TEXT FOR THE FOCUS GROUPS

Good evening/afternoon and welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of on traditional 4-H clubs. My name is Gina Canales, a graduate student from the University of Florida; I am from the beautiful country of Honduras. Assisting me today is __________. We are gathering information about 4-H programs in the county. We have invited people with similar experiences to share their perceptions and ideas on this topic. You were selected because you have certain things in common that are of interest to us. You are all ________. We are particularly interested in your views because you are representative of others in the Hispanic community.

Today we will be discussing your thoughts, opinions, and experiences about your participation (or not) in 4-H traditional clubs. We are interested in all your ideas and comments and there are no right or wrong answers but rather different points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others have said. Please keep in mind that we are interested in negative comments as well as positive ones, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

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Our session will last about 1-2 hours. We will not be taking a formal break. The rest rooms are _______ and refreshments are _______. Feel free to leave the table for either of these, or if you wish to stretch, but please do so quietly. We have placed name cards in the table in front of you to help us remember each other’s names.

I am going to ask the first question differently from the remainder of the questions. I will ask the first question, then pause to allow you to form your thoughts. Then I will ask each of you to respond to the first question. After this, anyone may respond to any question or discussion at any time.
APPENDIX D
FOCUS GROUP YOUTH INVOLVED IN 4-H

Start with an ice breaker to get the children involved, this where everyone introduces themselves. Ice breaker can be the knot and unknot activity

1. **When you hear the word 4-H what comes to mind?**

2. **Let’s talk about how you first found out about 4-H?**
   - **Listen for**
     - Parents
     - Friends
     - Church
     - School
     - Word of mouth
   - **Probe if necessary**

3. **Tell us what you think is the purpose of 4-H.**

4. **Let’s talk about how long have you been involved in 4-H.**
   - **Follow up**
     - 4a. To what level are you involved?
       - Local, county, district, state or national
       - Describe this involvement

5. **Tell us if you participate in any other youth programs**
   - **Listen for**
     - After school programs
     - Church
     - Sports
     - Boy/Girl scouts
     - YMCA
     - Boys/Girls club
     - Others
   - Moderator can list them on the flip chart and read them out loud to the kids to see if we have missed anything
6. What are the benefits of participating in 4-H? Take a moment and think about it and write these down in a piece of paper. When you are finished, we will share these with each other.
• Wait a few minutes for the kids to complete their list
• List the benefits on the flip chart
• Are there any others we want to add?

7. Tell us what projects you have been involved with.
• List them on the flip chart
Follow up
7a. Are there any projects that would like to do, that you have not yet got into?
• List them on the flip chart
• Discuss them and find out why they want to do these projects and why haven’t they done them yet (listen for: they could be fun, it is something I want to learn about, probe if necessary)

8. Let’s talk about what should a good 4-H program look like?
• List ideas on the flip chart and read them out loud to the kids and discuss them
Listen for
⇒ Having parents involved
⇒ Having a good club leader
⇒ Hands-on activities
⇒ Trips out of town
⇒ Life skills such as: public speaking, leadership, responsibility

9. Do you know the extension agent?
Follow up
9a. What do you know about that person?

10. How would you describe your current 4-H leader

11. Suppose you were trying to get friends to participate in 4-H. What would you say to them?
Follow up:
11a. Tell us if you have told your friends about 4-H.
11b. If so, have your friends gotten involved in 4-H.
If they did not get involved
11c. Why do you think they did not get involved?

12. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn’t?
APPENDIX E
FOCUS GROUP FOR PARENTS OF YOUTH INVOLVED IN 4-H

1. Tell us your name and one thing that you would like us to know about your child, for example, one thing that your child does to make you smile.

2. When you hear the word 4-H what comes to mind?

3. Let’s talk about how you first found out about 4-H programs.
Listen for
- TV
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Flyer
- Friends
- Church
- School
- Word of mouth
Probe if necessary

4. What do you think is the purpose of 4-H programs?

5. Tell us how long has your child been involved in 4-H programs.
Follow up
5a. To what level are they involved
- Local, county, district, state or national
- Describe this involvement

6. Tell us how accessible 4-H programs are to your family.
Follow up
6a. How does your child get to 4-H meetings?
- Family, neighbors, friends or other members
6b. Is the time, day and location accessible for you?
6c. Is it easy for your child to get to the location where the programs or meetings are being held?

7. What are the benefits of your child participating in 4-H programs? Take a moment and write these down on a piece of paper. When you are finished, we will share these with each other.
- Pause and wait a few minutes for participants to complete their list
- List the benefits on a flip chart
- After discussing the list on the flip chart ask: Are there any other benefits we did not mention?
8. Tell us how you feel about your child participating in 4-H.
   • Encourage the group to tell us about the positive things first, after citing the positive we can ask if there is any negative things the kids say about 4-H
   • Probes
     ⇒ Is fun for them
     ⇒ They learn about interesting things
     ⇒ They hang around with their friends
     ⇒ They learn new skills
     ⇒ They learn how to relate to others

9. What should a good 4-H program look like?
   • Pass out handouts and rank the items
   • Explain to the participants that they have to rank the qualities from strongly agree to strongly disagree
   • If there is a literacy problem the moderator can walk them through it
   • Are there any other qualities we did not mention?
   • Collect the handouts

10. Suppose you were trying to encourage other parents to get their children involved in 4-H programs. What would you say?
   Follow up:
   10a. Tell us if you have told other parents about 4-H.
   10b. If so, have these parents involved their child in 4-H?
   If they did not get involved in 4-H
   10c. Why do you think they did not get involved?

11. What would it take to get you to participate as a 4-H volunteer?

12. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn’t?
APPENDIX F
FOCUS GROUP YOUTH NOT INVOLVED IN 4-H

Start with an ice breaker to get the children involved, this where everyone introduces themselves. Ice breaker can be the knot and unknot activity

1. Let’s talk about youth programs in your community?
   Follow up
   1a. What programs do you know about?

2. Tell us if you are involved in any youth programs?
   Listen for
   • After school programs
   • Church
   • Sports
   • Boy/Girl scouts
   • YMCA
   • Boys/Girls club
   • Others
   Moderator can list them on the flip chart and read them out loud to the kids to see if we have missed anything

3. Have you ever heard of 4-H programs?
   If the answer is yes, follow up
   3a. What do you know about 4-H programs?
   3b. Have you ever been involved in 4-H?
   3c. If not, why have you not been involved?

The moderator will give a brief description of 4-H (Brief history, what it is, what it stands for) and the principle benefits that it provides youth.

4. Think about how a program like 4-H would benefit you? Take a moment and think about it and write these down on a piece of paper. When you are finished, we will share these with each other.
   • Wait a few minutes for the kids to complete their list
   • List the benefits on the flip chart
   • Are there any other we want to add?

5. Would you be interested in participating in a 4-H program?
   Probe:
   Why? Why not?
6. Let’s talk about what a good 4-H program looks like?
   • List them on the flip chart and read them out loud to the kids and discuss them
   **Listen for**
   ⇒ Having parents involved
   ⇒ Having a good club leader
   ⇒ Hands-on activities
   ⇒ Trips out of town
   ⇒ Life skills such as: public speaking, leadership, responsibility

7. What characteristics do you think the person that leads a 4-H program should have?

8. Suppose you were trying to get friends to participate in 4-H. What you say to them?

9. What would it take to get you to participate in 4-H?

10. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn’t?
APPENDIX G
FOCUS GROUP PARENTS OF YOUTH NOT INVOLVED IN 4-H

1. Tell us your name and one thing that you would like us to know about your child, for example, one thing that your child does to make you smile.

2. Let’s talk about youth programs in your community
   Follow up
   2a. What programs do you know about?

3. Tell us if your child is involved in any youth programs
   Listen for
   • After school programs
   • Church
   • Sports
   • Boy/Girl scouts
   • YMCA
   • Boys/Girls club
   • Others

4. Have you ever heard of 4-H programs?
   If the answers is yes, follow up
   4a. What do you know about 4-H programs?
   4b. Have you and your child ever been involved in 4-H?
   4c. If not, why have you and your child not been involved?

   The moderator will give a brief description of 4-H (Brief history, what it is, what it stands for) and the principle benefits that it provides youth.

5. Think about how a program like 4-H would benefit your child. What comes to mind?
   • List the benefits on a flip chart
   • After discussing the list on the flip chart ask: Are there any other benefits we did not mention?

6. Would you be interested in allowing your child to participate in a 4-H?
   Probe
   Why? Why not?
7. **What should a good 4-H program look like?**
   - Pass out handouts and rank the items
   - Explain to the participants that they have to rank the qualities from strongly agree to strongly disagree
   - If there is a literacy problem the moderator can walk them through it
   - Are there any other qualities we did not mention?
   - Collect the handouts

8. **Suppose we are trying to encourage parents to get their children involved in 4-H. What would you say?**

9. **What would it take to get you to allow your children to participate in 4-H?**
   **Follow up**
   9a. Would you have time and ability to take your child to meetings?
   **Probe**
   - Weekly
   - Monthly

10. **Would you like to receive information about 4-H?**
    **Follow up**
    10a. How would you like to receive the information?
    - Other parents
    - Friends
    - Church
    - School
    - Word of mouth
    - TV
    - Radio
    - Newspaper
    - Flyer

11. **Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn’t?**
APPENDIX H
QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INTERVIEW OF 4-H PROFESSIONALS

1. Tell me your name and how long have you been working/involved with 4-H?
   ✓ Possible follow up: Were you involved in 4-H as a child? If yes, share with me your experience.

2. Tell me about you current programs?
   ✓ Possible follow up: do you have programs that are specifically oriented to Hispanics? If yes, what type of program is it?

3. How do you determine the content of your programs?
   ✓ Possible follow up: did you do a needs assessment? Do you read articles/writings of what has/has not worked? Do you ask other 4-H agents? Do you ask your volunteers?
4. Tell me what a traditional 4-H club is and how it differs from your other programs?
   ✓ Possible follow up: what are the main characteristics of you clubs? How diverse are the 4-H clubs in your county?

5. Let’s talk about the diverse population within the county, how diverse is it?
   ✓ Possible follow up: what is the highest minority within the county? How does this impact your programs? How does extension deal with diversity? Are there any benefits of working with a diverse clientele?

6. Let’s focus on the Hispanics, how willing are Hispanics to participate in your programs or traditional 4-H clubs?
   ✓ Possible follow up: do you have any Hispanic 4-H leaders? If not, what do you think the reasons are?

7. What do you think of working within the Hispanic population?
   ✓ Possible follow up: have you faced any barriers? If yes, share with me your experience. Is the diversity among Hispanics a barrier or an opportunity to the implementation of programs? Is the language a barrier? Could it be the lack of knowledge about 4-H?
8. What skills or talents do you expect 4-H leaders to have?

- Follow-Up: What are the most important duties of a 4-H leader? How does extension encourage potential adults to take on responsibilities such as serving as a 4-H leader? Do you think that within the Hispanics you work with, you can find 4-H leaders? What are the strategies you use for the recruitment of 4-H leaders? Do you provide any training to the 4-H leaders? If yes, what type of training?

9. Typically, why do 4-H members or their parents withdraw from 4-H programs or traditional 4-H clubs

- Possible Follow-Up: What factors are involved in a 4-H member or their parent’s decision to leave the program or club?

10. What educational programs would you like to see offered for the Hispanic population?

- Possible Follow-Up: What skills do Hispanic members most need?

11. How feasible would it be to have a program oriented specifically for Hispanics?

- Possible Follow-Up: What would be the main barriers to do this?
12. What would you recommend other 4-H agents do in order to increase their Hispanic participation within 4-H?


13. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn’t?
APPENDIX I
INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Hispanic Involvement in 4-H Programs

Please read this consent form document before you decide to participate in this study

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to determine Hispanic’s perception about the 4-H programs offered by the Florida Cooperative Extension System in order to improve and develop programs that focus on their needs. The overall purpose is to increase the ability of extension to respond to the needs of Hispanics.

What you will be asked to do in the study: You will be asked to participate in a focus group where you are going to share your experiences, perceptions and opinions of the 4-H program in which you participate. These findings will benefit future 4-H program planning in that 4-H youth development agents and states specialists will be aware of the impact that 4-H club experience has on the positive development of Hispanic youth.

Time required: 2 hours

Risk and Benefits: Participation in this study will not put anyone at any risk for physical or economic harm, nor create any psychological risk greater than the experienced in daily life. There is no direct benefit to participants. There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality, Voluntary participation and Right to withdraw from the study: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my faculty supervisor’s office. When the study is completed and the database has been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You have the right to withdraw consent for your participation at any time without consequence.

Number of participants that will be recruited: The maximum number of participants that will be recruited is thirty-two.

Whom to contact if you have any questions about the study: Gina Maria Canales, Graduate Student, Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, 352-392-0502, gcanales@ufl.edu, fax 352-392-9585
**Supervisor:** Dr. Nick Place, Associate Professor 305 Rolfs Hall P.O. Box 110540 Gainesville, FL 32611, 352-392-0502 ext.227, nplace@ufl.edu, fax 352-392-9585

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:** UFIRB Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone number 352-392-0433

**Agreement:** I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have a copy of this description.

Participant: __________________________  Date: __________________

Principal Investigator: __________________  Date: __________________
LIST OF REFERENCES


Erickson, E.H. (1950). Childhood & society (2nd ed.).


Ladewig, H., & Thomas, J.K. (1987). Does 4-H make a difference? The 4-H alumni study. Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gina Maria Canales Hernández was born in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on November 4, 1976. Between 1994 and 1998, she attended Zamorano, “Escuela Agricola Panamerica,” where she earned the Bachelor of Science in agriculture with a minor in natural resources. After graduating, she worked for 4 years in a rural development program “Programa de Manejo de los Recursos Renovable de la Cuenca de El Cajón.” In 2003 she was granted a Fulbright Scholarship to continue her graduate studies at the University of Florida in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication.