



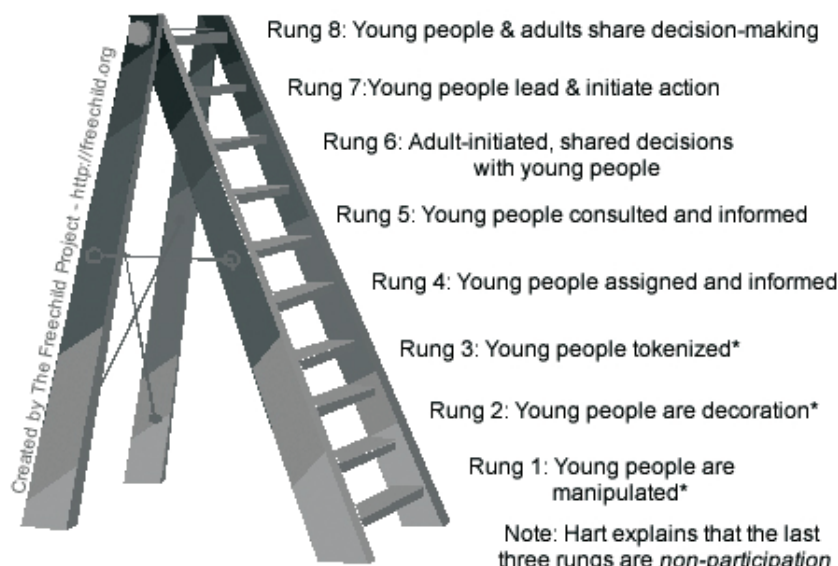
USING MOTIVATIONAL TOOLS AND EMPOWERMENT APPROACHES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

When setting up a youth peer network, expect young people to ask, “What’s in it for me?” Not only will young people want to participate, they will also want to have control, be decision-makers and have the opportunity to develop skills and build their capacity for leadership.

In order to motivate and empower, the level of participation has to be as high as possible. One way to explain what is required is to consider Roger Hart’s Ladder of Young People’s Participation. The aim is to get as high up on the ladder as possible, so that ultimately young people and adults share decision-making. A peer network on rung eight will be run for and by people, empowering young people, while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experiences and expertise of adults.

The point has been made that while rung eight might be the ultimate goal, what is more important is getting as high up the ladder as possible, without falling off. Ultimately, it would be for the peer network itself to decide what works best.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



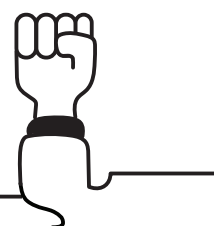
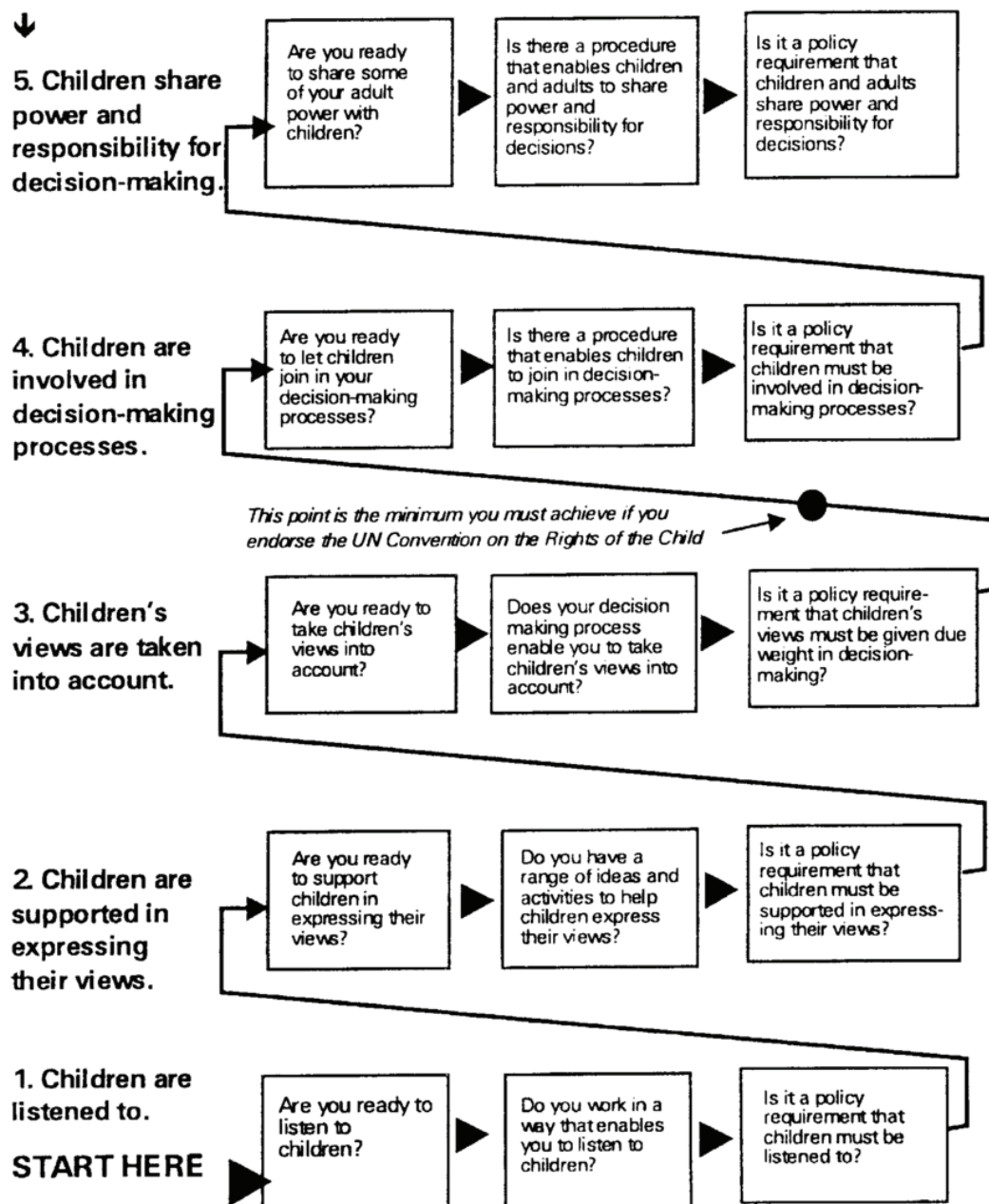
Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.



https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/ASTC/00e37246-8bd9-481f-900c-ad9d6b6b3393/UploadedImages/Ladder_of_Participation_1.pdf

Levels of participation

Openings > Opportunities > Obligations



Adapted from: Shier, H (2001) Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations, Young People and Society, Vol. 15, John Wiley and Sons Ltd: United States of America, pp. 107-117.

Reaching a point where young people and adults share all the decision-making will take time and commitment. Being prepared to give it time and effort and work alongside young people will mean being open and flexible with a willingness to re-think an approach.

As one JFY Peer Connector explains:

“The easiest way is not always the best way to do it. Julia Farr Youth is built on real lived experience. Peer Connectors live with disability and bring that notion of shared experience. We have become champions of our own lives and have the experience so it’s not about what you can do for us but you should be asking what we can do for you.”

Another model that is often referred to is Shier’s Pathway to Participation, which views participation as a process rather than a specific event or project. The pathway presents a series of levels and questions by which an organisation can assess its readiness to develop more effective youth engagement and participation.

Case Study: CityKids

CityKids is a successful example of young people choosing issues they find important, finding a safe space, and helping one another strengthen their community. The organisation helps them gain leadership skills and a close-knit peer group, and it sends a positive message to youth throughout the community.

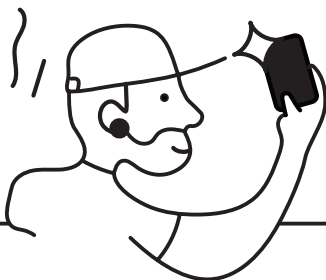
The CityKids motto is:

We empower, engage, connect, and inspire young people to skilfully lift their voices and be heard.

Our motto has always been:

**Each one reach one, Each one teach one,
Each one pull one into the sun.**

Thinking about the “ladder” of participation will help you think about where your peer network really is and then contemplate where you would like to be in terms of youth participation. This ladder was not created to suggest that we all have to be “at the top” rung all of the time, but, rather, that we ought to be aiming to get off of the lower rungs of non-participation and think of ways to genuinely engage children and youth.



For more information

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation:

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/ASTC/00e37246-8bd9-481f-900c-ad9d6b6b3393/UploadedImages/Ladder_of_Participation_1.pdf



Shier, H (2001) *Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations, Young People and Society*, Vol. 15, John Wiley and Sons Ltd: United States of America, pp. 107–117.



The next bead is on the string and you have a vibrant, engaged peer network where young people are the decision-makers.

You will want to let people know how well it's going. One of the key ways young people are able to hear about what's going on and what's interesting is through their friends and connections – it's word of mouth but in an age of technology and "sharing". It is likely that young people will turn to social media and then base decisions on what is happening, being talked about and "liked" by their peers. It becomes important for the peer network to use diverse media to get the word out and that is the topic of the next section.

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