

# What Does Citizenship Mean to Me?

## Citizenship

Citizenship can be characterised as follows:

- It can be understood as more than just a status that is granted by a country.
- It is a relationship that a person has with the country he or she is a member of.
- It can be understood differently by different people.
- It can be understood differently over time, depending on a person's knowledge, lived experiences and aspirations, and understanding of the four attributes.

## Legal Status

A person can gain legal status as a citizen of a country by the following ways:

1. By country of birth
2. By descent
3. By marriage
4. By naturalisation

## Rights of Citizens

Citizens enjoy certain **rights** as members of a country.

- Rights refer to the freedom and privileges that citizens in a country have.
- Rights of citizens, which are usually laid out in the constitution, are protected by law and should be respected by everyone in the country.

# Obligations of Citizens

Being recognised as a citizen of a country also means having **obligations**. These are duties that citizens are required to fulfil by being members of the country.

An example of an obligation of male citizens in Singapore is to serve National Service (NS). Under the Enlistment Act introduced in 1967, 18-year-old male citizens and Singapore PRs are required to serve NS. Following the completion of full-time NS, they will be required to serve up to 40 days of Operationally Ready National Service per year, until the age of 40 or 50.

# Sense of Identity

## Shared Values

**Values** are principles and beliefs that influence a person's attitudes, thinking and behaviour. Values represent what is important to a person and help him or her prioritise, make decisions and exercise judgement.

**Shared values** refer to values that are embraced and seen as important by a group of people.

## Civic Participation

**Civic participation** refers to citizens actively taking part in public affairs. Public affairs are matters of general interest or concern to most people in society. Those who actively take part in public affairs may see civic participation as an important obligation they want to fulfil as citizens.

## Individual Participation

In 2020, Mr Andy Teo initiated the Temporary Academic Assistance project to connect students with volunteer tutors. Mr Teo saw this need when schools moved to full home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. He enlisted the help of tutors through social media to teach for free. In just a week, 250 volunteered to serve.

## Community Group Participation

### Informal Groups

When there is an issue or area of need that requires attention, people organise themselves into informal community groups to address concerns or specific need. These groups generally exist for a period of time needed to address the specific objectives. They may not be registered with the government.

### Formal Groups

Formal community groups have clear objectives and are officially registered with the government. They cater to specific needs and interests of society and generally devote their efforts over a sustained period of time.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social service agencies (SSAs) are examples of formal community groups. NGOs are not necessarily affiliated with and may not receive any funding from the government. On the other hand, SSAs are affiliated with the government through the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), which provides some coordination and funding.

**NGO:** Zero Waste Singapore is an NGO leading the drive towards zero waste in Singapore through education and advocacy. It engages the public, companies, schools and government agencies to discuss the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) in relation to food waste, plastic disposables and organisational waste.

**SSA:** SG Enable is dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities and promoting an inclusive society. Through workshops organised by SG Enable, participants learnt how to interact with consumers with disabilities and improve accessibility of products and services for them.