Wise Citizen

What are different ways to participate in the community?

1 In the diagram below, write down some responsibilities we all have towards our community, types of participation you have learned about, and one example of how you would like to volunteer.

Responsibilites towards our community →	
Types of participation →	
How would you like to volunteer? →	

We are all responsible for participating in our community and contributing to the development of our country and the common good. Some types of community participation include town councils, sports clubs, church groups, human rights groups, animal rights groups, cultural organizations, and volunteer work, among many others.

An important part of public participation includes volunteer groups that do important work in and around the community. As is the case world wide, volunteering in Mexico helps different communities improve their quality of life in areas such as housing, education, environment, and safety. For example, TECHO is an organization that helps thousands of people living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. They help people living in dangerous or **inadequate** housing, for example, in towns that **lack** basic services like **sewer systems**, electricity, or clean drinking water. In this organization, volunteers and local residents work together to promote community development and overcome poverty.

There are also various non-governmental organizations (**NGOs**) and volunteer groups that dedicate themselves to taking care of the environment. These organizations do things such as maintain green spaces in cities, convert abandoned areas into parks, reforest **wilderness** areas, clean beaches or lake shores or riverbanks, hold recycling drives, take measures to conserve energy, and take care of animals. For example, WWF Mexico (World Wildlife Fund for Mexico) is an NGO that **aims** to protect nature and the environment.

K

KEY WORDS

aims
inadequate
lack
NGOs
sewer systems
wilderness

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Sports and participatory art projects are also activities in which people can take part. In this case, people form an organized group based on common interests, like practicing a sport, or participating in painting, dance, music, or other forms of art.

Each of us shares spaces with other people, like at school, around the neighborhood, or in an apartment building. A large part of our life happens in these places, which is why it is fundamental to get to know them, identify any problems or needs that require attention, and participate by suggesting solutions to those problems.

Technology has also opened up other spaces where people can participate. In recent years, social networks have increased public participation, especially among young people. Also, the Internet has increased the number of online newspapers whose reporters are the citizens themselves. Social networks must be used responsibly and under constant adult supervision.

Other types of organizations include groups formed for children and young people who want to spread specific lifestyles or affiliations. For example, the Association of Scouts in Mexico promotes spending time in and caring for nature, while at the same time offering lessons in values such as acting loyal to, and getting along with people. Religious organizations, such as Opus Dei Mexico, carry out missions across the country to help people in vulnerable situations.

Personal Skills

DIGITAL SKILLS

As you read above, social networks also recruit people to participate. How could you use social networks to recruit help in times of need? How would you make sure you are really helping the right people?

2 Complete the organizer by saying why you think these three types of participation are important and what effect you think they have on your community.

Participating in community sports

Participating in community art projects

Communicating community information

WORK IT OUT!

Do the activity ***The News*** *using what you've learned.*

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3 Complete the following concept map with the missing information.

People participate in issues of common interest...

...because...

Participation should have two characteristics:

There are many ways to participate, for example...

4 Imagine a world without participation. Get into teams of three to discuss this question and fill in the table:

- What would be different if there was absolutely no participation in your community?
- Fill in the following table with some causes for why people do not participate and the effects lack of participation has on a community.

Causes	Effects

TEAM UP!
Get into teams, go to ***Community Problems****, and follow the instructions.*

Key

Lines of Research
Did you know that sometimes all the people of a community can decide what to do with public money?

Research participatory budgeting and discuss with your classmates what you would vote for.

#KeyConcept
participatory budgeting

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