

UNIT III

Learning and Understanding our Individual role in Society

Overview

This unit shall orient you about Community Service and its importance in improving the quality of life. Moreover, the unit shall discuss the different types of communities and their characteristics. Lastly, ethical principles shall be thoroughly discussed as these matters are very important in dealing with the community through humanitarian services.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the unit, I will be able to:

1. Define Community and its different types;
2. Delimit the Fundamentals of Community Service;
3. Realize and formulate solutions on problems and issues in the Community;
4. Familiarize on approaches and methods in Community Organizing and Mobilization;
5. Adopt Ethics and Attitudes in Community Work to the group.

Setting Up

Name: _____

Course/Year and section: _____

Coretta Scott King says, "The Greatness of a Community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members".

Direction: From the quotation stated above, give your point of view or reflection by writing your answer on the space provided.

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Lesson Proper

What is Community?

A Community is a social unit (a group of living things) with commonality such as norms, religions, values, customs, or identity.

Communities may share a sense of place situated in a given geographical area (e.g. a country, village, town or neighbourhood) or in virtual space through communication platforms. Durable relations that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties also define a sense of community, important to their identity, practice, and roles in social institutions such as family, home, work, government, society, or humanity at large. Although communities are usually small relative to personal social ties, “community” may also refer to large group affiliations such as national communities, international communities, and virtual communities.

The English-language word “community” derives from the old French “*comuneté*” (currently “*Communauté*”), which comes from the Latin *communitas* “community”, “public spirit” (from Latin *communis*, “common”).

Human communities may share intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, and risks in common, affecting the identity of the participants and their degree of cohesiveness.

Key Concepts

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

In *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887), German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies describes two types of human association: *Gemeinschaft* (usually translated as “community”) and *Gesellschaft* (“society” or “association”). Tönnies proposed the *Gemeinschaft – Gesellschaft* dichotomy as a way to think about social ties. No group is exclusively one or the other. *Gemeinschaft* stress personal social interactions, and the roles, values, and beliefs based on such interactions. *Gesellschaft* stress indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and beliefs based on such interactions.

What are the elements of Community?

The important elements of the community are as follows:

1. Demographics
 - Characteristics of population
 - Tells about the movement of the population in the community that you will serve
2. History
 - Allows you to identify certain patterns of change and people’s way of adapting these changes that can be useful in plotting your activities
 - Events of the past that contributed to the development of the community
3. Understanding the economy, culture, and the community structures

- An economy consists of economic systems of a country or other area; the labour, capital and land resources; and the manufacturing, production, trade, distribution and consumption of goods and services of that area;
- Income level of the people
- Culture (Latin: *cultura*, lit. “cultivation”) ways of living of the people
- Structures physical, political, and social culture

Types of Community

1. Geographic Community is the most powerful force that causes the creation of the community in which the people’s mobility or day-to-day are confined within a limited by physical boundaries. They establish their culture by doing their activities within a common social environment.
2. Tribal Community. The cohesiveness of the community is strengthened by common social racial attributes and socio-cultural orientations that were passed on from generation to generation.
3. Symbolic Community. The community is founded on deep rooted submission to belief system. This community is oftentimes characterized by exclusivity which is driven by the people’s desire to freely express and practice their belief apart from discriminating view of others.
4. Built-up Community. Usually located in urban areas and is not always characterized by cohesiveness because the people’s socio-economic concerns prevail over the entire social environment.

Other Types of Communities

1. Interest – Communities of people who share the same interest or passion.
2. Action – Communities of people trying to bring about change.
3. Place – Communities of people brought together by geographic boundaries.
4. Practice – Communities of people in the same profession or undertake the same activities.
5. Circumstance – Communities of people brought together by external events/situations.

Community Service is when you work for free to help benefit the public or your community. Usually, students who choose to do community service do so volunteers, meaning that they choose to help out because they want to do so. Community service can have a lot of positive effects on students such as helping them to develop skills, making, and allowing them to improve the quality of life of others.

Community Service is a non- paying job performed by one person or a group of people for the benefit of the community or its institutions. Community service is distinct from volunteering, since it is not always performed on a voluntary basis. Personal benefits may be realized, but it may be performed for a variety of reasons including citizenship requirements, a substitution of criminal justice sanctions, requirements of a school or class, and requisites for receipt of certain benefits.

Engaging in community service provides students with the opportunity to become active members of their community and has a lasting, positive impact on society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables students to acquire life skills and knowledge, as well as provide a service to those who need it most.

Community organizing is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest.

Unlike those who promote more-consensual community building, community organizers generally assume that social change necessarily involves conflict and social struggle in order to generate collective power for the powerless. Community organizing has as a core goal the generation of durable power for an organization representing the community, allowing it to influence key decision-makers on a range of issues over time. In the ideal, for example, this can get community-organizing groups a place at the table before important decisions are made. Community organizers work with and develop new local leaders, facilitating coalitions and assisting in the development of campaigns.

Types of Community Engagement

1. Community engagement with a focus on community development or community building
2. Community participation in consultation and decision-making
3. Community engagement that helps organizations, businesses etc. to improve their service delivery or to achieve their goals
4. Community engagement as part of social change movements or as part of the work of voluntary community organizations

Approaches to Community Organization

Neighbourhood organizing is one form of community organizing. This is nothing but an effort by the community to solve the day-to-day problems and help those in need. There are three type approaches to neighbourhood organizing.

1. The Social Work Approach: In this approach, the society is viewed as a social organism and therefore the efforts are oriented towards building a sense of community. The community organizer whose role is of an "enabler or an advocate" helps the community identify a problem in the neighbourhood and strives to achieve the needed social resources by gathering the existing the social services and by lobbying with some in power to meet the needs of the neighbourhood. This method is more consensual and the neighbourhood is seen as a collective client.
2. The Political Activists Approach: Saul Alinsky, the Godfather of community organizing is the founder of this approach. The basic philosophy of this approach is based on his thinking that " more representative the organization the stronger the organization." In this approach the community is seen as a political entity and not as a social organism. Here, the neighbourhood is viewed as a potential power base capable of getting power. The role of the community organizer is to help the community understand the problem in terms of power and necessary steps are taken to mobilize the community. The problem of the neighbourhood is always identified as

absence of power and in the interest of gaining power for the neighbourhood the organizers are faced with conflicts with groups, interests and elites. Since most of the community organizers come from outside the community, it has faced the problems of equality of power relations and leadership in the community.

3. **Neighbourhood Maintenance/Community development Approach:** This approach has emerged out of both the previous approaches namely within the same neighbourhood movements. It is seen in the form of civic associations. This association uses peer group pressure to provide services in the community. They use this strategy to pressurize the officials to deliver services to the community but sometimes this approach takes the form of political activists' approach as they realize that their goals can be only achieved only through confrontations. In this approach we see the characteristics of de-emphasis on dissent and confrontation and these organizations view themselves as more proactive and development minded.
4. **Neighbourhood Development Approach:** Neighbourhood Model is the oldest model of community organization. This model has been practiced in India and in some of the underdeveloped countries. It has been used in the developmental activities. In general, it is believed that people living in a neighbourhood have the capacity to meet the problems they come across in their day-to-day life through their own efforts and resources. The main aspect here is that the community realizes its needs and takes appropriate steps to meet the needs of the community, which will bring greater satisfaction to all its members both individually and collectively. The role of the worker in this model is to induce a process that will sensitize the community and make the community realize its needs. Based on the value of self-sustenance the worker energizes the community and makes the community self-reliant, and not merely depending on the help from outside. So rather than providing services in the community, the communities are energized to meet its own needs. This model encourages the people to think for themselves rather
5. **System Change Approach:** As the name suggests, the system change model aims at developing strategies to either restructure or modify the system. Thus, it is termed as "System Change approach to community work". Although we find glimpses of this model gaining more acceptances, this has not become very popular. We know of various mechanisms that cater to the needs of the society. Such as education, health services housing, women empowerment, and employment. All these services are rooted through various systems and all these systems do have sub-systems. The fundamental aspect in this model is that due to various reasons the systems become dysfunctional. For example, the system of education as we have it today, reveals that the cities have better educational facilities as compared to the rural areas. This system (education policy) of education has generated disparities in the society. i.e. access to education, lack of basic facilities, trained staff, etc. The system instead of becoming a tool of empowering mechanism brings disparities between people of different socio-economic condition. So, the system has failed to achieve its objectives. Thus, the worker on observing this dysfunction in the community finds it important to develop strategies to restructure or modify the system.
6. **Structural Change Approach:** One of the most difficult and rarely practiced models of community work is structural change model. The society consists of small communities and it is nothing but "a web of relationships". These relationships of the people are formally structured by the respective countries' state policies, law and constitutions and informally by its customs, traditions etc. that determines the social rights of the individuals. The social structure in some of the societies is controlled by the state. Understanding the macro- structure of social relationship and its impact on the micro realities, the worker tries to mobilize the public opinion to radically

change the macro-structure. Thus the structural change model aims to bring a new social order, an alternative form of society which will transform the existing conditions at the micro-level. This can happen only if an alternative form of political ideology is adopted. This form of community work may originate from a community itself but it has wider coverage i.e. the entire society or nation. Sometimes this takes the shape of social action, which is another method of social work profession. Since the general situation in the developing countries is very peculiar, it is very difficult for the community worker to actually practice this model.

Ethics and Attitudes in Community Work

Ethical community work/engagement involves working to high ethical standards and so how we go about engagement is vitally important. The following are some of the principles:

1. Careful planning and preparation: Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.
2. Inclusion and demographic diversity: Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.
3. Collaboration and shared purpose: Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.
4. Openness and learning: Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities for effectiveness.
5. Transparency and trust: Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.
6. Impact and action: Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.
7. Sustained engagement and participatory culture promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support on going quality public engagement.

Additional Ethical Principles

1. Courage
2. Inclusiveness
3. Commitment
4. Respect & honesty
5. Flexibility
6. Practicability
7. Mutual obligation

What is Community Immersion?

Community immersion allows individuals who are not familiar with the people and communities where they will work immerse themselves in these settings. This gives them the opportunity to reflect on their assumptions, attitudes, and the knowledge base of their profession and to gain cultural competence. In the education field, it is an approach that has evolved with changing composition and diversity of schools and the continuing preponderance of white and female teachers.

How It Works

Communities become integral partners in educator preparation in different ways. Individuals can participate in:

- a residency program, where they live and work in a community and take courses for a specified period of time; and
- a field experience-based program, where methods courses are held in urban schools and summer exposures include exploring and learning about the community and interning with community agencies.

Why immersion is an important approach (strategy) in giving service to the communities?

- An old proverb says that “Experience is the best teacher”
- Through community immersion, the students will be exposed in further and other realities of life which they may or may not belong
- The role of the youth in the national/local development cannot be overemphasized. To reinforce this, are the very words of our national hero, “The youth is the hope of the Motherland”

Reference:

Sonia Gasilla ,Ed.d.Edeliza Dela Cruz-Lazo,Palino M. Mapue,NSTP (Literacy Training Service 1) Espinas,Arnold L.,Ferrer,Melchor P.,Dalanagin.Propecasio D.,Santos,Miguel R.,De Jesus Marilyn T.,Cabasag,Julius F.(2011)Reference test in NSTP.Mutya Publishing

Online Resources:

<https://medium.com/familyengagementplaybook/gfrp-community-immersion-84ff40545db0#:~:text=What%20It%20Is,and%20to%20gain%20cultural%20competence>

https://www.academia.edu/29905321/NSTP_lecture_notes