

Sub-group Citizenship

Working definitions for a glossary of terms

What needs to be clear when we discuss about

LEARNING

Defining common grounds for discussions on

CITIZENSHIP

in the voluntary organisations environment

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

There is not a general accepted definition. In fact, there are different definitions of active citizenship depending on the authors and the perspectives adopted. One of the main difficulties in defining active citizenship is related to the agreement of which the responsibilities of citizens are.

Active citizenship refers to the involvement of individuals in public life and other affairs. Citizens take an active role and exercise their rights and responsibilities in a balanced way.

Active citizenship implies action and empowerment as to making decisions, taking actions individually and collectively, etc. It can take place at local, national and international levels although it is usually used referring to the local level. Nevertheless, examples of active citizenship at the national level can be voting or being involved in campaigning pressure groups. At international level an active citizen may be involved in fair trade, for example.

The concept of active citizenship is often associated with a critical attitude towards the societal status quo in a wide array of aspects regarding human rights, equal opportunities, exclusion, environment, common goods. This attitude is corroborated with a surge to take action with the aim to produce positive change in public perception and in public policy and is strongly characterised by collective, rather than single, action. The concept of active citizenship includes a strong educational vocation.

Active citizen does not mean necessarily good citizen in the sense that they follow the rules or behave in a certain way. The key characteristics of active citizenship are: participation in the community, empowerment of people to play a part in the decisions and processes that affect them, knowledge and understanding of the political/social/economic context of their participation and ability to challenge policies or actions and existing structures.

Own elaboration.

References:

Council of Europe, Education for Democratic Citizenship, Dec 2004.

http://www.faceitproject.org/active_citizenship.htm

BASIC SKILLS

Language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT).

Ref. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 – Glossary

CITIZENSHIP

Group of citizens with the status of a citizen - from a town or nation - that have rights and duties. It also regards to conduct as a citizen. It encompasses the notion of people's status as active participants in the community and democratic life of a nation/state.

Own elaboration based on different documents and dictionary definitions.

For references and bibliography also to see:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship>

COMPETENCES

Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.

Ref. European Reference Framework – Key Competences for lifelong learning

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

FORMAL LEARNING

Formal learning usually takes place in schools, universities or training institutions and leads to a diploma or certificate.

Ref. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 – Glossary

INFORMAL LEARNING

Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Thus, informal learning can be found everywhere, e.g. in families, in the workplace, in NGOs, in theatre groups, or can also refer to individual activities at home, like reading a book.

Ref: [http://www.owwz.de/glossar.html?&no_cache=1&L=2&tx_sfbolognaglossar_pi1\[uid\]=37&tx_sfbolognaglossar_pi1\[s\]=EN&cHash=8f2d07d027c56209958767f5271043eb](http://www.owwz.de/glossar.html?&no_cache=1&L=2&tx_sfbolognaglossar_pi1[uid]=37&tx_sfbolognaglossar_pi1[s]=EN&cHash=8f2d07d027c56209958767f5271043eb)

KEY COMPETENCES

Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

- 1) Communication in the mother tongue;
- 2) Communication in foreign languages;
- 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- 4) Digital competence;
- 5) Learning to learn;
- 6) Social and civic competences;
- 7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- 8) Cultural awareness and expression.

*Ref. European Reference Framework – Key Competences for lifelong learning
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/l-learning/keycomp_en.pdf*

LIFELONG LEARNING

This refers to all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services.

Ref. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 – Glossary

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning includes free adult education within study circles, projects or discussion groups advancing at their own pace, with no examination at the end.

Ref. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 – Glossary

PARTICIPATION

This working definition is narrowed down, to suit our purposes, to participation in civil society.

It is a process of taking part, sharing in common and being involved with other people in areas as politics, economics, social and cultural life. Participation is a key element and a core value of not for profit organisations. Sometimes, it is said that is a distinctive element of the third sector as opposed to businesses and other kind of organisations.

Not only participation means being involved in participating from time to time, but also developing a critical and responsible participation, that involves being aware of your and other people's reality and the improvement of the community.

There are different degrees of participation: information, communication, consultation, deliberation and decision.

Constructing and bettering one's own competence in participatory processes relies on a continuous process of informal and non formal learning.

Ref: Vidal P. and Simon C. Idees per associacions participatives, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2008.

VOLUNTEERING

The European Volunteer Centre – CEV defines volunteering as an activity:

- Out of a person's free will, choice and motivation.
- Non remunerated.
- In an organised setting.
- With the aim to benefit someone other than the volunteer and/or the society at large.

The group has highlighted some characteristics of volunteering. Volunteering is a key element for participation and citizenship involvement for society improvement. It contributes with values, ideas, reflections, resources and, in short, is a generator of social capital.

Volunteering is in the origin and essence of not for profit organisations. The commitment with social, environmental and cultural missions or to sport, for example, is directly linked to the dedication to volunteering. It is an action that incorporates strong and warm relationships – with others, but also with the larger environment and society.

Volunteering is an altruistic activity intended to promote good or improve human quality of life of people. The activities of volunteering are developed in a framework of a not for profit organisation. Volunteers are an active part of a group, of an organised setting or of a collective action – this strengthens social ties and promotes social inclusion regardless of the sector of activity. Volunteering is closely intertwined with active citizenship.

There are important learning processes that take place when people volunteer. People learn competences, abilities and attitudes that may be useful for other aspects of their lives. It is of special interest the contribution of voluntary action to the development of key competences, at all ages.

Shared understanding of what volunteering means crosses cultures – see another useful definition that has common ground with the previous ones taken from the Turkish web site

<http://www.stgm.org.tr>

To attend or support the activities within the scope of a non governmental organisation or social attempt in order to improve the quality of life and reach a goal that is beneficial for the society without expecting something in return and doing by wanting.