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# ACTIVE CITIZENS



# BRITISH COUNCIL ACTIVE CITIZENS PROGRAMME

Are you:

- running a voluntary or community sector organisation, or a network working to promote active participation and social justice (such as tackling poverty and inequality) in your community?
- interested in sharing and learning from others worldwide?

If so, you may want to apply to be a UK local delivery partner on the British Council Active Citizens programme.

## WHAT IS ACTIVE CITIZENS?

Active Citizens connects organisations and people involved in local initiatives that benefit their communities, and gives them the opportunity to gain an international perspective on the valuable work they're already doing, contribute to social research on global themes, develop cross-cultural engagement skills and international professional networks.

The themes for the programme are:

- promoting peaceful co-existence within diverse communities
- participation in local politics and influencing decision making, particularly for under-represented groups
- meeting basic needs including education, shelter, food and social needs
- sustainable livelihoods and employment
- environmental protection and tackling climate change.

## WHAT'S THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S ROLE?

Connecting the UK to the world and the world to the UK, the British Council is the UK's international cultural relations body. In an increasingly interdependent and turbulent world we believe that creating opportunities for people to understand each other better, work together more and learn from one another is crucial to building secure, more prosperous and sustainable futures for us all. The British Council aims to strengthen understanding and trust between and within different cultures. We support people striving for better informed, more inclusive societies that accept, respect and welcome each other. For this reason we aim to work with groups and initiatives in society that have a powerful influence on cultural relations.

In the UK, the British Council is collaborating with an advisory group that includes representatives from the Community Development Foundation (CDF), the National Association for Community and Voluntary Action (NAVCA), the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

## WHY GET INVOLVED IN ACTIVE CITIZENS?

We are seeking to work with culturally and socially diverse communities, including those with challenging social cohesion issues. The programme will involve participants from the community who represent the range of social and cultural backgrounds existing in the community. We want to establish partnerships with organisations involved in community engagement and civic education initiatives to help develop the Active Citizens programme to make it relevant for your community and supportive of relationships and joint activity with overseas partners.

The programme offers a range of opportunities for individuals, organisations and communities that participate to:

- facilitate sharing of good practice and learning in community relations and community development, locally and internationally
- develop capacity to contribute towards positive social change, through enhancing professional skills, intercultural competences, confidence and networks
- build understanding and trust between people from diverse backgrounds
- create long-term international links that improve recognition of your community's achievements nationally and internationally, and enable your community to access international ideas and best practice
- strengthen local relationships between individuals, groups and organisations involved in community development and social action.

Through the programme, your community will have:

- access to a learning framework, training and other global citizenship materials
- membership of a wide network of active community-based professionals across the world
- funding for international experience and professional development for community leaders, trainers and facilitators, and active participants in your community
- an opportunity to improve practice in your community by learning from others and through greater understanding of the link between local and global issues.

Involvement in the Active Citizens programme can benefit your community by adding a new dimension to existing community initiatives, or by stimulating new activities that contribute towards more cohesive, resilient and just communities.

## CALL FOR PARTNERS

We are seeking UK organisations to work with the British Council and our partners worldwide to deliver the Active Citizens programme in your community. Potential UK partners will have:

- in-depth knowledge of the community and voluntary sectors in your area, including awareness of relevant government and local government policy initiatives
- a track record of designing interventions that address issues of social development, intercultural dialogue, community cohesion and/or promote democratic engagement and participation
- strong networks and relationships with the community development sector
- regular contact with key influencers, such as local and/or national government, relevant community and umbrella organisations
- commitment to working with diversity and experience of working with diverse groups in terms of race, educational background, religion, ethnicity, disability and gender
- knowledge and experience of facilitating or running learning projects on practical and social skills
- a track record of working with, and commitment to, volunteers
- motivation to develop links between their community and communities in other countries and a commitment to an understanding of the benefit of intercultural dialogue both locally and internationally.

## What's involved?

The programme will be designed in collaboration with linked communities, local partners and the British Council, and offers a menu of activities including opportunities to:

- access existing learning materials and contribute to the development and delivery of an international learning programme focused on intercultural dialogue, community engagement and active citizenship
- link with overseas communities and participating organisations and their communities
- contribute to designing an exchange programme, hosting and receiving international community exchange visits that will explore local social and cultural perspectives, explore local social development projects, explore community networks and experience local culture
- work collaboratively on social action projects that promote intercultural dialogue and address global issues around the themes of:
  - promoting peaceful co-existence within diverse communities
  - participation in local politics and influencing decision making, particularly under-represented groups
  - meeting basic needs including education, shelter, food and social needs
  - sustainable livelihoods and employment
  - environmental protection and tackling climate change.
- register and contribute to features and articles on the online Active Citizens magazine
- contribute to the social and digital media platforms for professional learning, networking and sharing of best practice with Active Citizens locally and globally
- participate in international internships
- attend international events on global citizenship, civil society and social action
- contribute to joint global social policy research and development.

### What's the role of local delivery partners?

If you want to be part of the Active Citizens programme you will need to commit to:

- leading the Active Citizens initiative in your community and involve other relevant organisations, such as local government, local strategic partnerships, community planning partnerships, community groups and voluntary organisations
- acting as the liaison point between the facilitators, participants and the British Council
- identifying two community facilitators, who can work with between 20 and 30 active citizens in the community to identify good practice and share the Active Citizens concepts
- ensuring the facilitators' attendance at an induction workshop (four to five days) – which may be held in the UK or in another country
- leading and organising a programme of workshops in your community that will explore Active Citizens concepts and prepare participants for the international exchange (approximately five days)
- identifying suitable participants (around ten per exchange) for the international exchange (five to seven days) that will involve one visit to an overseas community and will be led by the facilitators
- supporting and mentoring participants in their social action projects
- assisting participants selected for overseas exchange programmes in the logistical arrangements for their travel
- working with participants and your community networks to organise an inward visit by partners from overseas
- supporting the participants to identify funding sources for initiatives that arise as a result of the exchanges.

In order to participate in the programme, your organisation can apply for a grant of up to £7,500 to contribute to the costs of co-ordinating the programme in your community, including staff time (facilitators, co-ordinators, and administrative support), seed funding for social action projects, venue hire, refreshments, running workshops, etc. You will need to demonstrate how your organisation and other participating organisations in your community are contributing to the programme with either funding or in-kind support.

### Where are the international links?

At present, the programme offers links with communities and counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and most of Europe; but in future we may expand coverage to other regions of the world (see list below).

### Participating countries 2010–11

South Africa	Syria	Belarus
Nigeria	Palestinian Territories	Bosnia
Kenya	Saudi Arabia	Croatia
Oman	Yemen	Serbia
Sudan	Denmark	Macedonia
Ethiopia	Finland	Montenegro
Pakistan	Sweden	Kosovo
Bangladesh	Latvia	Georgia
Nepal	Estonia	Azerbaijan
Sri Lanka	Poland	Israel
Egypt	Hungary	Slovakia
Lebanon	Romania	Algeria

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Interested organisations are invited to respond by completing the application form and sending it to [active.citizens@britishcouncil.org](mailto:active.citizens@britishcouncil.org) by Friday 9 July 2010.

Application forms can be downloaded from [www.britishcouncil.org/activecitizens](http://www.britishcouncil.org/activecitizens)

If you have any questions or queries please email them to [active.citizens@britishcouncil.org](mailto:active.citizens@britishcouncil.org), leaving a name and contact details, or phone Ed Wyatt on 0207 389 4264.

Please note, depending on the response, we may run an additional call for applications in late 2010 or early 2011.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you have submitted an application it will be assessed by the British Council against the following criteria:

- Relevant experience of the lead partner in social development/ social action in the community proposed.
- Evidence of involvement of other relevant organisations from the community, including other community/voluntary organisations, local government, etc.
- Experience of the key personnel proposed to be involved in the project (lead/co-ordination role and facilitators).
- Clear articulation of the benefits to the partner organisation(s) and the community of being involved in the programme.
- Evidence of bringing in additional resources to the programme from participating organisations and external sources.
- Evidence of the contribution made to local or national policy and social development themes in the community.
- Long-term impact of the programme and sustainability beyond British Council involvement.

The overall selection will also be assessed in order to achieve:

- a geographical spread of communities in the UK
- a mix of urban and rural communities in the UK
- commonality of themes and interests with international communities.

Applicants will be informed by the end of July 2010 if they have been unsuccessful or if they will go forward to the next stage.

The next stage will be a negotiation between the applicant and the British Council on the level of involvement in the programme, which may include themes, geographical area, timing, resources, level of funding and, if successful, will lead to a formal agreement with the British Council.

