



# Community Service

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

## Objectives >>>

### Students should:

- Know the meaning of community service and the main categories of this
- Plan and carry out a viable and beneficial community service project as an individual, group or class

need of a believer is more dear to Allah than fasting two consecutive months while performing I'tikāf in Masjidul ḥarām”

## Class Activity

Explore the different community service projects in your immediate and wider community. Which one inspires you? Use this discussion to involve yourself in one of these projects<sup>i</sup>

The Imam quotes from the Prophet (saw):

“Charity is obligatory upon every Muslim every day”  
When the Prophet (saw) said this, he was asked: ‘who can afford to pay charity every day?’ He (saw) said:  
“Removing harm from the path of believers is charity.”

## ETTIQUETES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

In order to reap the benefits of helping others, we have to follow some very simple rules:

- 1- **We must help purely and only for the Sake of Allah (SWT):** not for the sake of fame, or praise or appreciation. If we feel bad or disappointed for having done something and then not being appreciated, it means we did not do that action purely for Allah (SWT).
- 2- **Do it quickly:** we should not delay helping out for it is more pleasurable for the receiver.
- 3- **Make it seem small:** We should try to make the thing we do to seem small as only then will it be big. Do not lord our favour over the person. Rather, act as if it was nothing.
- 4- **Do it secretly:** When we help others, we have to ensure that they and others do not see it. It has

## Lesson 1+ 2 : Community Service Practical

Community service is defined as any activity done for the benefit of the community as a whole or an individual. It can be as simple as picking up some rubbish or helping an old person with their shopping bags to serving the community as a public servant.

Community service is very much encouraged in Islam. Indeed our Imams (as) have informed us that:

“The most beloved of the slaves of Allah is the one who serves the slaves of God the most.”

One ḥadith by Imam al-Sajjād (as) captures the rewards of helping others, Imam (as) says:

“The one who meets the need of a believer has begun by meeting the need of God and because of it God will meet one hundred of his needs. One of these needs is paradise. The one who relieves the sorrow of someone else, God will relieve the sorrow of the Hereafter from him. If one visits an ill person, the angels will surround him and pray for him until he leaves. The angels say: ‘may Paradise be for you purely’. By Allah, meeting the

to be done very smartly and quietly so as not to show off or embarrass the recipient.

## Community Service Major Project

As part of this lesson, and as part of the completion of this curriculum, all students are encouraged and expected to undertake a community service project.

We will use this lesson and next lesson to plan a community service project without our community. These projects can be individual, group or class-based.

Your teacher will guide you through this process by considering the following advice.

### Planning a community Project

Before starting any community project, three major aspects must be well planned:

#### 1- Purpose, aim and vision

Every community project must be planned and have a clear vision and aim. A haphazard or inconsistent or vague aim usually results in disillusionment, failure and may in fact be detrimental to morale and enthusiasm. The following need to be considered

- What is the purpose (aim) in term of what do you want to achieve at the end
- Is the purpose specific
- Is it a long term or short term project
- Who is the target audience
- Is it necessary, will it make a difference, is anyone else doing it, can you assist those already doing it?
- Ensure that the vision and aim is not too big that it would be impossible to practicably be achieved (eg paint the WHOLE masjid) not too small to have any real impact (eg. Spend 1 hr a year painting the masjid)

#### 2- Execution: Before (or during) one executes a community service project, there are several important things to consider, to plan and work out these include

- Have the dates and times for activities been checked and confirmed, have bookings been made and confirmed in time?
- Who will volunteer, are they competent, and are they trained?

- Has advice been sought from others who have either done this or a similar activity previously?
- Who will be the main supervisor/leader (you can only have one) of the project. Are they competent? (They have to be competent and responsible and have enthusiasm and belief in the vision and purpose- not just popular!) Without a competent leader a project should not be attempted.
- Have permissions been sought, whether from the Islamic centre, the parents, the teachers, other stake holders etc.
- How will it be financed? You need to spend money often for such projects
- Is the activity safe and legal?
- Is it manageable, practical and feasible? Has each minute of an event, for instance, been carefully thought out and managed?

#### 3- Reflection and Evaluation – This is perhaps the most important part of any project, an opportunity to think about what went right and wrong and if the project is to be attempted again, whether the aims were met. Often this may mean an acknowledgement (in form of gift/kind message) to the volunteers, community leaders etc.

There are also a number of things that one should take into consideration for a successful community service project.

- 1- The leader and participants should be constantly reminded of the purpose, goals and vision so as not to divert from the goals
- 2- One has to be careful not to feel like one owns the project or the outcome. Community service is for Allah (SWT) and therefore is owned by the community
- 3- Accepting help from outside the core group is important as it may assist in bringing a project to completion quickly but management is important.
- 4- Making everyone feel important and useful is key as most workers are volunteers.
- 5- Don't expect reward or recognition. Only God (SWT) is the giver of recognition and reward.
- 6- Don't overly hype or advertise your activities as the charity that is done covertly is more liked by God (SWT) than that which is done for the public (show off).

- 7- Volunteers are not paid therefore depending on the priorities in their life, some may abandon the project. If good counsel and encouragement does not work, it is important to acknowledge their contribution, similarly, abandoning a project halfway for weak reasons is not appropriate.
  - 8- Working in the path of God can be difficult and often thankless, it is important to persevere and have patience. Quitting early and often is demoralising for the community, does not achieve the purpose and destroys the goals.
  - 9- Avoid long meetings. Having a clear concise agenda sent out to all participants and keeping to the important topics and issues can mean pleasant, productive and constructive meetings.
  - 10- Community service is often associated with criticism (cultural objections, moral objections, political objections etc.) it is important to take criticism constructively and diplomatically.
  - 11- Do not be disappointed with failure if everything was done right. Allah (SWT) rewards for intention first before actions and acknowledging that the true rewards are from Allah the Almighty, failure means one may need to try again and do better or try a different strategy or idea therefore the evaluation must be more thorough.
  - 12- Finally be ORGANISED! It will save time, effort and pain during any project.
- We will come back to this lesson at the end of the year to evaluate the projects that were undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers should have a list of activities students can do to fulfil this obligation. This could be things like helping clean up the Islamic centre, visiting the elderly and sick, collecting money for charity etc.