<u>What is a Community Activist?</u>

Community activism is about people in communities creating opportunities for growth and change and deliberate movement towards ends which they determine and in the process so increase their critical awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes. (www.infed.org/community/b-comwrk.htm)

Dictionary Definition

Activism – vigorous and sometimes aggressive action on pursuing a political or social end.

Activist -n.
A proponent or practitioner of activism: *political activists.*

adj.
1. Of, relating to, or engaged in activism.
2. Of, relating to, or being an activist

Community Activist
A member of a community who is voluntarily working with others from that community to achieve common aims (Delivering Change)
Someone who takes individual action or action with others in a community, in a planned way to bring about a clearly identified and agreed change which contributes to an improvement in quality of life

Quality of Life A broad term used to describe the overall well- being of an individual, group or community. It includes aspects such as quality of health, housing, educational achievements, employment and the environment

Community Action focuses on the organisation of those adversely affected by the decisions, or non-decisions, of public and private bodies and by more general structural characteristics of society. It aims to promote collective action to challenge existing political, social and economic structures and processes, to explore and explain the power realities of people's situations, develop both critical perspectives of the status quo and alternative bases of power and action.

Community Development emphasises self-help, mutual support, the building up of neighbourhood integration, the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving and self-representation and the promotion of collective action to bring a community's preferences to the attention of decision makers.

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Building Community Capacity

Work that strengthens the ability of community organisations and groups (for example, by building their structures, systems, people and skills), so that they are better able to set out and achieve their aims. This can include supporting them to be better at being involved in consultation and planning, managing community projects and taking part in partnerships and community enterprises. – Adapted from Steve Skinner, Building Community Strengths (Community Development Foundation, 1997).

Community Learning and Development

- 'Empowerment' – encouraging people to take control of, or have a say in, decisions that affect them.
- 'Participation' – giving people every opportunity to get involved in learning and acting with others.
- 'Inclusion, equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination' – giving everyone a chance to be involved, whatever their background or abilities, and actively challenging discrimination.
- 'Self-determination' – allowing people to make their own choices about what they do.
- 'Partnership' – achieving more by encouraging everyone with an interest to work together.

> *'Be the change you wish to see in the world. Don't wait for the world to change – go out and make a difference!'*
>
> *Gandhi*

- Activism is about taking intentional action to bring about social, political, economic, or environmental change – i.e. to alter the current situation

- An activist is someone who **works to create change.**

- Community activists usually work at a local level to create positive social change and help communities come together to solve problems.

- Some activists try to persuade people to change their behaviour directly, others work to persuade governments or other power holders to change their actions, policies or laws.

- The word "activism" is often used in line with protest or dissent, but activism can take a wide range of forms from writing letters to newspapers or politicians, political campaigning, holding public meetings, economic activism such as boycotts or preferentially patronising businesses, rallies, street marches, strikes, sit-ins, hunger strikes, or even guerrilla tactics.

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