

## Commitment to Action - Participation

### The Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation is a model for thinking about youth participation developed by Roger Hart. The bottom three rungs describe youth involvement that is not true participation whereas the top five rungs describe true participation.

#### Degrees of Participation

**8) Child -initiated, shared decisions with adults** is when projects or programs are initiated by children and decision-making is shared among children and adults. These projects empower children while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

**7) Child -initiated and directed** is when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role.

**6) Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children** is when projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the young people.

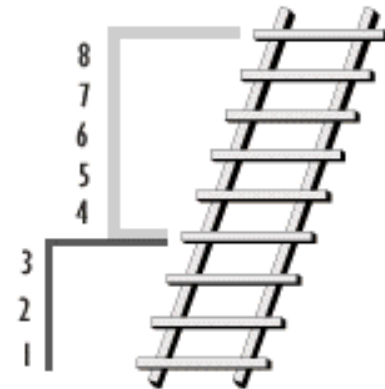
**5) Consulted and informed** is when children give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. Children are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

**4) Assigned but informed** is where children are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

**3) Tokenism** is where young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.

**2) Decoration** is where young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by children.

**1) Manipulation** is where adults use children to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by children.



#### Activities

- Discuss with the class why it is important for the community to participate in fund raising activities that help others.
- Brainstorm a list of potential fund raising ideas that the class could organise within the school community.
- Reflect on Roger Hart's, Ladder of Participation and find examples of participation that demonstrate each rung.

Source: Adapted from [http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya\\_ladd.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_ladd.htm)

Adapted from: Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, UNICEF