

Future Problem Solving Program International Community Problem Solving Overview



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 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 multiple divisions equivalent to grade levels of the USA: Junior (grades 4-6), 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.

2016 Beyonder Award

Humans of Manatee County

Manatee County FPS Club, Florida, USA

“Humans of Manatee County has partnered with the homeless and homeless advocates to address the articulated needs of the homeless, to provide an insightful look at homelessness through our short documentary, to raise awareness and donations for the 5000 homeless in our community, and to mentor at risk students. Oftentimes homeless individuals are treated as social outliers, making them feel ashamed and forgotten. Through launching our ‘Just Say Hello – Homeless are Humans Too’ campaign, we hope to inspire our peers and community to treat the homeless with the respect and dignity they deserve.”

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 even more students, as 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 CmPS Essential Publications for information focused on Community Problem Solving and Tips for Coaches for ideas on working with your students. Contact your Affiliate Director or the International Office of FPSPI 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.

2016 Middle Grand Champions Project FOReSight School of the Arts, Singapore

“Project FOReSIGHT aims to address the problem of the increasing rate of childhood myopia in Singapore, and combat the lack of knowledge and understanding of taking care of one’s eyes in parents and children. We have chosen to solve these problems by advocating the practice of good eye care amongst children aged 4-9 and their parents through strategies such as workshops conducted at kindergarten schools, a storybook aimed at the aforementioned demographic, and posting eye care tips on social media. Project FOReSIGHT has established external partnerships, and is looking forward to collaborating with various schools, kindergartens, ophthalmologists, and organisations. Ultimately, we hope to cultivate good eye care habits in children to delay the onset and lower their resultant degree of myopia.”

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 CmPS Fair where the team shares their projects and presents 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?

An example of a written report, addendum, and the team’s PSA media presentation are found on fspspi.org (WHAT WE DO menu/COMPETITIVE COMPONENTS/Community Problem Solving).