**M3-H2-Hart’s Ladder of Participation**

1. **Read through the explanation of Hart’s Ladder of Participation**
2. **Read through all the scenarios.**
3. **Match the example scenarios to where they sit on Hart’s Ladder of Participation.**
4. **What actions could you take to improve youth engagement and move each scenario up a rung on the Ladder? Try to move it up at least one rung, but not that the top rung, isn’t always the end goal - as long as it’s not in the non-participation rungs (1, 2 and 3).**

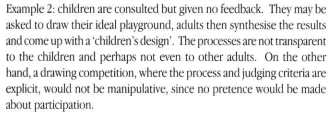
**Explanation**

The ladder of participation is a useful metaphorical ladder when considering the degree to which young people are engaged in a development initiative and whether this engagement is tokenistic (non-participatory) or meaningful (participatory). Each step described in more detail:

* *Manipulation* is the lowest step of the ladder of participation and in this case young people participate only on a superficial level with the initiative, but are not involved with planning or conducting the initiative, it is manipulation because often the initiative is described by adults as being participatory.
* *Decoration* is the second lowest step and here young people are simply visually present in the initiative possibly as a visual tool to bolster the adult’s cause, but are not directly linked with the cause or creating it’s solution. Decoration is one step up from Manipulation as it does not pretend to be participatory.
* *Tokenism*, the third lowest step, is the case when young people are seemed to be given a voice, but have very little or no choice on the subject or communication style, or a chance to formulate their own opinion on the subject. The bottom three steps of the ladder Manipulation, Decoration and Tokenism make up the three degrees of non-participation.
* The fourth step of the ladder, *Assigned but Informed* is where young people understand the intentions of the project, know who made the decision on their involvement and why, they have a meaningful role, and volunteer for the project after the project was made clear to them - it is still an assigned role however as the young person has had little choice either in their involvement or the type of role they had.
* *Consulted and Informed* is where the project is designed and run by adults, but young people understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously. This may mean that young people are brought in not just to offer consultation input through ideas, solutions or priorities in the first phase of an initiative, but will also be included further along the process to review the product of their consultation.
* *Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with youth* as the sixth step of the ladder is the first step of true participation because, though the projects at this level are initiated by adults, the decision making is shared with the young people.
* *Youth Initiated and Directed* occurs when young people conceive of, initiate and carry out their own initiatives and adults do not interfere or direct. This often occurs strongly in youth-led movements or youth-led organisations.
* *Child Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults* is the eighth and top step of the Ladder of Participation where an initiative conceived and started by young people is supported by adults, not by dominating or changing the initiative, but by supporting and sharing the initiative with the young people who conceived it.

**Scenarios**

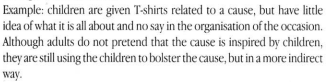
**Scenario 1:**



**Scenario 2:**

Development practitioners have a stall at a national event for young people on behalf of their organisation. This stall is a part of efforts by development practitioners to design a new youth leadership programme. Young people who pass this stall are asked to come and draw an empowered young person and receive a badge in return for their efforts. Development practitioners then synthesise the results and this turns into the youth design that informs their programme design.

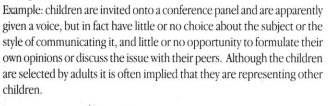
**Scenario 3:**



**Scenario 4:**

Young people are invited to a meeting with the UK Prime Minister on Youth Priorities in development after reacting to a call for young people. For many it is their first time in Parliament, they are nervous, and due to the importance of the meeting and concerns about reputational risk of the organisation, the accompanying development practitioner does most of the speaking during the meeting. The young people have some sense of what the conversation is about and feel after the meeting happy that they have learnt a lot about Youth Priorities in development.

**Scenario 5:**

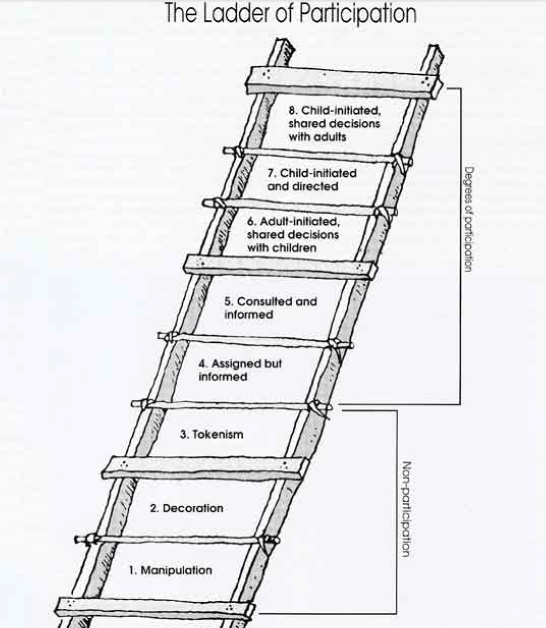


**Scenario 6:**

A young international volunteer and young national volunteer in Uganda come to the office one morning and are told by a development practitioner that today they will be teaching LGBTQI rights to their class as a part of their peer-to-peer learning programme. It is explained to them that even though the development practitioner knows they don’t know a great deal about LGBTQI rights in Uganda, the development practitioner is sure they will do a great job as they have been chosen for their confidence and excellent relationship building skills in the classroom and what they need to do, say, and how they should say it, is in the facilitation-pack.

**Scenario 7:**

Young people are out delivering ‘how to keep safe!’ leaflets to members of the public in response to an earthquake in Tanzania. They were given these leaflets by a member of staff at the organisations’ office after responding to a call for alumni volunteers on the shared WhatsApp group by development practitioners. None of the volunteers are sure what the leaflets say or why they are handing these leaflets out, but they trust that the organisation knows what it is doing and are proud to be active citizens.



**Figure 2. Hart’s ladder of participation**