1. As an international organisation, IACD is concerned with issues that cross national borders. But we recognise that for people to be able to participate and relate to each other anywhere there have to be democratic frameworks in each country. People have to feel themselves to be citizens of somewhere in particular in order to be citizens of the world. And where they are not citizens, whether because they are visitors, refugees, asylum seekers or stateless persons, they particularly need the hospitality and inclusiveness of those who are citizens.

However, formal citizenship is not enough to ensure commitment to shared values and cooperative endeavour. Symbolic and educational measures are important but what is even more essential is personal involvement in practical community action, linking the individual with others in some purposeful joint effort. This builds the *experience* of citizenship without necessarily theorising it. It may consist in action to improve one’s neighbourhood, take part in a social activity, help people suffering from a particular health condition, campaign on a current issue, protect the environment or numerous other topics. It is through such lived activities, carried out in a spirit of mutual benefit and respect, that people know themselves to be members of society alongside others, whether from similar or different backgrounds.
The visible expression of these types of activities is the community sector of independent groups in each locality or across wider areas in all countries. Community development (CD) is the set of techniques and values which nurtures this sector. A policy on citizenship should therefore give a high priority to ensuring the health of the community sector, deploying CD practitioners where needed to achieve this. Here we would urge the committee to acknowledge and indeed build upon the UK’s extensive tradition of governmental and non-governmental support for community development as a practice profession since the 1960s both domestically and overseas.

The importance of CD in this respect is not merely its fund of skills and techniques but the values of equality, diversity and cooperation that are built into them. Community activity sometimes arises from dissatisfaction with local conditions, from protest, and from social tensions, and it is vital that its motivations are understood and guided into constructive forms. This applies equally to communities of locality and communities of identity, interest or ethnicity. CD practitioners work with them all, respecting the identities that people choose for themselves but at the same time instilling the message that all must respect the identities chosen by others. These values are of course not unique to CD, but CD is the occupation which applies them in the detailed life of local groups and networks.

2. We find the phraseology of this question slightly disturbing, as it implies that your concern is only with people who are formally citizens. We see it as vital that other people living in this country (or in any country) who for one reason or another do not have formal citizenship status should nevertheless be included in citizen-like activity and experience. It is important to make extra effort to overcome the feelings of alienation and exclusion that they are likely to experience. This is not incompatible with encouraging pride in being or becoming British, but such pride should be vested in Britain’s once-famed qualities of tolerance and inclusiveness, not in some supposed superiority or exclusiveness.

3/4. We see the main obstacles to active citizenship not as matters of legality but policies which exacerbate inequality and divisiveness. We believe that the virtual disappearance of the ‘Big Society’ initiative shows that it was unwise to seek to separate community involvement from state support and cooperation with public services. The community sector and parts of the voluntary sector have significantly dwindled in the last few years, notably in England (less so in Scotland). We would advocate new investment in those forms of community and voluntary activity which particularly enhance the experience of cooperative involvement in society (not merely in the form of contracts to voluntary organisations to deliver parts of the public services). This includes recognising once again the important role that local councils can make in employing CD strategies AND professionals.

5. There is undoubtedly scope for better education in citizenship. Past initiatives on this subject in schools have sometimes been little more than arrangement of volunteering. Although we recognise and welcomed the initiative taken in the early 2000s regarding citizenship education in all secondary schools as a core subject, that encompasses such notions as political literacy (knowledge and skills) and practical experiences of getting involved in local communities (of locality, interest and identity). What needs to be conveyed is a more all-round understanding by young people (and indeed adults through community education support and the role of the media) of how society works, in terms of decision-making and negotiation between different interests through the democratic
framework at national and local levels. Many schools, colleges and universities do have imaginative schemes in this area, but others regard it as a marginal issue which can be dropped in order to concentrate purely on formal qualifications. We would like to see a review of the extent and content of genuine good practice on citizenship education, followed by strong guidance throughout the lifelong education system. However, again we would stress that the emphasis should be on understanding how society works and on practical experience of co-operative activity, not merely on symbolic declarations.

6. We do not have a single view on the efficacy of the national citizen service. We can see considerable value however from all young people, in that important transition period after school, engaging in community development type programmes and have seen this work in many countries, where it is well planned and supervised and where there is a strong partnership between schools, post school institutions and the local voluntary sector in ensuring a rich practical placement. Such citizenship service programmes should also be linked with proactive policies and funding programmes by the government et al that assist the host voluntary/community organisation to professionally host young people (and indeed adults) engaging in a citizenship service experience. VSO and CVS in the UK have had years of experience in this area which should be learnt from.

7. The most natural and common motivations to civic engagement often occur in relation to public services, since these affect people’s daily lives, whether in the form of housing, education, health, policing, environment or other fields. To encourage active citizenship it is therefore necessary that the services are delivered in such a way as to invite and value user involvement and in what is currently known as ‘co-production’. This should go beyond merely consultation, by developing active decision-making partnerships between providers and users. CD is again a key instrument here, but, given the closed nature of large institutions, the requirement for them to develop genuine partnerships has to come from government and its local agencies. A number of tragic disasters in recent years (the Grenfell Tower fire being only the most recent) reveal a chronic lack of partnership and joint decision-making between providers and users. And it is for this reason that we would strongly urge that the committee learns from the best of the past, where CD practitioners employed within the local state and other agencies can have a hugely significant role to play in training and supporting all public servants to adopt more citizen engaging and empowering processes.

23 August 2017