12

Community Engagement, Solidarity & Citizenship

First Quarter- Module 1:
The Importance of Studying Community Dynamics and Community Action in Relation to Applied Social Sciences

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The concepts of the community stand for something useful and desirable, and therefore, students should imbibe with the desire to help established a just and humane society/community.

This module explains the importance of studying community dynamics and community action in relation to applied social sciences and the learners’ future career options.

After going through this module, you are expected to:

- Explain the importance of studying community dynamics and community action in relation to applied social sciences.

Instructions:
Kindly read the story entitled “The Elephant and the Blind Men,” after reading there were some questions below. Use your answer sheet.

The Elephant and the Blind Men

Once upon a time, there lived six blind men in a village. One day the villagers told them, “Hey, there is an elephant in the village today.” They had no idea what an elephant is. They decided, “Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway.” All of them went where the elephant was. Everyone of them touched the elephant.

“Hey, the elephant is a pillar,” said the first man who touched his leg.

“Oh, no! it is like a rope,” said the second man who touched the tail.

“Oh, no! it is like a thick branch of a tree,” said the third man who touched the trunk of the elephant.

“It is like a big hand fan,” said the fourth man who touched the ear of the elephant.

“It is like a huge wall,” said the fifth man who touched the belly of the elephant.

“It is like a solid pipe,” said the sixth man who touched the tusk of the elephant.

They began to argue about the elephant, and everyone of them insisted that he be right. It looked like they were getting agitated. A wise man was passing by, and he saw this. He stopped and asked them, “What is the matter?” They said, “We cannot agree to what the elephant is like.” Each one of them told what he thought the elephant was. The wise man calmly explained to them, “All of you are right. The reason everyone of you is telling it differently because each one of you touched the different part of the elephant. So, the elephant has all those features what you all said.”

“Oh!” everyone said. There was no more fight. They felt happy that they were all right.

Questions:
1. Whose description of the elephant was correct?
2. What is the moral story of “The Elephant and the Blind Men?”
2. Please provide your own understanding about community.
3. What significance can this story have on the study of the community?

Lesson 1

The Importance of Studying Community Dynamics and Community Action in Relation to Applied Social Sciences

Discover

To “see” is to get to know and understand the community. It is prerequisite for judgment and action. To “judge” is to analyze and assess the community based on one’s knowledge. To “act” is to push for community action. The Community assessment will be the basis of the community engagement or action.

Community situations vary. Each community has its own context and realities. Those interested in working with a community must first have a clear picture and a good grasp of the entity they are trying to address. It is in appreciating the features and elements of a community that engagement processes and actions become relevant, acceptable, and appropriate. Without a deep and wide knowledge of a target community, interventions may emerge as exclusive, inappropriate, or totally insensitive to the members of the community.

What are the other gains you can derive from understanding a community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gains from Understanding Community Dynamics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides benchmarking data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before the undertaking of any community action or development intervention like a community project, it is important to establish benchmark data. The data illustrate the preliminary picture or image of the community. It serves as the initial community situationer or briefer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides preliminary project planning information</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is necessary to secure community information and feedback needed for the conceptualization of a project design or plan. Understanding community dynamics is the key to a sound and relevant community development plan. A community development action plan includes strategies and actions meant to enhance the quality of life in a community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides an idea of the community’s strengths and challenges</td>
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<td>An in-depth understanding of the community’s strengths and challenges guides the community-based project development team to identify the strengths and possible loopholes of the project design. Thus, it will make the design more feasible and realistic. The project development team involves the key stakeholders in the community, such as the community leaders and the representatives of the people who will be directly or indirectly affected by</td>
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<td>Provides an opportunity to understand the community’s dominant rules and norms.</td>
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There are many ways to understand and appreciate a community but there is no substitute to immersing and living with that community. Social development workers, social workers, social action people, and community organizers cannot escape what we call in Tagalog as “paglubog” or “pagbabad.” It is more than exposure; it means immersion. It is a process of living with people in order to feel, smell, and think like them.

Communities are generally defined by their common cultural heritage, language, beliefs, and shared interests. They may be classified as small such as the small place-based community of a barangay or coastal village, or large such as a region, state, or
nation. According to Murphy and Cunningham (2003), small communities have “defined territories and are given life by three interacting processes: (a) an underlying web of human relationships called as social fabric, (b) a unique community power structure, and (c) a set of resource flows that constitute a local economy.” Small communities are powerful producers of relationships which include kinship, friendship, neighbours, local institutions, and communication mechanisms that connect people to people (Murphy and Cunningham, 2003).

In sociology, we define community is a social group who follow a social structure within a society (culture, norms, values, status). They may work together to organize social life within a particular place, or they may be bound by a sense of belonging sustained across time and space.

The dynamics of a community are determined by its nature and structure and how it reacts with external or internal forces. It is thus important to recognize the characteristics and features of a community to understand why it acts and reacts in a certain way.

A community can be considered like an organism because it can function even if people come and go. It transcends the individual persons that make it up. Bartle (2010) further pointed out that “a community is a super-organic organism or system” made up of the thoughts, outlook, and conduct of individual human beings full of divisions and conflicts brought about by differences in religion, ethnicity, gender, access to resources, class, personality, opportunities, and a lot more. This reality indicates that to work in a community or to undertake community interventions is a challenging task. One must get to know first and foremost the community system. One must observe how the community acts and reacts to forces that are external and internal to its system. Development work requires understanding community dynamics and processes.

Having a sense of community unites us. Being a part of a community can make us feel as though we are a part of something greater than ourselves. It can give us opportunities to connect with people, to reach for our goals, and make us feel safe and secure. It’s important for every person to have a sense of community. Involvement with your community helps prepare people to become responsible and active citizens, who understand the challenges local people face and work to improve the quality of life through political and non-political processes.

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**Analyze**

“Lakbay-Utak” (Mental Tour)

Instructions:

1. Take a mental tour of a community, preferably a poor community that is familiar to you.
2. Imagine that you are investigating the community. Be quiet and let your mind travel slowly and be aware of what the exercise reveals.
3. Identify the power actors/players in the community. Who are the influential members of the community? What are the characteristics of these people? How do they influence the members of the community?
4. Your explanation will be evaluated based on the following:
<table>
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NOTE: This RUBRIC may apply all activities in this module.

Enrichment Activity

Activity 1:
Write your essay in your answer sheet.

Photo Essay
1. Does the scene below qualify as a form of community engagement? Why or why not?
2. Say something about the pictures below, cite the community dynamics.

Picture A

Picture B

Activity

Instructions:

1. Each one of you will come up with a definition and description of community.
2. Write the definition and illustrate the description on a piece of bond paper.
3. Explain your definition and illustration.

Remember

The community is one of the sociology’s oldest and most enduring objects of study and research. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) defined and shaped the concept of community from the scientific point of view. For most of us, “community is synonymous with belongingness, togetherness, camaraderie and similar state of peaceful social relations.
Pramila Aggarwal (2006) describes the community as a social organization that is considered fundamental to society such as, village or religious sect. Aggarwal (2006) furnishes us with several definitions of community:

- Clusters of individual lives make-up communities, societies, and cultures. To understand some of the complexities, complications, and confusions within the life of just one member of a community are to gain insights into the collective (Coles and Knowles, 2001);
- For Bill Lee (1992), community is simply a group of people who have something in common;
- For the Greeks, it means “fellowship,” that is, a group of people who come together for mutual support and to fulfil their basic needs.
- Boothroyd (1990) sees community as “a human system of more than two people in which the members interact personally over time, in which behaviour and activity are guided by collectively-evolved norms or collective decisions, and from which members may freely secede.”
- It is a collection of people who have become aware of some problem or some broad goals, who have gone through a process of learning about themselves and their environment, and have formulated a group objective” (Roberts, 1979).

From the given definitions above, we can surmise that the concept of community connotes a broad range of meanings. Forming a community depends on the individuals living in a certain location. For some, it takes the time to belong to a community, for some, it is easy and fast.

Sometimes, the word community is used to describe an organization or institution, such as workplace, a school or college/university to imply a common spatial bond. There are times that we use the term community to talk about people who have shared a common characteristic such as religion, caste, or language.

**Evaluation**

**Multiple Choice.** Choose the letter of the best answer among the given choices. Write the chosen letter on your notebook as your answer sheet.

1. Why it is that a community can be considered like an organism?
   - A. It is a unique community power structure.
   - B. It can function even if people come and go.
   - C. It is a set of resource flows that constitute a local economy.
   - D. It is an underlying web of human relationships called as social fabric.

2. How the dynamics of a community determined?
   - A. By its nature and structure and how it reacts with external or internal forces.
   - B. By their behavior or reaction can break or make community development interventions.
C. By the characteristics of a community may be attributed to the combination of the communities’ human resource.
D. By structures that have impact on local communities and also linkages that form collaborative works.

3. What will be the basis of the community engagement or action?

A. Community briefer
B. Community Assessment
C. Community Case Analysis
D. Proposal for Youth Community Plan

4. According to Murphy and Cunningham (2003), small communities have “defined territories and are given life by three interacting people processes, EXCEPT?

A. A unique community power structure.
B. A set of resource flows that constitute a local economy.
C. An underlying web of human relationships called as social fabric.
D. The capacity to influence the decision-making and distribution processes.

5. Community situations vary. Communities are generally defined based on following, EXCEPT?

A. Beliefs
B. Language
C. Personal Interest
D. Cultural Heritage

6. An understanding of the community members’ attitude and behaviour will give the project development team an idea whether the project will be supported or rejected or whether it can be negotiated with the people. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Provide benchmarking data
B. Provides preliminary project planning information
C. Makes networking and partnership building more favorable
D. Provides an occasion to gauge the attitude and behaviour of the community

7. The data illustrate the preliminary picture or image of the community. It serves as the initial community situationer or briefer. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Provide benchmarking data
B. Provides preliminary project planning information
C. Makes networking and partnership building more favorable
D. Provides an occasion to gauge the attitude and behaviour of the community

8. It is necessary to secure community information and feedback needed for the conceptualization of a project design or plan. Understanding community dynamics is the key to sound and relevant community development plan. What gains from community dynamic is this?
A. Provide benchmarking data  
B. Provides preliminary project planning information  
C. Makes networking and partnership building more favorable  
D. Provides an occasion to gauge the attitude and behaviour of the community

9. By having an idea of the different advocacy and interest groups in the community, it is easier for people from schools, institutions, or groups to partner with local networks and associations. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Provide benchmarking data  
B. Provides preliminary project planning information  
C. Makes networking and partnership building more favorable  
D. Provides an occasion to gauge the attitude and behaviour of the community

10. An in-depth understanding of the community's strengths and challenges guides the community-based project development team to identify the strengths and possible loopholes of the project design. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Gets project implementation less complicated  
B. Provides an idea of the community’s strengths and challenges  
C. Provides a way for a more directed and well-informed dialogue with the community  
D. Provides an opportunity to understand the community's dominant rules and norms.

11. The project implementation plan includes the steps and processes that must be taken into consideration. An understanding of the community will tell the project development and implementation team what not to do or what to be more concerned of. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Gets project implementation less complicated  
B. Provides an idea of the community’s strengths and challenges  
C. Provides a way for a more directed and well-informed dialogue with the community  
D. Provides an opportunity to understand the community's dominant rules and norms.

12. The quality of the dialogue depends on how well-informed or how knowledgeable the outsiders are on the community situation and issues. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Gets project implementation less complicated  
B. Provides an idea of the community’s strengths and challenges  
C. Provides a way for a more directed and well-informed dialogue with the community  
D. Provides an opportunity to understand the community's dominant rules and norms.
13. The success and failure or failure of a community project more often than not is strongly affected by the prevailing rules and norms in the community. What gains from community dynamic is this?

A. Gets project implementation less complicated  
B. Provides an idea of the community’s strengths and challenges  
C. Provides a way for a more directed and well-informed dialogue with the community  
D. Provides an opportunity to understand the community’s dominant rules and norms.

14. There are several definitions of community, but according to Bill Lee (1992), community is?

A. A human system of more than two people in which the members interact personally over time.  
B. A group of people who come together for mutual support and to fulfill their basic needs.  
C. A collection of people who have become aware of some problem or some broad goal.  
D. Simply a group of people who have something in common.


A. A social group with a common territorial base.  
B. Share interests and have a sense of belonging to the group.  
C. A social organization that is considered fundamental to society such as, village or religious sect.  
D. An organization or institution, such as the workplace, a school or college/university to imply a common spatial bond.

**Additional Activity**

**Description of My Community**

Instructions:
Describe your community/village/town/barrio. Using the pattern provided by a “classy” village cum resorts being developed in the Southern part of Manila, describe your community (not all elements may present in your community).

1. Lifestyle:
   (It offers the best of both worlds for its residents – it only gives luxury; it also gives comfort. It has a pleasantly quiet, community-like feel with wide streets, swaying palm trees, and stroll-able sidewalks). My community
2. Amenities: What is a community without top-of-the-line shopping right on the doorstep? Residents will get to fuel their passion for fashion when a 2-kilometer commercial and retail row would soon to thrive near the residential area. The street will showcase an array of top local and global luxury boutiques; it will also house various high-end restaurants to satiate food craving. Within the community, you can find a one-hectare space for its exciting lifestyle amenities in its 2-storey clubhouse. This will also include basketball, badminton and volleyball courts. My community

3. Accessibility (Churches, schools, markets, recreation center, city/municipal hall, hospitals):
4. Security:

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References:


Region IX: Zamboanga Peninsula Hymn – Our Eden Land

Here the trees and flowers bloom
Here the breezes gently Blow,
Here the birds sing Merrily,
The liberty forever Stays,

Here the Badjaos roam the seas
Here the Samals live in peace
Here the Tausogs thrive so free
With the Yakans in unity

Gallant men And Ladies fair
Linger with love and care
Golden beams of sunrise and sunset
Are visions you’ll never forget
Oh! That’s Region IX

Hardworking people Abound,
Every valleys and Dale
Zamboangueños, Tagalogs, Bicolanos,
Cebuanos, Ilocanos, Subanons, Boholanos,
Ilongos,
All of them are proud and true
Region IX our Eden Land
Region IX
Our..
Eden...
Land...

The Footprints Prayer
One night I had a dream. I dreamed that I was walking along the beach with the LORD.

In the beach, there were two (2) sets of footprints – one belong to me and the other to the LORD.

Then, later, after a long walk, I noticed only one set of footprints.

“And I ask the LORD, Why? Why? Why did you leave me when I am sad and helpless?”

And the LORD replied “My son, My son, I have never left you. There was only one (1) set of footprints in the sand, because it was then that I CARRIED YOU!

Trees by Joyce Kilmer
I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.