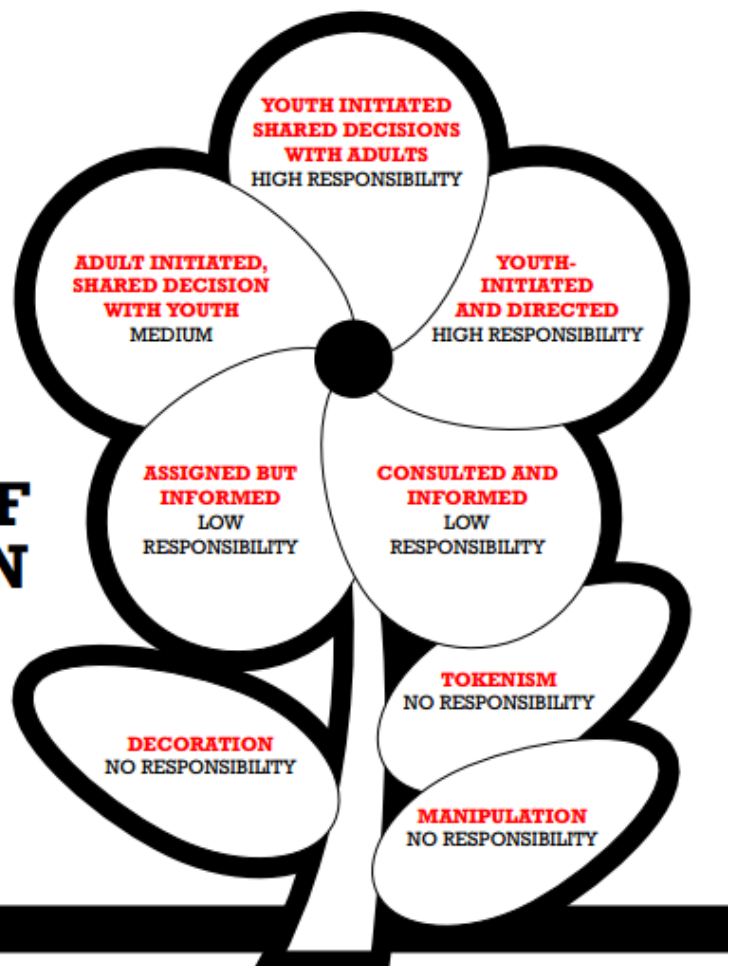


choice. FOR YOUTH & SEXUALITY

THE FLOWER OF PARTICIPATION

BASED ON THE THEORY OF THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION BY ROGER HART.

DEVELOPED BY CHOICE FOR YOUTH & SEXUALITY AND YOUACT.



The **Flower of Participation** was developed by CHOICE in order to give a better understanding of youth participation. The flower is based on 'the ladder of participation' which can lead to a focus on hierarchy, where the highest level is the ultimate goal. Instead, the flower is based on the acknowledgement of young people's rights in relation to the different needs and realities of youth participation.

Explanation

The lowest steps of the ladder are the leaves, because these forms cannot be described as meaningful youth participation. The flower petals represent the different variations of responsibility that young people can have or take but all are based on equality. This shows that there are different forms of participation that in practice, work differently and lead to different results. The form of participation must fit the program/project and the objectives of the program/project. Even more important: it must fit the needs of the involved young people. Because of this the different forms of participation can even take place simultaneously within one organisation or program. The form of participation and the amount of responsibility of the youngsters depend on several factors.

The most important factors are:

- Level of training (knowledge is power)
- Available time
- If the young people being involved are volunteers or are getting paid for their work
- Available funds
- The level of investment of organizations in all of the above

The different forms of participation

(1) Manipulation

Manipulation happens when adults use young people to support a good cause and at the same time they pretend the good cause is inspired by young people.

(2) Decoration

Decoration happens when young people are being used to support a good cause, or give it more zest, even though the adults don't give the impression as if the good cause is inspired by youth.

(3) Tokenism

Tokenism means that young people seem to have a voice, but in reality they have little to no choice in what they do or how they get involved.

(4) Assigned but informed

Assigned but informed happens when young people get a specific role and get informed on how and why they are involved in the program or project.

(5) Consulted and informed

Consulted and informed is the case when young people give advice on projects or programs developed and executed by adults. Young people are informed about how their advice will be used and what the outcome is of the decisions the adults have made.

(6) Initiated by adults, shared decisions with young people

This happens when projects or programs are initiated by adults, but decisions are shared with young people.

(7) Initiated and executed by young people

This happens when young people initiate and execute a program or project. Adults are only involved in a supporting role.

(8) Initiated by young people, shared decisions with adults

This happens when programs or projects are initiated by young people whilst decisions are shared with adults and young people. These projects are supportive and motivational for young people, while, at the same time, young people can profit from the experience and expertise of adults.