

Steps in Community Organisation

Exam Notes — Social Work | AMU

Community organisation is a "process" — a movement from identification of a problem to its solution. It involves a series of steps that, although distinct, may overlap in real practice. The sequence may also vary depending on context. These 16 steps can be grouped into four phases: **(1) Enter & Understand, (2) Decide & Plan, (3) Act, and (4) Review & Grow.**

Phase 1 — Enter & Understand (Steps 1–4)

Step 1: Role Searching

Analyse your own goals and the agency's objectives before entering the community. Ask: Are the objectives in line with community needs? Assess resources (time, finances, manpower) and select the geographical area.

e.g. An NGO worker asks: "Does our literacy programme match this village's actual needs?"

Step 2: Enlisting People's Participation

Build genuine rapport with community members — formally (through leaders/teachers) or informally (by visiting and meeting people). Avoid false promises, caste/religious bias, or over-reliance on one leader.

e.g. Worker visits the village regularly and meets farmers and women's groups informally.

Step 3: Developing a Community Profile

Collect detailed information about the community in partnership with its members. Include: identification data, local history, population, transport, employment, housing, health/education infrastructure, government schemes, NGOs, and major problems.

e.g. Making a map of the village showing schools, water sources, anganwadis, and problem areas.

Step 4: Needs Assessment

Identify community needs across basic, economic, health, educational, recreational, and informational categories. Key principle: distinguish felt needs (what people themselves feel) from perceived needs (what the worker assumes). Felt needs must drive action.

e.g. People feel the need for a road — the worker must not impose a literacy centre instead.

Phase 2 — Decide & Plan (Steps 5–8)

Step 5: Ordering / Prioritising Needs

List all identified needs with the community, then rank them by severity, urgency, and impact. Community participation in ranking builds ownership and motivation for action.

e.g. Village lists 10 problems; decides safe drinking water is the top priority over road repair.

Step 6: Problem Analysis and Redefinition

Examine the selected problem deeply: state it clearly, identify root causes and direct effects, and conduct stakeholder analysis (who is affected, who causes it, who can help, who may resist).

e.g. Girls' dropout rate — real cause is absence of female teachers, not lack of schools.

Step 7: Formulation of Achievable Objectives

Convert the redefined problem into specific, realistic goals. Break large goals into smaller sub-goals that can be translated into concrete programmes and activities.

e.g. Objective: "Appoint 2 female teachers in the village school within 6 months."

Step 8: Development of Community Confidence and Willpower

Build the community's belief in its own capacity — "we can do it." Combat apathy and indifference. The worker provides encouragement. Sometimes a crisis naturally mobilises communities; otherwise, small early successes help.

e.g. After a flood, community unites; or worker organises a small achievable task first to build confidence.

Phase 3 — Act (Steps 9–13)

Step 9: Work Out the Alternatives

Through brainstorming, generate multiple possible solutions to the problem. No single option is forced. All options — mild and strong — are placed on the table.

e.g. School dropout problem: meet teachers directly, petition the DEO, or organise a signature campaign?

Step 10: Selection of an Appropriate Alternative

Choose the best option or combination of options. Begin with mild measures and escalate gradually. Radical social action is a last resort if all else fails.

e.g. First meet the school principal; if that fails, petition the DEO; then organise a protest if needed.

Step 11: Work Out a Plan of Action

Assign responsibilities, fix a timeline, and prepare an organisational structure. Decide who does what, when, where, and how many people are involved.

e.g. "On 10 May, 20 community members will meet the DEO; Ramesh will carry the petition letter."

Step 12: Mobilisation of Resources

Identify and arrange all needed resources — money, manpower, time, and materials. Internal community resources come first (space, volunteers, indigenous knowledge). External resources (NGO funding, expert advice) supplement where necessary. Avoid over-dependence on outside help.

e.g. Community provides the meeting hall and volunteers; NGO provides printing for awareness pamphlets.

Step 13: Implementation of Action

Execute the plan with active community participation. People must own responsibilities. The worker gradually steps back while the community gradually takes over — ensuring sustainability. Even partial achievement builds confidence for future action.

e.g. Community members themselves submit the petition; the worker guides but does not lead.

Phase 4 — Review & Grow (Steps 14–16)

Step 14: Evaluation of Action

Assess what worked and what did not. Maintain accurate records. Evaluation can be periodic, phase-wise, or end-of-programme, and can be done internally or by an external expert. Community participation in evaluation builds accountability and capacity.

e.g. After the petition drive, community reviews: Did the DEO respond? What were the gaps? What should change?

Step 15: Modification

Based on evaluation findings, revise and improve the action plan. Identify strengths and weaknesses. Modifications ensure a more effective and lasting response to the problem.

e.g. Petition did not work — community decides to involve the local MLA in the next attempt.

Step 16: Development of Cooperative and Collaborative Attitudes

The ultimate goal of community organisation. As the process evolves, diverse subgroups learn to understand, accept, and work with one another. Differences may not disappear, but a common frame of reference develops. The community becomes better equipped to handle future problems independently.

e.g. After solving the school problem together, the same community now organises a health camp on its own.

Key Point for the Exam

Community organisation is not simply concerned with solving one problem (a school, a water tank, a road). Its real and deeper goal is the **development of the community's long-term capacity** to act as a united, self-reliant group for any future need or challenge.

The worker's role is temporary; the community's strength must become permanent.

Intro line for exam answer: "Community organisation is a process involving a series of steps, which may overlap in real practice and vary in sequence depending on context. These steps move from problem identification to long-term community empowerment."