

UNIT 6 SCHOOL COMMUNITY LINKAGES





Introduction

- Schools do not exist in isolation; they reside within the communities they serve and must cultivate relationships with them.
- In this unit we will look at school community partnerships as a component of the child friendly school.
- We shall look at the importance of school community linkages and types of communities.
- We shall also look at the role of school community linkages and activities.
- In addition, we shall examine how to establish school community linkages and the skills that you should possess for effective implementation of the linkages.



Expected learning outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Define school community linkages
- b) Describe the legal framework for school community linkages
Identify the types of communities
- c) State the components of school community linkages
- d) Discuss the role of school community linkages
- e) Explain how CFS could be promoted by school community linkages
- f) Explain the types of school community linkages
- g) Describe the types of school community activities.
- h) Discuss the impact of school community linkages
- i) Discuss how to establish school community linkages
- j) Apply the skills required for implementing school community linkages

Definition of school-community linkages

(a). School community: The term community refers to a group of people living within a common locality and sharing similar interests. For schools, these include the people who reside around school environs, members of the learners' families, retired as well as serving politicians and anyone with the capacity to contribute to the school's wellbeing.



(b). Linkages: The manner or style of being united

(c). Partnerships: Is an arrangement in which parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests.

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Legal framework for school community linkages

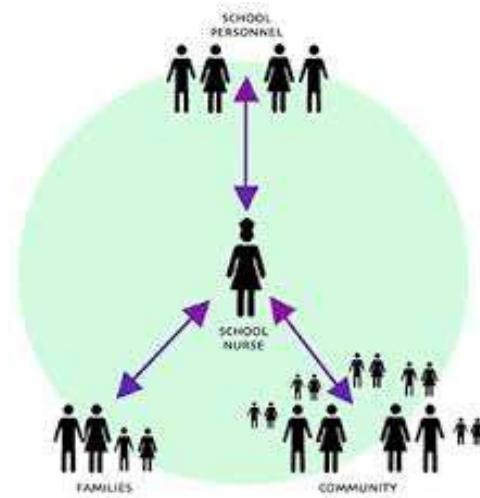
- School community linkages are enshrined in the following legal instruments:
 - a) Basic Education Act (2013):** Collaborative management- Enhancement of co-operation, consultation and collaboration among the Cabinet Secretary, Teachers Service Commission, the National Education Board, the County Education Boards, the education and training institutions and other related stakeholders on matters related to education;
 - b) Sessional paper No. 14 of 2012:** Financing, investment and resource mobilization- Promote increased private sector financing of education; strengthen internal and external partnerships and strengthen governance and accountability as well.
 - c) Vision 2030 (Social Pillar):** Through this strategy, Kenya aims to build a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment.



Types of communities

There are several types of communities

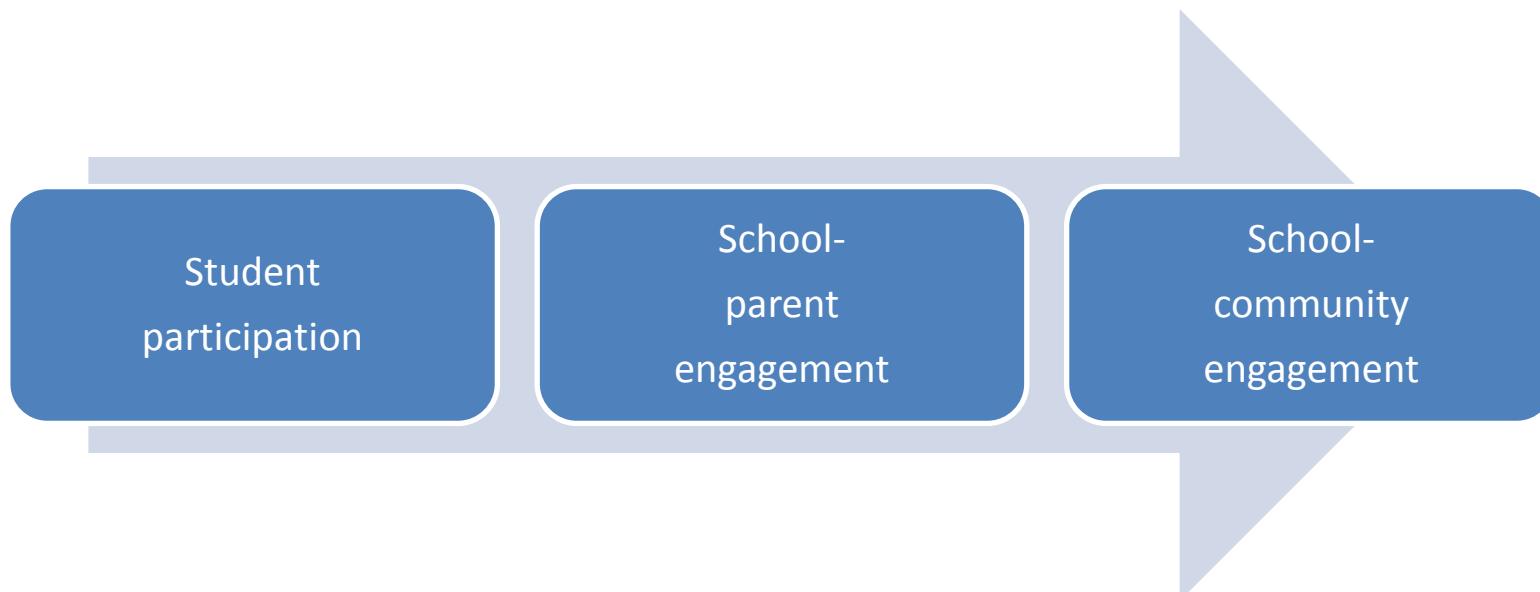
- i. **Local community:** The collective identity is founded in a particular neighborhood or region: for example, the local neighborhood or school community.
- ii. **Administrative community:** The collective identity is found in a particular politically determined identity: for example, the city, county, or school district community.
- iii. **Social community:** The collective identity is founded in a particular set of interpersonal relationships without regard to local or administrative boundaries: for example, all the people in one's community of friends.



- iv. **Instrumental community:** The collective identity is founded in direct or indirect engagement with others in performance of a particular function of mutual concern: for example, a professional group; such as the educational community, a union community, or a philanthropic community.
- iv. **Ethnic or class community:** The collective identity is founded in affinity to a particular national, racial, or cultural group.
- v. **Ideological community:** The collective identity is founded in a particular historic, conceptual, or socio-political community that stretches across the local, administrative, social, instrumental, or ethnic communities: for example, the Christian, Muslim, scholarly communities etc.

Components of school community engagement

- There are three components of school community engagements as illustrated below:





- a) Student participation:** Mechanisms for students to express their views about school work and school life and to participate in student and school organizations;
- b) School-parent engagements:** Mechanisms for building school-parent partnerships for school policy-making, management, and the development and protection of students; and
- c) School-community engagements:** Mechanisms for building school-community partnerships for school management and support, student protection, and community improvement.



Roles of communities in the schools

(a). Roles of head teachers and teachers

- Communicate regularly with the learners' homes on the developments taking place within the children.
- Work with community leaders to know which children are not in school & devise ways to bring them to school.
- Explain the value and purpose of a CFS to parents of pupils in their classes.
- Prepare pupils to interact with the community as part of the curriculum e.g. fieldtrips or special activities and events.
- Undertake regular needs assessments of schools within the CFS components, identify possible intervention areas and implement projects aimed at overall school improvement.



(b). Roles of community members

- Providing curriculum support materials and resources.
- Ensuring that all school-age children attend schools and learn.
- Supervising curriculum implementation.
- Identifying all out-of-school children and enrolling them in schools.
- Assisting needy pupils in their schools in various possible ways.



Promoting CFS using communities

Promoting CFS using communities involves:-

- i. **Committee:** A school should have a small committee where the head teacher is a member to help coordinate and explain issues of child friendly schools to the larger community. The following are some of the strategies that could be used to communicate with parents and communities; meetings, involvement in social services, printed information, electronic media, county administration meetings, and linkage with other schools among others.
- ii. **Publicity:** The school could develop CFS publicity materials for instance pamphlets, brochures, newsletters to communicate information to community members. Media practitioners for instance journalists could be invited to the school to publicize child friendly school practices in line with provision of quality education. Information to community members could also be communicated through radio, television or internet. These adverts can inform parents for instance about the need to take children to schools.



- iii. **The cluster system:** This is where four to seven schools are encouraged to work together and support each other in strengthening child friendly schools components. Schools could discuss good child friendly practices from each other that could be cross transferred and implemented.
- iv. **Advocacy:** To bring change in our schools and make them child friendly advocacy is required and some of the best advocates in this could be parents. In many cases parents are quite willing to participate in school programs especially when it's properly explained to them. In a number of cases parents and guardians may resist change due to ignorance, misinformation and this may require advocacy to be conducted to help bring them on board. This entails educational and publicity activities meant to gain support and persuade others to talk about child friendly schools. To have child friendly schools a lot of advocacy is required for school stakeholders to change and implement projected activities.



v. **Encourage parents to tell others about your CFS:** Parents can be very useful especially when it comes to dealing with their colleagues who resist change and explaining to them child friendly issues using their own experiences. When parents are involved they can volunteer to make contribution to activities meant to enhance welfare of the school. Parents and guardians can help in a number of areas for instance language instructions, helping learners with special needs, which could remarkably enrich teaching and learning activities and enable teachers to have more time to work with children who may need more attention. Several ways can be used to realize this one of which is holding enrolment fair at the beginning of the term, whereby parents, guardians and local businesspeople are invited to attend and enroll children. Special food may be organized, small gifts offered, dancing, fun games may be included to help attract children and all these activities focus on quality education.



- vi. **Outreach programs:** This approach could assist in enhancing linkages with community members and reaching out to children who are not in school. Suitable individuals for instance marginalized or disadvantaged groups or those with special needs could be included in outreach programs to explain child friendly activities in schools and how community members could participate.
- vii. **Role modelling:** Women from the nearby community working in different fields could help encourage the girls in schools. In many communities girls face more obstacles especially concerning cultural practices as compared to boys. When these role models narrate their experiences many young people are encouraged and motivated to excel in their studies.



Types of school-community linkages

There are three types of school-community linkages

- a) **Pedagogic link:** There is a pedagogic link between schools and homes and localities. This is because learning takes place all the time and everywhere, throughout life. Children bring to school their family and community beliefs, practices, knowledge, expectations and behaviors. Similarly, when they return from school they bring back to their homes and communities new forms of knowledge, practices, behaviors, attitudes and skills.
- b) **Economic link:** A wide range of costs is involved in the provision and uptake of education, and these costs are borne by various parties. The link between schools and homes and communities determines how these costs are shared. Viable, sustainable school financing depends on a healthy link between schools and the communities that they serve.
- c) **Sociopolitical or developmental link:** Schools serve primarily to achieve national development goals, such as cultivating human resources for economic growth, modernizing society or instituting cultural change.



Types of school community activities

There are two types of school community actions, namely, school-led actions and community-led activities.

School-led activities

- a) Schools as providers of services and facilities:** Schools provide a wide range of services and facilities to communities such as childcare support; access to health care, adult learning and access to community leisure, library and I.T. facilities.
- b) Schools developing communities' social and civic capacity:** Schools actively work to build positive relationships, social networks, and a sense of cohesion and pride within communities.
- c) Schools promote development:** Schools may stimulate economic growth by establishing their own entrepreneurial project which provides local employment.
- d) Schools developing community-responsive curricula and pedagogy:** Schools integrate community history, experience, and range of opportunities into their curricula and pedagogical approaches.



Community-led activities

- a) Parents exercising choice:** The school is responsive to parents' expectations.
- b) Communities' involvement in school governance:** The school involves community members in the leadership and management of schools, and about formal mechanisms through which community members can hold schools to account.
- c) Community organizing:** This is the involvement of communities as agents for educational reform.
- d) Communities establishing schools:** Communities start new schools.

Impact of school-community relations

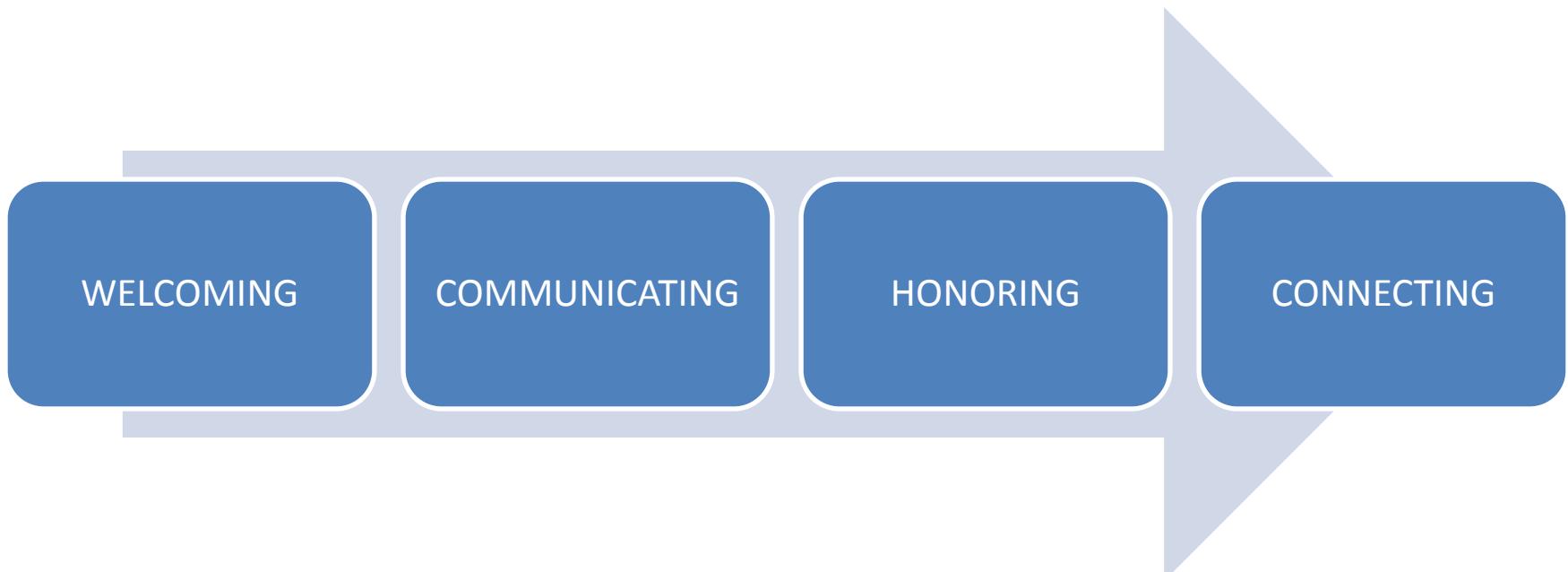
Here are the effects of school-community relations:-

- i. Upgraded school facilities
- ii. Improved school leadership and staffing
- iii. Higher quality learning programs for students
- iv. New resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum
- v. Resources for after-school programs and family supports
- vi. Increased social and political capital of participants



How to establish school-community relations

- Establishing school community relations involves 4 steps as follows:-



- a) **Welcoming:** Families are made to feel at home, comfortable, and a part of the school community.





b) Communicating: This may be done through holding meetings, informal discussions, field visits, classroom visits, homework etc. While communicating with parents it's important to inform them what teachers are doing to help the child and what is expected of parents as far as child learning is concerned. Parents should be informed that child friendly schools mean active involvement of all stakeholders and as children learn they will be learning for instance about the meaning of an inclusive school. It's important to regularly communicate with parents and guardians about the progress children are making in schools and also deliberately make efforts to identify skills the leaner's has acquired in various areas. Many ways could be used to maintain this communication some of them include, use of diaries, progress record and color code charts. This communication will help keep all the key stakeholders informed and appropriately involved.

c) **Honoring:** Family members are respected, validated and affirmed for any type of involvement or contribution they make.



d) Connecting: School staff and families put children at the center and connect on education issues of common interest designed to improve educational opportunities for the children.



Skills required to enhance school community linkages

Skill 1: Ensure that you have a functional BOM and CFS team:

Ensure that you also link the BOM with the CFS team. Also ensure that the BOM and CFS team are equally represented by males and females.



Skill 2: Ensure that you involve the community in the development and implementation of the strategic and development plan of the school.





Skill 3: Involve parents in the learning and teaching processes: Family involvement has a protective effect. The more families can support their children's progress, the better their children do in school and the longer they stay in school. Parents can be engaged through the following:

- Participating in PTA meetings.
- Supporting pupils' learning at home, and discussing pupils' work with teachers.
- Supporting school child friendly activities. Parents should also be encouraged to give ideas on how to make the school child friendly.
- Seeking for traditionally excluded children to enroll in school.
- Volunteering to assist teachers in classroom activities.
- Sharing information about their work and the world of work as guest speakers.
- Donate in schools much needed materials to the school or help resource financial contributions to meet classroom/school needs.
- Where there are no female teachers, women from the community can be involved in role model programs.



Skill 4: Promote child-to-child activities for school community linkages as follows:

- Children can find articles or get information from their home or get information from their home or community that relate to a lesson at school.
- They can find plants or other materials (such as used cardboard) that teachers can use to make teaching and learning materials.
- Children can participate in re-designing the classroom or in assessing and improving the school grounds so that they are more "child friendly" (especially for children with special needs), safe (reduce conflict) and gender sensitive. Improve upon the school grounds can also lead to more outdoor classroom spaces.
- Children can map their communities and assist in identifying children who should be in school but are not.
- Children can participate in community service activities.

Skill 5: Ensure school participation in community activities: This could be done through outreach activities done by the school in the community and engaging in income generating projects.





- We have come to the end of this Unit on school community linkages. We have looked at the concept of school community partnerships and types of communities.
- We have also looked at the components that make up school community linkages and the benefits accruing from those linkages.
- In addition, we have examined the various ways of promoting school community linkages and the skills required.
- We hope you can now work on establishing and promoting these linkages so that your school can reap the benefits we have discussed.