

Future Problem Solving Program International Community Problem Solving Component 2015-16



What is Community Problem Solving?

Community Problem Solving (CmPS) is a team or individual activity in which students identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community – local, state, national, or even global. Students use the skills of the problem solving process as they work on their project; however, since real life is not always as organized as an academic exercise, the process may not proceed neatly from step to step. CmPS can be pursued as an extracurricular activity or as part of the regular school curriculum and can be one or two years in length.

Why Community Problem Solving?

Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) provides the tools and strategies students need to face the challenges of today and the future. What better way to prepare students for their future than by teaching them to think systematically about problematic situations, to gather information to understand the situation, and to evaluate

multiple solutions in order to best address the situation? Students involved in Community Problem Solving learn powerful lessons about creating change, about dealing with local authorities and organizations, and about making a positive impact. The implementation of real solutions gives students a strong sense of accomplishment and helps them to see the practical applications of the processes and skills that they have been learning. CmPS participation may fulfill service-learning requirements, although CmPS projects are typically more extensive.

Future Problem Solving Program International's six-step problem solving model is aligned with National Curriculum Standards, Common Core Standards, and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards. Through participation in Community Problem Solving, students refine critical and creative thinking skills, focus on a real community or school issue, produce solution ideas, generate criteria to evaluate solution ideas, determine the best plan of action, and implement the plan to resolve their problem.

Who can participate in Community Problem Solving?

Students may participate in CmPS in three divisions: Junior (grades 4-6, or the equivalent), Middle (grades 7-9), and Senior (grades 10-12). Having a background in the Global Issues or Action-based components of FPSPI is a great start for students in CmPS, but this is not required. If students have not been involved with these components, they do need to learn the problem solving process as part of their community problem solving experience.



2015 Beyonder Award Project Integrate Singapore

“Project Integrate is a 2-year project targeting the recreational needs of the foreign worker population in Singapore. We aim to create a healthy culture of recreation for workers of Healthserve to reduce unhealthy activities like drinking and gambling. We achieved this through our interactive library trips, sport sessions, regular outings and events on break days. Additionally, we organised a book drive and helped out at carnivals. We increased our outreach through posters, promotional videos, social media and concerts. Foreign workers deserve our respect, and Project Integrate is proud to have made a difference.”

How do students participate in CmPS?

Individuals or teams of any size may participate in Community Problem Solving. For a team, you may want at least 3 or 4 students to handle all requirements; and for larger projects, the group may consist of more students. Complex projects often require substantial organization, with tasks divided among the participants. Please note that a maximum of 15 students on a team advancing to the International Conference may participate in the CmPS interview, but all team members may participate in the CmPS Fair. Since CmPS projects are long-term activities, lasting up to a year or more, students need to be committed to following through with the activity.

How can I get started with students?

Training in the problem solving process is important for coaches of Community Problem Solving teams and individuals. Affiliate Programs often hold workshops in the problem solving process, and you can find resources for the problem solving process within the Global Issues Problem Solving or Action-based Problem Solving publications at fspimart.org. See the CmPS Essential Publications page for information focused on Community Problem Solving and the Tips for Coaches pages for ideas on working with your students. Contact your Affiliate Director for more information.

How do I register students for Community Problem Solving?

Each Affiliate Program determines its own processes, fees, and due dates for registration and entries. Your Affiliate Director can provide you with registration and submission materials and may be able to put you in touch with experienced CmPS coaches.

2015 Junior Grand Champions Project R.U.R.A.L. Whangarei, New Zealand

“Our school’s 4.5ha of land was used ineffectively and we thought it could be used for authentic hands on learning; supporting our education, including the wider community and utilizing landspace more effectively. One challenge was finding 5 more hectares so contractors would support us on our land. We successfully signed a lease; included the whole school in learning to farm 6ha of maize; re-claim a native bush, harvest and distill essential oils from manuka and lavender we planted, keep bees, make balms, build a paddock, plant an orchard, keep Alpacas, felt, enterprise, taught all classes and provided all teaching resources.”

How are CmPS projects evaluated?



CmPS projects are scored by trained evaluators who consider all elements of the project. At the Affiliate level, these assessments usually include evaluation of a six-page written report, supporting documentation

within an addendum, and a scrapbook. Additional requirements for projects that qualify for International Competition include a table-top display, an oral presentation, a media presentation, and an interview. In most Affiliate Programs, first place projects move on to the International Competition (IC).

Where can I find a sample project to view?

Please visit www.fpspi.org and click the components tab to view a winning CmPS project report, addendum, and media presentation.