A Program Planning Outline for Camps
Virginia Bourdeau and Mary Arnold

Introduction
Unless you launched a completely new 4-H camp program when you arrived in your county, you probably inherited a camp program with a set schedule, traditions and location. This guide is an invitation to take a step back from the camp program you inherited and decide if it is really the program you want to deliver. The exercises below use logic modeling to help camp program planners design quality camp programs. A step-by-step approach to analyze your current camp program is provided. Invest some time in taking both a macroscopic and microscopic look at your camp program and determining if there are opportunities for improvement.

Exercise 1- Find your Path
In The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness (Covey, 2004) defines pathfinding as finding shared vision, values and strategic priorities within groups. Do you have a current mission statement or vision statement for your camp program?

Take a few moments to write down your personal vision and values for your camp. Remember that your camp’s vision should be compatible with the mission and vision of the Oregon 4-H program:

The mission of 4-H is to teach subject matter and life skills through an intentional process that helps young people meet key developmental needs. 4-H produces five functionally valued outcomes of competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and compassion. Our vision is for all youth to experience economic and social success in adulthood while making positive contributions to their communities.

If, after you complete these exercises, you identify areas where you want to make changes in the camp program you might work with your camp committee to develop shared vision, values and strategic priorities, then complete the exercises in this guide as a group. This will allow your committee the opportunity to assist in identifying where improvements could be made and to develop shared ownership of, and leadership for, change.
Exercise 2- Identify who you Reach

Who participates in your camp program? Campers, counselors-in-training (CITs), youth counselors, college-age staff and adults are some examples. Make a chart with your list of participants on the left and a wide column on the right. In the right-hand column write some needs of each group of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Needs of this group:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campers</td>
<td>Practice group living skills, gain knowledge about nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITs</td>
<td>Practice leadership skills, learn how to “parent” campers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Counselors</td>
<td>Practice teamwork and leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 3- Identify your Outputs: What you do

Find a copy of your current camp schedule and a set of highlighter pens in as many colors as you can locate. Use the highlighter pens to put the individual daily camp activities into categories. The categories are your camp’s current outputs. They may include meals, chores, recreation, crafts, classes, rest/bedtimes and so on. Make a list of your camp’s outputs.

In Exercise 2 you listed some of the groups your camp program reaches. Outputs also include who you reach. Think about the number of kids and counselors the camp is reaching. An important part of logic modeling includes understanding if your program is “worth it” given how many people you have participating.

Exercise 4- Identify your Inputs: The Resources you Have

Make a list of your camp’s current inputs. For example, you know that to serve meals, an output, you will need inputs such as (1) food and (2) a cook. When planning for activities or classes, you will need instructors with specific skills. The instructor input may change based on your planned outputs and outcomes.

As we continue through the exercises you will see that Exercises 3, 4 and 5 may not always happen in a linear way; often times as you work through these steps you will need to go back and modify the others. Sometimes you know what your inputs are. At other times you will choose to change your inputs so you can provide a particular target output and outcome. You should continue to adjust your input list as you plan your program to be sure you have the needed inputs to deliver your planned outputs and outcomes.

Exercise 5- Outcomes

Now look at the information you have gathered. What participant outcomes are you currently achieving with the existing inputs and outputs? Remember, outcomes are the result of what you do in your camp program. For examples, what do camp participants learn? What skills are developed? What attitudes or behaviors are changed? What aspirations are inspired? As we move through the next exercises you may
want to use the logic model and the Oregon 4-H Program Model for reference. See the Appendix for copies.

Because you are analyzing an established camp program this guide asked you to start by listing the existing inputs and outputs. Now record your camp’s current outcomes. At this point you may discover that your inputs and outputs are not aligned with your intended outcomes.

Now pretend you DO have the opportunity to start a new camp! One a new sheet of paper select and record some desirable camp program outcomes. You can plan for short, medium or long term outcomes. Most camps will be targeting short and medium term outcomes. Short term outcomes generally refer to the learning objectives of the program. Medium term outcomes generally refer to an action or behavior change that should result from participation in the program.

Fill in the blank in the following sentence: “After participating in my exceptionally well planned and organized camp program campers will ______________________________.” Ok- Corny! - but you get the idea! Write at least one outcome statement for each of the groups of camp participants you listed in Exercise 2.

**Exercise 6- Cycle Back**

Review your inputs and outputs and adjust them to support your new or revised camp outcomes.

**Exercise 7- Being Intentional**

Now take a microscopic look at each output of your camp program. Every output should contribute to one or more outcomes. It will take some time to analyze all your outputs carefully. In fact, you may not do it all in one month or even one year. You might involve your camp leadership or camp committee in the process. Keep your logic model handy.

For this example the output of camp education classes will be examined. Classes should do more than keep campers busy for a set period of time. There should be a theme or plan used to select class topics and instructors. This might be nature, nutrition or arts and crafts. The classes you provide should meet the needs of the participants you listed in Exercise 2 and help the participants to meet the outcomes you listed in Exercise 5.

Let’s say that in Exercise 5 the blank was filled in this way:

> “After participating in my exceptionally well planned and organized camp program campers will ______________________________.” Ok- Corny! - but you get the idea! Write at least one outcome statement for each of the groups of camp participants you listed in Exercise 2.

A class on Birds is selected to meet the educational content outcomes and the structure of the class will provide youth development outcomes as well. That’s the intentional part. You select the classes (outputs) and presenters (inputs) because they will help you deliver on your proposed outcomes.

In the Bird class campers will:

- work cooperatively in pairs (short term outcome) to construct bird houses (output).
• learn why it is important to provide cavity nesting sites for birds in urban areas. (short term outcome)
• want to take their bird house home (short) and place it in their neighborhood. (medium term outcome)

The instructor for the Bird class is from the local Audubon group. She will explain why some species of birds need cavities to nest in, how each type of nest box meets a specific bird’s needs and where each type of nest box should be placed. She will help campers build a nest box to take home and give each camper a handout with information to share with parents. The handout will ask parents to help the camper install the nest box in a particular way and provide tips for annual nest box cleaning and maintenance.

The class is structured so that the campers work in pairs to construct their bird houses. They will need to do some problem solving, use teamwork and social skills and practice personal safety to cooperatively build the nest boxes without smacking anyone’s fingers with the hammer. The invitation to take the bird house home, share the information with parents and take action to install and maintain the box gives campers a chance to practice concern for others (bird’s needs), and learning to learn; this is also a service learning opportunity.

The Bird class is intentionally selected to help meet planned outcomes. What do you do about a camp volunteer who has taught the same class for ten years on a topic that does not target any of your planned outcomes? If its only one volunteer you may be able to live with it. If all your volunteers, and therefore all your classes, are missing the outcome target its time to provide leadership for change.

Classes are a big part of the camp experience, but they are just one output on your list. Work on being intentional about each of your outputs. Are there things on your output list that really do not contribute to your camp program, but “it’s always been done that way?” Are meal times an opportunity for education about nutrition? food choices? food waste? or alternative diet needs? Besides the need to keep the toilet paper stocked in the restrooms, why do campers do chores? Chores provide life skill building opportunities such as teamwork, contributions to group effort and responsible citizenship. When campers take a hike, do they learn to stay on the trails, avoid bears and poison oak, and return safely to camp? This is an opportunity to build the life skill personal safety.

**Exercise 8 Cycle Back**
Review your inputs, outputs and outcomes again to check for congruency.

**Exercise 9- Evaluation**
Now that you have an “exceptionally well planned and organized camp program” how will you document your success? With an evaluation, of course!

What are some ways the planned short and medium term outcomes of the Bird class can be measured? For short term outcomes you could design a camper survey to measure:
• camper’s pre-post knowledge gain about the needs of cavity nesting birds
• camper’s awareness of how they can help cavity nesting birds.
To measure some medium term outcomes an evaluation could be mailed to camper families the following spring. The evaluation would ask if families placed their nest box in their neighborhood and if it is inhabited. This will show if they took some action to help cavity nesting birds and if they are interested enough in birds to notice if the nest box is being used.

**Exercise 10- Peer Validation**

Your “exceptionally well planned and organized camp program” is a huge success and you have the evaluations to prove it. You did your homework and were intentional about your camp program planning. Now it’s time to share this information with your peers so they can learn from your success. Give a presentation at a conference or write an article to share what you have learned. Congratulations! You are a leader in 4-H Youth Development.

**References**

**Appendix**
The Oregon 4-H Youth Development Model
The Logic Model
The mission of 4-H is to teach subject matter and life skills through an intentional process that helps young people meet key developmental needs. 4-H produces five functionally valued outcomes of competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and compassion. Our vision is for all youth to experience economic and social success in adulthood while making positive contributions to their communities.
## Logic Model

### Situation

**Inputs**
- *What we invest*
  - Staff
  - Volunteers
  - Time
  - Money
  - Materials
  - Equipment
  - Technology
  - Partners

**Outputs**
- *What we do*
  - (program activities)
    - Workshops
    - Meetings
    - Facilitation
    - Product Dev.
    - Training
    - Curriculum
- *Who we reach*
  - (Participation)
    - Participants
    - Customers
    - Citizens

### Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumptions:
1)  
2)  
3)