

Exploring Cultures through the Clothes They Wear **Patreese Ingram and Jan Scholl**

Purpose:

In the early 2000s, several Pennsylvania 4-H curriculum committees determined there was a need for young people to study cultural awareness . The idea was to choose a relevant secondary subject matter interesting enough for teens—foods and clothing. Since our adult volunteers often also need as much assistance with diversity issues as young people, a member/leader guide was the selected format. In 2003, the project *Breads Around the World* was published and very popular. After this, a 5-year effort went into researching and developing the *Exploring Clothing from Cultures Around the World* project publication. This 44-page member/leader manual was published in 2008.

The objectives of the project were to help young people and adults:

1. understand culture through clothing and clothing customs
2. appreciate clothing design and customs from different cultures and countries.

In order to accomplish the objectives, we selected six types of dress from hundreds of world cultures as a way of helping youth and adults begin to learn about various types of clothing and customs. We designed activities that would make the information more relevant to the life of a teen. In addition, a step-by-step section on head wraps was included and a record book for those involved in the 4-H program. (School and other youth groups use our materials too).

Audience:

A thousand teens 13-18 in the Pennsylvania 4-H program was our main audience, but we have also given presentations and distributed the materials to more than 200 adults, family and consumer science teachers and professionals, 20 youth Extension and outreach seminars, professional improvement sessions, and classes throughout PA. Sometimes the publication was used in a club project that included ages 8-18. In this type of setting, older members help the younger ones and the activities are modified by the volunteer leader.

Marketing/promotion:

The project was made available through the college publication distribution center and the various presentation given throughout the state. Before publication, in-services were conducted to peak interest in the project and secure additional content , clothing and people willing to be photographed. A state Extension in-service was held in 2006, for Extension educators taught by the authors and guest presenters from various countries. In 2007, a presentation was given at the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Meeting in Reno, NV and at the annual meeting of the International Council for Innovation that was held in Beijing China.

After publication in 2008, the project manual was shown at various curriculum showcases, including one at the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in Milwaukee and the Curriculum Conference of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction in Antalya, Turkey. Information About the project with photographs was also included in the College's monthly publication. Additional marketing to 4-H audiences was through e-mail and county newsletters.

Role of Each Entrant for the Project:

Patreese Ingram, Extension Diversity Specialist, researched and wrote much of the content. She contacted people for the photographs and was available at every photo shoot for clarification. She developed the clothing collection that was photographed later became a traveling collection in a suitcase used at presentations to show and allow individuals to touch and try on the individual garments. Jan Scholl, 4-H curriculum developer, developed the objectives, activities and the record book. She was involved with several photo shoots, provided transportation, reviewed content and located some of the garments for a traveling suitcase collection. Sookyong Lee, who has recently relocated to Korea, was the graphic designer. We also utilized the assistance of the international groups on campus to find people that were photographed, many of whom were faculty, graduate students and individuals from the community.

Ninety percent of the photographs (168) were taken in 2007 and 2008 in the College of Agricultural Sciences' studio at Penn State University. Extension educator, Wanda Braymer, took six of the photographs. Ten of the photographs were purchased. An outside artist was hired to create the graphic on page 9. Those who were photographed signed releases. The Amish photographs were not taken of actual Amish, but with people with Amish heritage that allowed us to take photographs of their images. The clothing, however, is authentic.

Though the publication is still new, we have received widespread acclaim for our 4-H project. It was noted that even for those cultures that are not included in the publication, enough information was given that young people could use the project to study, for example, clothing worn in other countries. The project also served as a way of closing the generation gap among young people and their grandparents. The youth also said that they were more likely to go up to a person wearing something different and ask them about it. Many noted that they learned about the practical aspects of the clothing designed for a certain climate. They also learned about how the caste system is reflected in clothing for most parts of the world, indicating your social and marital status, for example. Also, that fashion trends, even for the most traditional garments are present in other countries. Young people adapt new accessories, and ways of wrapping and wearing garments. Ideas from other countries and cultures find their way into American couture, too.

The cost of printing 3,000 copies of this 44-page publication was \$7,033 paid by the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education. Cost of photography and graphic design is very difficult to estimate in total as several different departments and photographers were involved in this effort and there is no access to salary information at our university. The bill for the graphic on page 9 was \$100.00. This was our first attempt at a four-color publication. We are particularly proud of it as it includes information and photographs of textiles, close-up details, head dress wrapping (very difficult to find in other publications). It also includes content that would require educators (without the benefit of this publication) an extensive library to supply the same information in order to reach the same or similar goals.