



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

(INNOVATION CODE - SKM/18/02)

If education is a means to creating a positive, progressive society, then the most critical factor to ensure social upliftment is the school. And hence, it becomes the community's primary responsibility to support its schools. All of teacher's efforts to make learning engaging, improve learning levels, increase enrolment and attendance, and so on, cannot yield any significant results unless the parents and community join forces with the teacher. However, the reality is that often less educated or uneducated parents are indifferent towards education. Many times they do not even consider it important to send the child to school every day, leave alone participating in school activities. That is why 'Community Participation' innovation is so important for every school. It provides solutions to increase community's awareness and engagement in children's education, so they take more interest in upliftment of the school.

Names of the innovators

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Benefits of this innovation

- ◆ Effective means of helping the community understand the importance of education and school.
- ◆ Fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation among parents and teachers.
- ◆ Community members feel valued by becoming a part of children's education, and they are inspired to support the school's development.
- ◆ Positive changes in learning environment for students, inside and outside the school.
- ◆ Increase in children's confidence as well as their attendance and enrolment.

Impact areas

Increase involvement of parents in their child’s education; Improve motivation levels among teachers.

Summary

The different ideas described in ‘Community Participation’ focus on involving all kinds of community members—from sincere to uninterested, from professional to illiterate—in the education process. This is done by engaging them in teaching-learning activities so they feel valued and empowered by contributing meaningfully to children’s education, and develop an affinity towards the school. There is no special requirement of creating a TLM.

Activities for classroom

1. Home Visits

Introduction: Students’ academic results are directly affected by the atmosphere they get at home. Some children are seen doing poorly in studies as they do not get proper study environment at home or attention from their parents. In some cases, due to poor diet or lack of hygienic facilities at home, their health starts deteriorating or they fall ill frequently. As a solution, the teacher (along with community members like panchayat heads, members of the block authority, school management committee or local

media) visits homes of students to assess whether the family environment is conducive to their academic and personal growth or not. Parents/guardians are also counselled on the importance of providing children clean and healthy space to grow and learn, and how to foster good habits in them. Parents who are found to be more careful and attentive towards their child’s education, are awarded by the school.

Classroom Application: Home Visits is a suitable solution for teachers to ensure that what students learn in school is supported at home equally. As parents become more diligent about their ward’s performance, students’ attendance and learning outcomes also improve.

Planning: Approach community leaders and block authority members to brief them about the objective of this exercise and seek their participation in visits to students’ homes. Explain how their presence as prominent members of the society will help convince parents about the importance of education. Secondly, also take permission beforehand of the parents/guardians to visit their homes. Depending on the number of homes to be visited in a month, plan the visit schedule accordingly.

Preparation: On a plain paper, make columns mentioning the students' names, their parents' names, date and time of home visit, learning environment, hygiene level and diet of the students. Leave space



Home Visit Schedule				
DATE	DAY	VILLAGE	TIME	TEAM OF VISITORS
18/9/17	Monday	Upper samsing New	11:00 A.M	Mr. D B Gurung, Mr. D Sapkota, Ms.hema Gurung, Mr.m Poudyal
19/9/17	Tuesday	Kartok	11:00 A.M	Mrs. Januka Dhakal, Mr. D Sapkota, Ms. Sangeeta Subba, Mrs. P L Lepcha
20/9/17	Wednesday	Pakyong bazar	11:00 A.M	Mrs. Roshni Rai(Adc Dev Pakyong), Mrs Januka Dhakal, Mr. N K Subba (A D Hrdd,Pakyong), Mr. D Sapkota, Mrs. S Rai,Mrs. Tshering D Bhutia, Mrs. Kamala Bhandari, Mr. Ajay Thapa
21/9/17	Thursday	Chalamthang	11:00 A.M	Mr. Tika Gurung, Mr. D Sapkota, Mrs Radha Bhusal, Mr. S T Sherpa
22/9/17	Friday	Namcheynbong	11:00 A.M	Mr. P T Lepcha, Mr. D Sapkota, Mr. D Parajuli, Mrs.som Kri Gurung, Ms. Samjay Lepcha

Home Visit Observation Sheet							
DATE	NAME OF PARENTS	NAME OF STUDENT	Time	STUDY ENVI- RONMENT 1/2/3/4/5	SANITA- TION FOR GIRLS 1/2/3/4/5	KITCHEN & DAILY DIET	HYGIENE
20/9/17	GAJENDRA	MUSKHAN KHRI	1:00	2	2	3	2
20/9/17	SUNIL	ANKIT KRI	1:05	3	2	2	3
20/9/17		MEENA	2:20	3	4	4	4
20/9/17	ACHA LAAL	KAJOL KRI	2:30	3	3	3	3
20/9/17	RUSTAM	ABDULLA	2:30	3		3	3
20/9/17	RUSTAM	JAIBBULA	2:30	3			
20/9/17	RUSTAM	SAIFULA	2:45	3			
20/9/17	BINDESHA- WAR	AMODH RAM	2:45	3		3	3
20/9/17	RASOL	SAKET	3:00	3		3	3
20/9/17	RASOL		3:10	3		3	3
20/9/17			3:10	3			
20/9/17			3:30	3			

to mark them on a scale of 0-5, where 0 denotes need to improve, 5 denotes an outstanding environment. This is called an observation sheet. (See image)

Implementation:

◆ Inform parents beforehand about the planned visit to their house.

◆ On visiting the house as a team, observe the parent's views towards the child's education and ask about specific efforts they put in to support him/her. Does the child have a place to study? Are the kitchen and bathroom clean? Does everyone know when and how to wash hands properly? Is the child getting healthy food? Basis the answers and your observation, mark the various factors on a scale of 0-5 in your observation sheet.

◆ The team then counsels the parents/guardians on how to further improve these aspects, and makes them aware of the significance of holistic development of a child.

◆ After completing the visits, the teacher keeps track of improvement in learning levels of children whose homes were visited.

◆ Parents who are found to be diligent in taking care of their children are recognised and honoured

by the school at special cultural event/annual day celebrations, as an inspiration to other parents.

Note: This activity should be conducted at least once, or if possible, twice a year, for all students.

2. United We Stand

Introduction: United we stand, divided we fall. According to this phrase, even arduous tasks become easy if everyone comes together. This approach can be very helpful in government schools where resources are limited and teachers struggle to find the means to provide proper infrastructure to students. In such a scenario, community can come together and fill in the gaps by extending small help, such as providing water for preparation of mid-day meals in case of a shortage, beautifying the school by giving plants, and provide tents and chairs during events.

Classroom Application: Students learn cooperation and unity by seeing their parents' contribution to school. This initiative also develops harmony between the school and community.

Planning/Preparation: Arrange a meeting with the

community members on a regular basis and keep them abreast of what is going well in the school, and what is not. At the same time explain how parents and community members can help in improving the school through their small efforts.

Implementation:

- ◆ Organise meetings with the community members on a regular basis.

- ◆ List problems where students can benefit by little support of the community, such as school infrastructure and resources issues.

- ◆ Community members and teachers together find solutions and volunteer to provide best possible support. Some examples are:

- **Problem:** A school faced extreme water shortage and it was difficult even to cook mid-day-meals. **Solution:** Mothers started sending their children with 1-litre bottles of water as a contribution. This way, the school has over 100 litres of clean cooking water whenever there is a shortage.

- **Problem:** With many students showing interest in performing arts, the school wanted to organise festival celebrations in schools for community members, but there were no resources available for hosting people. **Solution:** One parent volunteered to provide tables, the other volunteered to arrange tent, another volunteered to help students prepare a play, and so on.

- **Problem:** Students in a school were mostly from marginalised families and were usually without notebooks. The school also had shortage of books. **Solution:** Housewife mothers offered to create new notebooks out of leftover pages from old notebooks, which solved the problem to an extent. They also mended some of the course books by binding them and pasting torn pages, so if next year there is a shortage of books, at least these can be

passed on to younger students.

3. Mothers' Club

Introduction: A good diet and proper hygiene are imperative for a healthy body and mind. A child becomes more attentive in class and other extra-curricular activities when he/she is in a good mental and physical condition. Apart from the school mid-day meal, the diet he/she gets at home is a direct indicator of his/her health. This idea of constituting a Mothers' Club in school helps monitor a child's fitness level. In this method, mothers are called at regular intervals to check the mid-day-meals prepared for students, volunteer to cook the meals, and offer their suggestions on improving the quality of the food. By contributing to the school in this way, mother's feel respected and engaged with school activities, in turn making an effort to ensure more sincerity in the child's education.

Classroom Application: As mothers feel more involved, students attendance and learning levels are seen to improve. Also, improved quality of food leads to an active body and mind.

Planning/Preparation: Invite students' mothers for a quarterly or a half-yearly meeting to discuss food and hygiene requirements of students. They are also counselled to attend the meeting on a regular basis and keep track of their child's growth.

Implementation: This activity can be conducted in schools on weekly basis, or more frequently if possible, as follows:

- ◆ Invite students' mothers to school, sending out an invitation in person or through children; convince them that their attendance is important for their child's future.



◆ Mothers are teamed together as a ‘Club’, to function like a support group for the school.

◆ The first task of the club, to do regularly, is to improve mid-day-meals. On rotational basis, mothers take responsibility of cooking the mid-day meals, and of checking the mid-day-meal’s quality and taste. This is done by mothers at least three time in a week.

◆ The club can also take up other support tasks. For instance, helping students prepare for a cultural event, carrying out rallies in the village to raise awareness about education, or teaching vocational skills to students as and when they have time.

◆ More examples of the Club’s tasks can be beautification of the school, organising students’ birthdays, tree plantation, etc.

◆ The club also conducts a meeting every few months to discuss the children’s health and hygiene habits, and teachers suggest solutions. They also advise mothers on what important steps should be taken in case a student is not eating properly or keeping ill frequently.

4. PLC or Professional Learning Community

Introduction: Young children are quick learners. They observe, grasp and try to imitate whatever is happening around them. Anything said or done before them sometimes leaves a mark forever in their minds. So, to help them realise the significance of education and inspire them from an early age to pursue a values-based, constructive lifestyle, it is important that they get to meet role model citizens and successful professionals. Towards this, PLC or Professional Learning Community is capable of playing a vital role. In this activity, intellectuals, retired officials, and skilled persons from the nearby villages/towns are invited to guide the students.

Classroom Application: Students learn about different occupations and workspaces. At the same time, they understand the important aspects of History, Geography, Literature, Politics, and health and cleanliness. Students are inspired to pursue education sincerely and aim to be successful professionals when they grow up.

Planning/Preparation: First, after a meeting with the Gram Panchayat/Sarpanch, prepare a list of

talented and eminent persons from the village and nearby areas who would be willing to share their experiences with students. Thereafter, these persons are invited to conduct lectures and counselling classes, at least once in two or three months.

Implementation: Interactive sessions of students with the selected persons can be conducted as follows:

◆ Keeping students’ interests in mind, the guest shares their thoughts with them. They speak about life and practical values to students. The guest speakers also focus on their achievements and success stories that can influence and inspire students.

◆ For example:

- A lawyer or a policeman can enlighten students about the prospects of their profession.

- Doctors can discuss the significance of cleanliness and health with the students.

- Artists/sculptors can conduct a workshop for students to gain knowledge as well as practical training in the art form.

◆ Through this activity, the invited guests are also made aware about the activities and innovations of the school.

◆ Opportunities must be provided to students to express their views, ask questions, and satisfy their curiosity. ■

