



Further engagement

ACTIVITY



45 minutes
approximately

So many ways to get involved

This activity helps voters in training see that there are multiple forms of involvement. Participants will identify, act out and guess situations that illustrate different ways of getting involved in the community.

OBJECTIVE

Recognize that there are many ways to participate in democracy

MATERIAL REQUIRED

- ✓ Whiteboard
- ✓ Sixteen cards
- ✓ Timing device

LINKS TO THE QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Subject area: Personal development

Competency: Reflect on ethical questions

Broad area of learning: Citizenship

Focus of development: Awareness of the importance of rules of social conduct and democratic institutions

Broad area of learning: Community life

Focus of development: Involvement in action in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity

Cross-curricular competency: Construction of identity

So many ways to get involved**ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY**

Ask participants the following questions:

- What does involvement mean?

Potential responses:

- Involvement means volunteering your time and putting your talents to work for a cause you care about.
- Involvement is about making a difference.
- Involvement means participating in the democratic life of your community.
- There are opportunities for involvement at school (e.g., serving on student council), in the classroom (e.g., helping another student, taking on responsibilities such as decorating the classroom or sorting materials) and at home (e.g., doing chores).

- Do you know people who get involved?
- Do you get involved? If so, what motivates you to get involved?

A BIT OF THEORY

There are many reasons to get involved in the democratic life of your community. You don't need to support a specific political party. You might want to support a cause or an organization, to promote ideas that are important to you, etc. Whatever the reason, getting involved is a good way to achieve social integration and to become an important member of society.

There are diverse ways of participating in democracy. Here are some different forms of involvement:

- **Political participation** can mean running as a candidate in an election or voting to elect people who will represent you. It can also involve exercising freedom of association and the right to sit on governance bodies, such as boards of directors. You can participate in political life at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.
- **Public participation** requires spaces for debate and deliberation. These spaces allow citizens to get involved in collective decision-making, a process that enriches society and contribute to its development. Good examples of participation in public life include participatory budgeting, submitting briefs, advocacy through petitions or demonstrations, and public consultation processes.

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- **Social participation** often means getting involved with an organization to advance a specific cause. It can simply involve becoming a member of an organization. But it can also mean volunteering at school, at work or in the wider community. Social participation can also be more informal. At a personal level, it can refer to ethical consumption practices or even to how you contribute to your own family.

Getting involved at an early age

A commitment to getting involved can develop at a very early age. For instance, young people can take an interest in issues affecting their community and express their views in a variety of ways:

- by submitting open letters to publications such as a school newspaper, a neighbourhood newspaper or a municipal newsletter;
- by participating in public debates organized at school, in the community, online, etc.;
- by helping to create works of activist art (songs, paintings, plays, etc.);
- by discussing political developments with people close to them.

Getting involved with your school's student council is another great way of participating in democracy. The Vox Populi: "Ta démocratie à l'école" program is jointly offered by the Assemblée nationale du Québec, Élections Québec, and the Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant. It helps elementary or secondary schools set up a student council. In concrete terms, the program allows students to experience an election process, to put democratic values into practice and to participate in decisions affecting the life of their school through a student council. For more information, visit **www.voxpopuli.quebec**.

So many ways to get involved**SUGGESTED STEPS****PART 1**

1. Ask voters in training to complete, out loud and one at a time, the following sentence: "I get involved by..."

Potential responses:

- ... voting for my class representative;
- ... volunteering my time to support a cause;
- ... helping people in need;
- ... doing volunteer work;
- ... participating in a demonstration;
- ... helping out around the house;
- ... helping friends with their homework;
- ... taking action to protect the environment;
- ... contributing to a project in my community or at school;
- ... signing a petition;
- ... finding out more about important issues that affect society;
- etc.

2. Write all responses on the whiteboard.
3. Choose about ten of the ideas shared by participants (without saying which ones!) and write each one on a different card.

PART 2

1. Divide the larger group into teams of three or four participants. Have each team pick a card.
2. Time to get started! After giving the teams two or three minutes to prepare, have them take turns acting out the idea on their card in front of the larger group. Give each team 30 seconds to act out its idea.
3. Next, have the other participants guess the idea.
4. Repeat the process for each team or until all the cards have been used.