

Citizenship Education & Community Education

Active Citizen: Locally Active, Globally Connected

ACTIVE CITIZEN

LOCALLY ACTIVE, GLOBALLY CONNECTED

Importance Of Active Citizenship At National And Global Level

Active citizenship is a term used to describe the involvement of individuals in public life and affairs (communitysouthwark.org.uk).

- An active citizen is motivated by the sense of personal responsibility or by other ethical norms as well as other environmental issues i. e Global warming, Climate change etc. Thus one actively raise his voice to bring ethics in society, country and in world. For this purpose one participates either by civil participation or civic engagement. There may also be many other ways through which one engages with community. One also learns new skills, gains knowledge and develops understanding to make informed decisions. Based on these decisions that person participate in society at a local, national and international level to tackle problems, bring about change or even resist change to improve the condition of society. (citizenshipleicuni.weebly.com).thus it plays major roles in society. It
- Create a global identity and responsibility of one's.
- Make links between learning and the real word so economy of country grows it also brings benefits for schools and educational organizations at large.
- Enables persons to challenge existing structures and provides a nominating structure for community. Thus it Promote the quality of life in a country through both political and non political processes as it empowers people to influence the decisions which affect their lives.

- Promote positive relations between people from different backgrounds and addresses discrimination through engagement with different communities i. e local communities, global communities etc
- Provides a link for the local authority to connect with community groups by promoting consultation
- Facilitate and articulate a diverse range of views and interests. Thus it also teaches how to critically engage with their own as well as that of other people's beliefs
- Enables democratic participation on all levels, as well as enabling individuals to be active as individuals as well as a part of a group and society by raising sense of personal obligation, as well as the necessity of a communal global effort.
- Work out participation strategies for policies relevant to the environment and sustainability
- Explores fundamental political questions such as questions of sustainability, legitimacy of political power so it is vital for future of democracy as it hold their governments accountable. Active citizenship is mostly seen among youth so youth organizations should be more close to political system to bring about mega changes in political system.

Understanding community

It is vital to understand community in order to bring about or resist a change at national or international level. To understand a community it is foremost to having an interest or urge to understand community as well as skills such as Communication Skill, Thinking Skill, Social Skills etc.

There are different aspects of understanding community such as demographics (Age, Population No. Etc), History, Psychology (Culture, Beliefs, Values etc), Social Behavior, Physical Characteristics (Climate, Soil fertility etc, organize etc. The most important of these are History, Psychology and Social Behavior that one must know.

For understanding, do research, collect data and make a contact with community members. For this you must have a healthy relationship with someone or community so that one can easily share one's feelings or problems. So firstly work on production capability of a community. Let's have an example of family. If you want that your brother/sister make a cup of tea for you or do any task given by you, for that you will have to build a healthy relationship with your sister/brother. So firstly build trustworthy relationship by understanding others if you want to be understood. (R.Covey)

Listening Skill plays much important role to understand someone as it increases production capability (PC) which is necessary for production (P) or team-making. Through listening we understand problem of a society or of someone. There are different types of listening but an empathic and active listening is much helpful of all types of listening. To become a better listener:

- ✓ Firstly Set aside judgments based on his/her appearance
- ✓ Secondly listen seriously and commit yourself
- ✓ Thirdly understand his/her idea by using both part of brain (emotions, analyzing logically and critically) and keep in mind the main points. Eye contact is also compulsory but it must not be irritating.
- ✓ Fourthly suspend judgment until you listen the complete message
- ✓ Finally, note down it

*Note taking depends on you either note it immediately or after complete analysis of problem (need of community)

Identification of resources

Understanding of community is incomplete without knowing its assets/resources such as individual skills, physical space, associations, institutions, local economy etc. Knowing the community's strength make it easier to understand what kind of initiative must be taken to meet the community's need As well as people are likely feel more positive that they will must succeed.

Identification of resources is needed when community have talented, skilled and experienced members and you want to encourage residents to take responsibility and improve their community but can't provide traditional services to mobilize community.

Community member of all stripes and from all sectors should be involve in resource identification. These resources can be identified by knowing community size, available people, individual assets (skills),time required, financial resources and results (what action, how and will post online or not etc). For this regard surveys are taken and two important points are kept in mind.

- ✓ Why am I collecting this information?
- ✓ What do I want to use it for?

Other sources of information are also used such as Community websites, Newspapers, Friends, Colleague etc. Finally refine and make a list or map. This process of mapping is called mapping community assets. (section8.identifying community assets and resources)

*It will be quite helpful to Identify if an asset mapping activity has been done previously in the community.

**Examples of Community Assets that
Might be Included in an Asset Map**

Associations: Animal care groups Anti-crime groups Block clubs Business organizations Charitable groups Civic event groups Special needs groups Education groups Elderly groups Environmental groups	Physical Space: Gardens Parks Playgrounds Parking lots Bike paths Forest/forest preserves Picnic areas Campsites Fishing spots Duck ponds	
Institutions: Schools Universities Community colleges Hospitals Libraries Social service agencies Nonprofits Museums Fire departments Media	Individuals: Gifts, skills, capacities, knowledge and traits of: Youth Older adults Artists TANF recipients People with disabilities Students Parents Entrepreneurs	Local Economy: Business Consumer expenditures Merchants Chamber of commerce Business associations Banks Credit unions Foundations Institutional purchasing power

Source: Discovering Community Power; A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Your Organization's Capacity, Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J.; Asset-Based Community Development Institute, School of Education and Social Policy; Northwestern University, 2005.

Utilization of resources for development (community participation)

“AS AN INDIVIDUAL I COULD DO NOTHING. AS A GROUP WE COULD FIND A WAY TO SOLVE EACH OTHER'S PROBLEMS”

After identification of resources, implementation policies, planning, developing and delivering services are formulated. This is done through community involvement as it is responsive, reactive, strategic, generative, supportive, helping and engaging. Thus community develops:

- Self-reliance
- Critical awareness
- Problem solving skills

Program is entirely run by the community, except for some external financial and technical assistance. In this way a team is build up and then duties are assigned to each member according to his/her assets (skill set), time and financial resources. For effective team working, End (result) of a task is given as well as Don'ts to members (Stephen R. Covey).resource utilization can be used to:

- Find new ways to bring groups and organizations together
- Publicize to attract new businesses and other opportunities to community

Barriers to community participation

- An unfair distribution of work or benefits amongst people of community
- A highly individualistic society where there is little or no sense of community
- The feeling that a government or agency should provide the facilities
- Physical limits
- Cultural restrictions
- Language and literacy
- Misunderstandings
- Time

Strategic planning for development (community linkage and mobilization)

Strategic planning considers possible future events and trends, and then bases planning and resource allocation on anticipated changes. All the members must be motivated and encouraged to participate (community mobilization). In order to mobilize the community successfully, it is important to identify where the people's priorities lie and what it is that motivates them. And make sure that all community members are represented.

The basic premises behind strategic planning are:

1. A thorough understanding of the purpose for the community's existence i. e. knowing how your local economy and socio-political structure works.
2. Familiarity with the competition and a comparison of strengths and weaknesses.
3. Strategies that build on strengths and overcome weaknesses.

The final document should address these five questions

1. What do we want our community to become?
2. What are all the possible actions we can take to improve the quality of life in our community, given our vision statement above?
3. How do we organize and proceed to implement our plan?
4. Who is going to lead and who is going to follow to implement our plan?
5. Where do we find all the resources to support the implementation of our plan?