

Hear our Voices!
Making Sure
Young People's
Voices Are Heard

The STOP AIDS NOW! Youth Participation Model (SYP) Manual

STOP
AIDS
NOW!

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Young People's
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STOP AIDS NOW!

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God's Golden Acre
"Khayelitsha"



Dear Reader,

This manual was sponsored by STOP AIDS NOW! and is an output of the STOP AIDS NOW! Joint Learning Project (JLP) in South Africa.

The STOP AIDS NOW! JLP was made up of 10 community-based organisations in South Africa who work with children and youth infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. All the organisations target young people in their activities and projects.

Our partners had four areas of focused learning that were designed to help each organisation improve its activities. This manual comes out of the learning track that seeks to ensure the meaningful participation of young people. It introduces a tool for you to assess how meaningfully involved young people are in an organisation, and some ideas for how to increase their involvement in various ways.

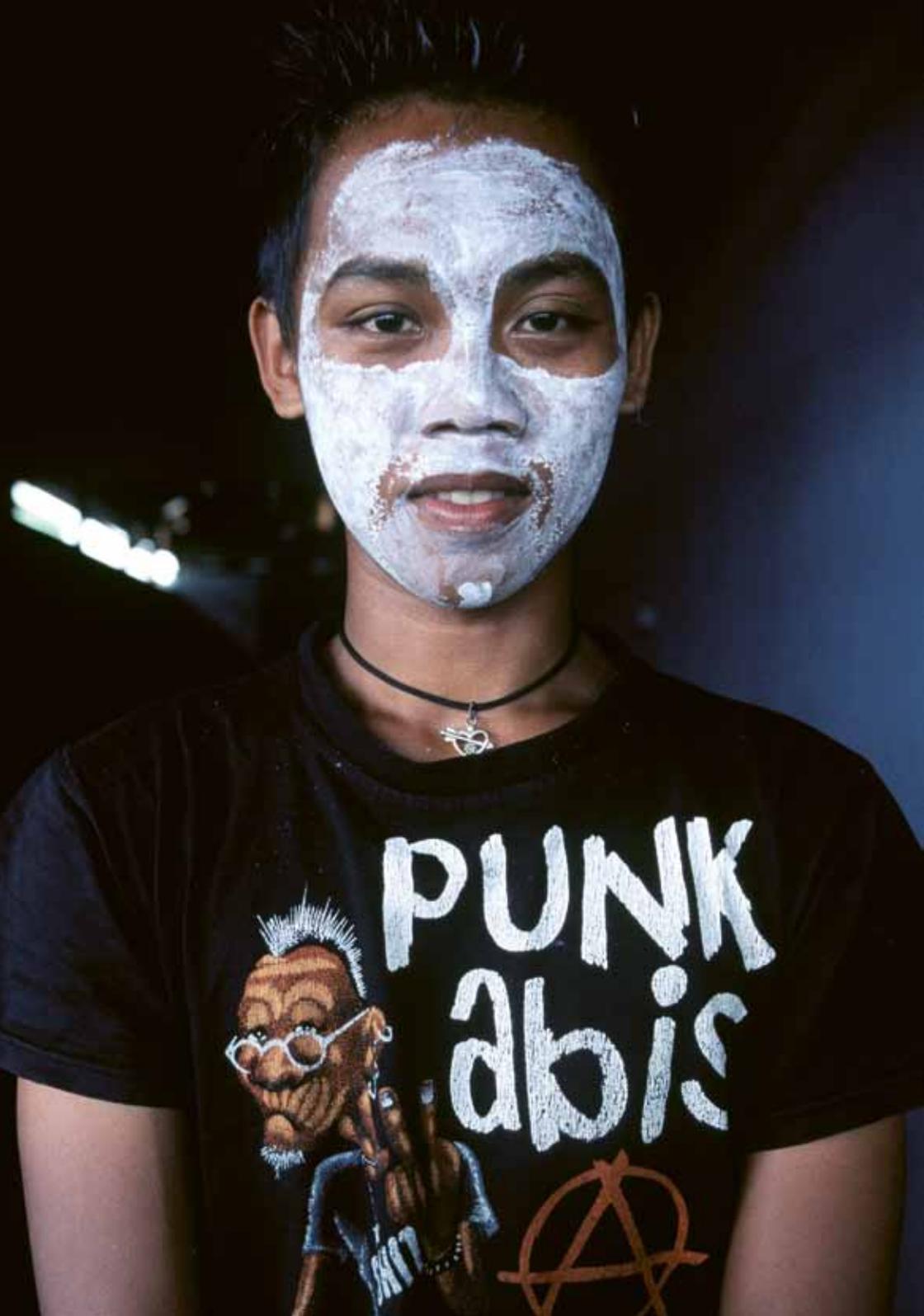
Neill Stevenson developed the STOP AIDS NOW! Youth Participation (SYP) model for the STOP AIDS NOW! JLP. It builds on information gathered from an audit of all our partners' activities, and input from a workshop on meaningful participation held in September 2007, where the organisations present at the workshop were asked to think about how they could deepen their interactions with young people.

This manual draws on what we learned through implementing various ideas that emerged from the workshop and seeks to describe how you can use the SYP model to assess the meaningful participation of young people in your organisation. Each organisation involved, and their project, is described at the back of this manual. Justin Maxwell, as the coordinator of this Community of Practice, contributed to the development of this manual.

Regards,

Milly Siebrits

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PUNK
abis



Let us take you on a journey

Some easy steps to include young people more meaningfully

This manual will show you how easy it can be to give the young people you work with a voice in your organisation. This could happen on different levels in your organisation – anything from asking for input on programme content to including young people on your Board. This depends on the journey that you are willing to undertake.

Meaningful Participation of young people is simply about giving space to the voice of the young people and taking what they are saying seriously. So often, young people carry responsibility yet are somewhat overlooked. Experience shows that people learn best when they are involved in an activity, since an involved person becomes interested and more often remembers what they have done and why it was important.

In this process we believed that our organisations needed to offer young people a safe environment to gain new experiences and learn how to make thoughtful decisions. As organisations that work with children and young people we chose to begin finding ways to align our corporate activities with the articulated ideas and needs of the target group. The first step is asking ourselves **why** we want to involve young people and **how** we can do this more effectively.

“This workshop has opened doors for me I never knew existed but also has pushed me into doing things I never saw myself doing before. It has proved to me that I can believe in myself and run as a representative for others.”

Sifiso, young person

“Youth participation is low and mostly young people are not involved in decision making. I think this is a bad thing because young people know best what the need of youth are.”

Lerato, young person

(So often this can be said of our programmes and our organisations.)

Next we explore a model that assists us to describe where we are in terms of youth participation, as an organisation, which then gives us ideas on how to take the process of meaningfully involving young people in our organisation further. We also look at the benefits of involving young people for the individual, organisation and society.

Throughout this manual you will hear the young people’s voices, see how some organisations have gone about growing in this regard, and find some practical tips.

What do we mean when we use the term young people?

The term “young people” can mean many different things. In our case, the STOP AIDS NOW! partners use it to indicate people between the ages of 8 and 24 years. You might want to define your own age group appropriate to your youth target.

“The response overall was great to see. I was a little nervous about the National Board meeting (more than 25 of the most senior adults in the organisation attend this meeting) as I thought that the ideas would be shot-down almost immediately and hence we would not fulfil the expectations of fellow youth members from the workshop. However, my nervousness was in vain as I can now proudly say that our voice was heard and our ideas are going to be used to the benefit of the organisation.

I left with a very positive feeling after spending the day with the board members. I think it was definitely worth the time, money and effort that was put into this initiative from all involved.”
Wendy, a young scout at a national board meeting representing their youth for the first time.

Why should we involve young people?

Benefits to young people involved

It is our experience that young people benefit from being included more by:

- Developing competencies and self-esteem
- Improved skills and experience as leaders
- Increased knowledge and understanding of other cultures
- Improved status in the community
- Improved self discipline and time management
- Increased career choices
- Greater appreciation of the roles of adults.

An effective way to get people committed to a programme is to allow them to help in the planning of the project before it starts. However, sometimes this is not possible since the project has already started, or because of other limitations such as time or funding. You'll need to decide how you will involve young people – in all activities or only those that concern them directly.

Benefits for the organisation

The organisation may benefit from improved (better and more appropriate) programme outcomes as a result of:

- New ideas and different ways of doing things
- Information about young people's needs and interests leading to better decisionmaking
- Feedback about the effectiveness of existing services to young people
- Peer to peer outreach efforts
- Shared responsibility resulting in increased availability of human resources
- A higher degree of acceptance of messages, services and decisions because of the participation by young people in shaping them
- Synergy from young people's energy and enthusiasm and the professional skills and experience of adults
- Greater credibility of the organisation with both young people and others.



"A crossroads before me,
which way do I choose?
The fear of an unknown journey
is overwhelming me."

Extract from a young person's poem

"Participation in the Meaningful
Participation Track will enable us to align
our Youth Development Programme
with the needs of the communities,
schools, and young people we support."

Debbie, God's Golden Acre



Young people can help to clarify and bring focus to the organisation's mission. Having young people make decisions can assist to convince foundations and other funding agencies that the organisation was truly committed to meaningful youth development and youth involvement.

Benefits to society

When young people see their own ideas and actions producing positive change, they often feel a sense of self-worth, connection and civic responsibility and are prepared for participation in democratic processes.



Idea box

Who speaks? Young people have voices as well

In order to become more involved young people must feel heard. This means giving young people a voice by ensuring they have the space to speak about what concerns them. Adults need to take time to listen to what young people are saying, offering them a non-judgemental and uninterrupted space to share their ideas and concerns.

Making decisions

Decisions are how an organisation determines its aims and programme implementation. What young people say can be included in these decisions and the processes by which they are made. This results in a more authentic and representative decision process.

Ensuring a safe environment to learn

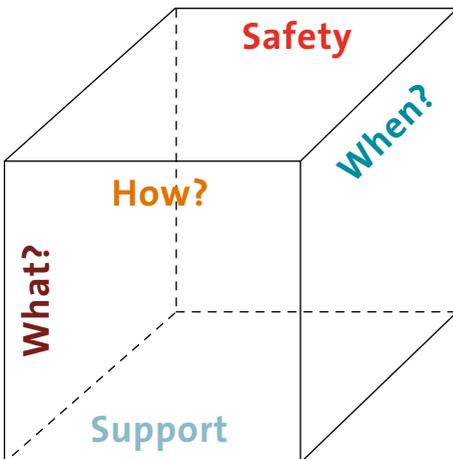
Growing up is about learning. The ideas and skills we learn when young, are important. Having the responsibility of being heard and making decisions helps us think carefully about what we do. Our responsibility as adults is to ensure that young people have safe environments to learn how to make thoughtful decisions.

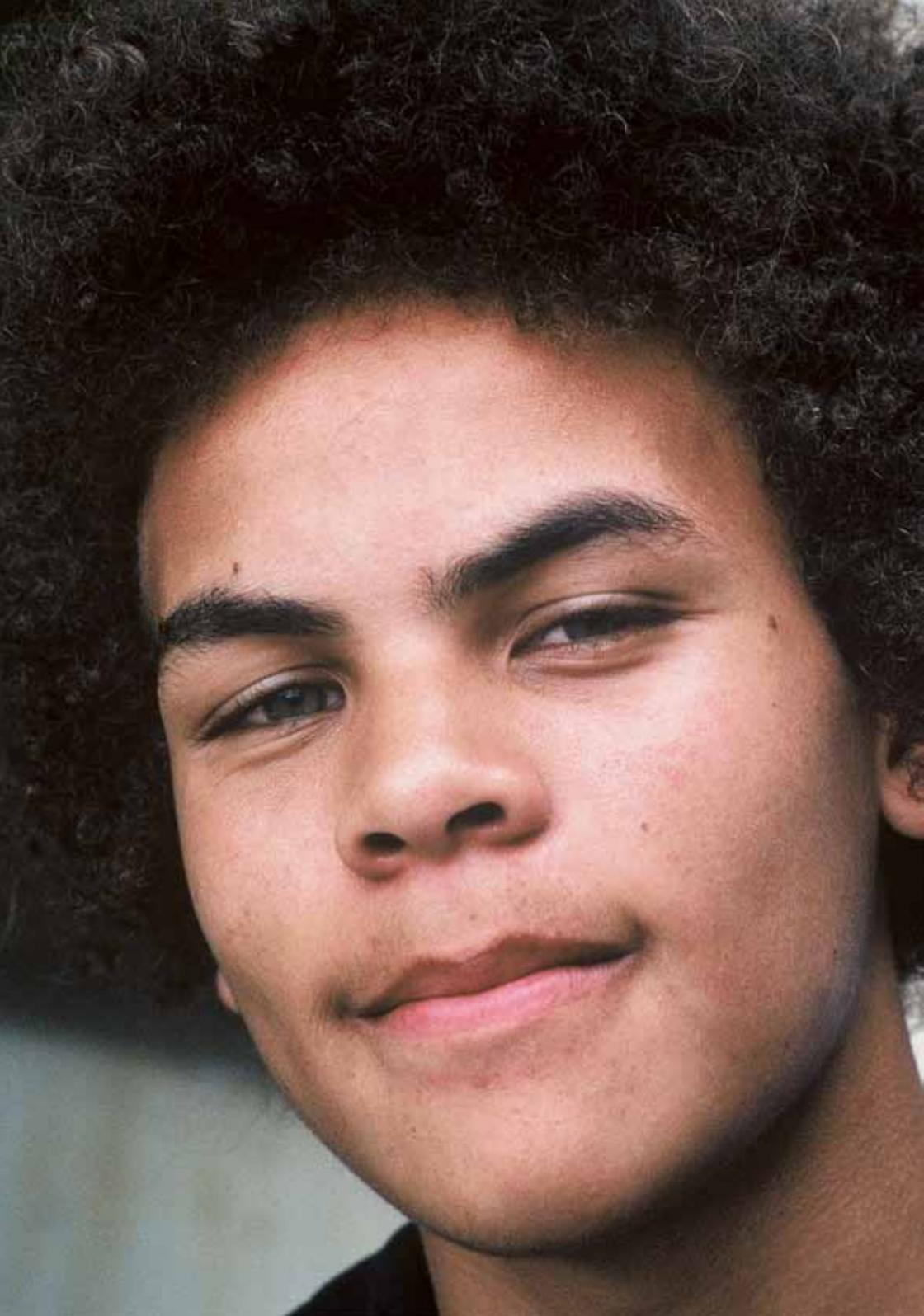
The STOP AIDS NOW! Youth Participation (SYP) Model

Deciding the level to which young people should be involved in the organisation is sometimes the hardest part of the meaningful participation process. The SYP model is a tool which aid in this process. It helps you to determine where your organisation is right now, where it wants to go, and what your first step is when it comes to involving young people meaningfully.

The model refers to three other theories: the *Ladder of Participation*, *Participation Spiral* and the *Wheel of Participation*. Each of these is discussed in Annexure 1. These theories describe ways in which young people can be involved, consulted and heard in an organisation. The SYP model takes this further. It asks what you can do to put theory into practice.

If you want young people to participate meaningfully, there are five important questions to be answered: **what, how, when, safety, support**. The SYP model explains how these questions relate to each other by showing them in the shape of a cube.





The five questions of SYP

Your organisation can work for young people, it can work with young people, or it can be by young people. Each approach has a different impact on the meaningful participation of young people in your organisation. Determining what you want is vital to knowing how to proceed.

1. What does participation mean for your organisation?

What is participation? Participation occurs when young people have a voice **and** when their opinion is considered and recognised when decisions are made about matters that affect them.

Regarding decision making in your organisation and the programmes aimed at young people, and in order to find your starting position, ask yourself:

- Should adults decide what to do for young people?
- Should young people make decisions together with adults?
- Or should young people make decisions by themselves?

The answers to these questions depend on the ideology and aims of your organisation.

Stevenson (2007) emphasises that the involvement of young people is only meaningful if they are not only given a voice but are also listened to. The adults working with the organisation should be **active facilitators** of the participatory process.

If the organisation is taking the young people seriously and chooses to include them in decision-making it can either be done by incorporating and considering the voices when decisions are made, or the young people can be engaged in the decision-making process themselves (which is suggested as “best practice”).

2. How will your organisation get to your desired level of participation?

The model is designed to suggest answers about participation: “How?”

Adults need to develop the right **attitude**, take **action**, be held **accountable** and use youth-centred **approaches**. Getting to the level of participation you desire means your organisation must:

- Have the right **attitude** towards young people. Listening is key: give young people space in which they can speak and be heard, and ask for ideas before deciding on actions.
- Take **action**. The organisation needs a *strategy* and *process* that asks for and uses young people’s views and abilities.
- Be **accountable**. It must have *policies* that ensure there are strategies and processes for action, so that the organisation is accountable.
- Have a participatory **approach** to involving young people in the organisation.

Achieving the correct attitude, action and accountability requires a participatory, youthcentred approach. So the left and top of the cube answer the questions, “**What** is participation?” and “**How** can we implement participation?” The other four sides of the SYP model (see page 13) apply the “What?” and “How?” to the different stages of the project cycle and answers the question “**When** do we get young people to participate?”

3. When will young people participate?

The project cycle can be summarised in the words for the three main phases of any project, “Plan”, “Do” and “Review”. Throughout the project there are “Management & Governance” opportunities.

“Attending the Meaningful Participation workshop and using the SYP model that was developed allowed us to explore and challenge our current structure and how we do or don’t involve young people. It required us to think strategically on how this involvement can be more meaningful and what issues and ideas we could establish within the organisation to facilitate this process.”

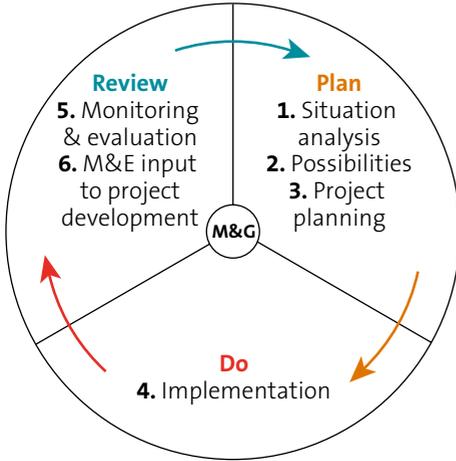
Mandy, dance4life

“This is a historical milestone that we have opened our doors to the young people. We have never done this previously. We debated at the World Scout Conference whether youth should be represented on the World Scout Board, but it was defeated. National Scout Organisations were however encouraged to elect young people on their Boards. I can assure the youth that we are looking forward to their contribution.”

Chief Scout, Scouts Association of South Africa

Participation of young people in the project cycle

In the **Plan** phase of the project cycle young people can participate in the situation analysis, the exploration of possibilities, proposal development and project planning.

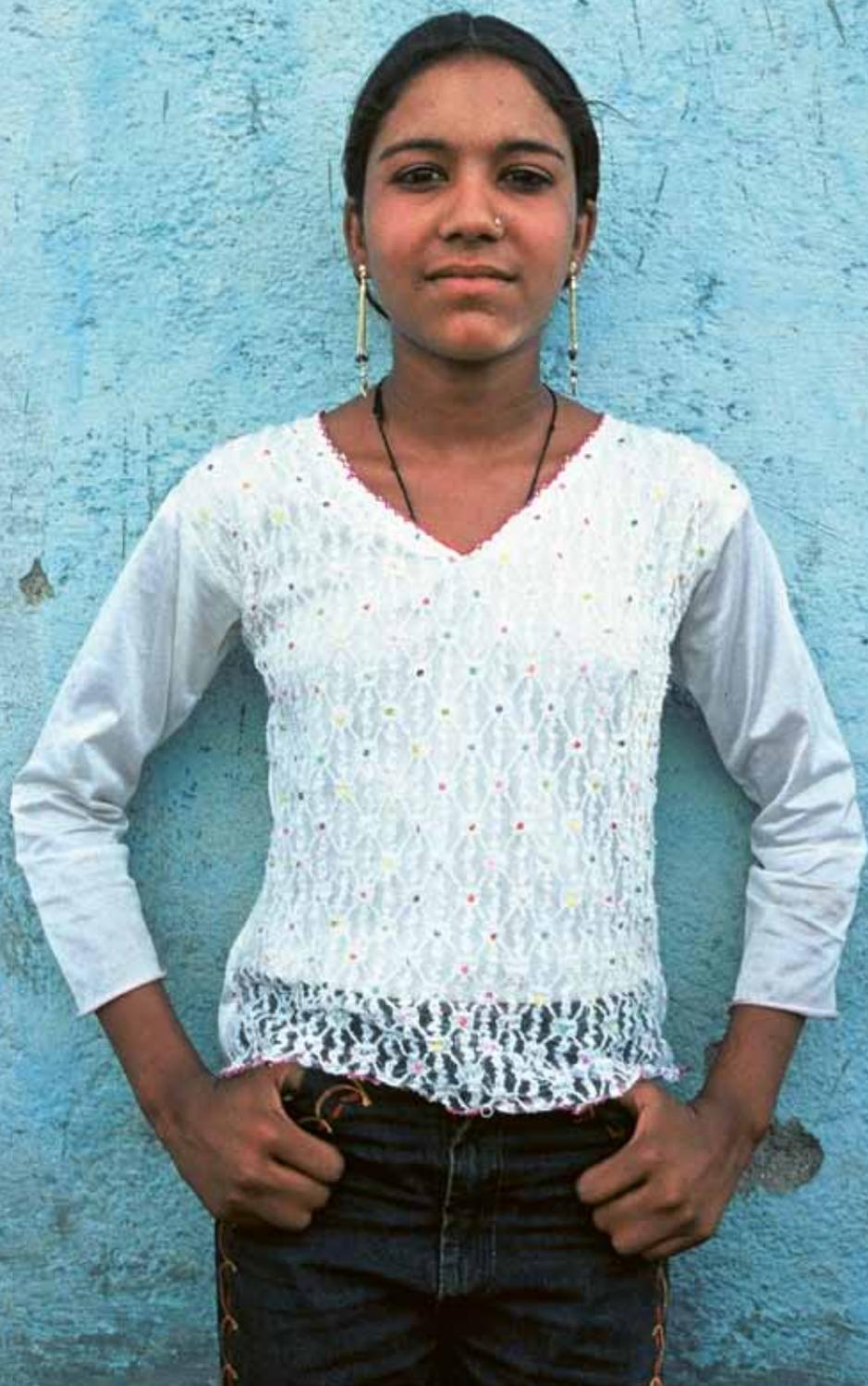


M&G = Management & Governance

In the **Do** phase (implementation) of the project cycle you'll find there are many opportunities in which young people can be involved. We can invite young people to run **specific project activities** and involve them more in the running of the **organisation**.

The **Review** phase of the project cycle includes monitoring and evaluation, identifying what went well so that you can do more of it, what can be improved and what lessons have been learnt. Getting young people involved in **evaluating** an activity or project means your organisation can assess what a child or young person actually learned and how they experienced the activity. This helps your organisation decide if the right information is getting to young people in the right way. This information feeds into the planning phase of the next cycle.

One of the most challenging areas for meaningful participation of young people is in **Management & Governance**, functions that occur throughout the project cycle, since traditionally young people are not considered capable or appropriate for this responsibility.



Using the four sides of the SYP model to represent the phases and functions of the project cycle (Plan, Do, Review, Management & Governance) ensures that meaningful participation of young people is systematically applied in a comprehensive way to every aspect of organisational functioning.

You can decide at what stage it is most useful for young people to participate given **why** you want young people to participate and **how** you plan to get there. See the projects described in Annexure 2 to get some ideas.

4. Is it safe for young people to participate?

The roof of the model represents **Safety**. Children and young people have a right to feeling safe. It is the first duty of anyone advocating greater meaningful participation of young people to ensure that young people are not exposed to, and are protected from, harm. By placing Safety as the roof of the model we are indicating that all other factors are subordinated to the safety of young people.

Safety can be about a person's physical environment and also about their emotional environment. Practically, it is dangerous for young people to participate when it is dark, or when they are far from home. Similarly, young people might also worry that talking about certain issues could affect how their friends and community will treat them. You can find ways to address these issues, but first they must be heard and recognised. Talking to young people about their hopes and fears in a safe and trustworthy way is important. Working with issues of HIV and AIDS is one example of when you must think hard about how to make participation confidential and safe. **Safety** for its youth must always be an overriding consideration of an organisation.

5. What support can your organisation offer to ensure meaningful participation?

The foundation or floor of the model is **Support**. This underpins all dimensions and phases. Both young people and adults need **support**, encouragement, training and resources to make meaningful participation of young people possible. Think about what kind of **support** your organisation can offer to both the young people and adults who are working together for the same organisational outcomes e.g. improving literacy or management levels.



Idea box

The dance4life workshops were designed to explore the model further and how these steps contribute to participation. However, because participation cannot be achieved in a day and can sometimes be a process over years, the workshops only explored the first two steps of the model which is to LISTEN and FACILITATE. The workshops used creative techniques and provided an opportunity for adults (facilitator) to listen and facilitate discussion with young people about their concerns, comments and input. A workshop programme was therefore designed to ensure that learners were engaging in dialogue and sharing their ideas which allowed the facilitator to listen to their comments, facilitate further discussion and capture their input. The model was central to all processes of the workshop, the principles of listen, facilitate, incorporate and engage was evident in the workshop processes and interaction with learners. However, the focus of the workshop was to listen and facilitate discussion with learners which are the first steps to give young people a voice.

Use SYP and get people thinking

Each side of the cube (page 13) is linked to a matrix (or table) of questions. The vertical axis represents the degree or extent of participation. This side of the cube is labelled “**What?**” (and is used with each table grid). The horizontal axis shows “**How?**” to do it. Each cell of the table has a focused question. As each of the questions on the table are explored by you the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of creating meaningful participation are being answered.

Use the questionnaire to explore the level of participation by young people in each stage of the project cycle. You can choose whether you want to ask both the young people and the adults, or only the young people, or only the adults, to participate in this questionnaire. We found it helpful to explain to participants what area of the project cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring or management & governance) you want them to consider when answering the questions (“**When**”).



Using the questionnaire

Give each participant a copy of the questionnaire. It is advisable to fill in one copy of questions for every phase of the project life cycle you are exploring. Put the answered questionnaires into unmarked envelopes so that they are anonymous. Participants must not write their name on the paper. [If necessary the questions can be read out to people with low literary levels if they can be assisted in responding in a way that does not make them vulnerable i.e. is safe.]

Give each person a set of five different coloured stickers or pens. Participants must mark each block with the colour they feel represents their answer.

The colours mean:



Strongly agree



Agree



Don't agree or disagree



Disagree



Strongly disagree

There are four columns in the table: **Attitude, Action, Accountability** and **Approach**. The “Attitude” column describes how your organisation *thinks* about the meaningful participation of young people. The “Action” column explains *what is done* about meaningful participation. “Accountability” describes the *level of responsibility* of young people and adults. The “Approach” column looks at *how* young people can be involved in your organisation.

Every row in the table is a step that means more and better involvement of young people in that area. Doing well in step 4 of a column means better participation of young people than previously. If most of the orange and red stickers are falling in the first row it means that you have a very low level of meaningful participation of young people. If the majority of the green and blue stickers are in row 4 it means that you have a best practice scenario for meaningful participation of young people in respect of that specific column.

For example, your organisation might decide to look at Management and Governance. Participants might give high marks to step 1 of the Attitude column (“Are your organisation’s adults committed to involving young people and do they... listen to what young people have to say?”), but low marks for step 4 (“Are your organisation’s adults committed to involving young people and do they...encourage young people to have a real role in the decision making process?”). This suggests your organisation wants to listen to young people, but does not yet see the value in involving them in decision-making. In the section after the questionnaire we will look at practical tips for assisting you to create an enabling environment for youth to participate meaningfully.

On the following page you will find the questionnaire.

SYP model questionnaire

How involved are young people in:

- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Management and governance.

Steps	Attitude	Action
	Are your organisation's adults committed to involving young people and do they...	Does your organisation have a strategy and way of doing things that...
Step 1 Listen	... listen to what young people have to say?	...make it possible for adults to listen to young people's views?
Step 2 Make it easier	... make certain that young people are able to have their say?	... make it easier for young people to have their say on matters that concern them?
Step 3 Include (Minimum standard)	... include what young people have to say in the decision making process?	...make sure what young people have to say is thought about carefully?
Step 4 Involve (Best Practice)	... encourage young people to have a real role in the decision making process?	... provide young people with opportunities to have a real role in the decision making process?

Accountability

Approach

Does your organisation have a policy that expects...

Developing a participatory approach means:

... adults to make sure that young people are heard?

Actively listening to young people.

... young people to be given assistance and support so they will be heard?

Supporting young people with:

1. Child friendly materials
2. Familiar adults
3. Familiar environments

... that what young people have to say is considered in the decision making process?

Considering young people's viewpoints. Having them accurately represented by either a young person or a young person's advocate.

... that young people will have a role in the decision making process and receive feedback for the part they play?

Giving young people a genuine place within the decision making process. This can include:

- Shared decision making, **OR**
- Consulted and informed, **OR**
- Assigned but informed.

Provide information to young people on how their views influence decisions



“What makes me proud is when people comment on how I have grown and improved and when I know I have just shared my good information and knowledge with others.

I heard that to be a better person you can't just wait, you must get involved in your community and volunteer so that you build up your skills so that one day you can get a good job... I want to be family man and sit with my children and reflect on my past history, how I survived... and how I made a difference.”

Melusi, young person



Practical ideas: Ensuring young people can participate

Getting young people to meaningfully participate the organisation needs to consider issues which would assist to increase the participation of young people. The following are specific ideas that should be considered by the organisation.

Holding meetings outside of work and school hours

Young people are often in school or at work when your organisation is open. Involving young people and children means thinking about having meetings in the afternoon or evenings, or on the weekend. The same issue must be considered when organising a workshop.

Travelling to and from meetings or workshops

Most young people cannot easily travel. They cannot drive cars and often do not have money for public transport. Young participants could be provided with transport to and from meeting or workshop venues.

Providing food

Everyone, young and old, thinks better when fed. A hungry person cannot concentrate. Most young people we work with cannot afford to buy food, so make sure that food is provided for every participant who spends their mealtime in a meeting or workshop.

Making sure there is equipment and support

Asking young people to make decisions and take action involves resources. Computers, a room, and access to information are key aspects of most projects. Young people with the same access to equipment and support as adults will know that they are important.

Procedures and policies

It is important to have clear guidelines for both young people and adults. These ensure that every person knows what they can or cannot do, and who is responsible for what decisions and actions. Design policies and procedures with young people and adults, so that they reflect your whole organisation's aims and activities.

Training

Training on Meaningful Participation is often necessary for both adults and young people. Adults might need training on how young people can participate. It is useful to train young people on how to be heard and in different methods of taking action. The Children's Rights Centre in Durban is one such organisation. Footsteps in Durban and Vuk'uyithathe Research and Development are others.

Honest decision making

Treating young people as equal partners in decision-making is important in meaningful participation. However, young people sometimes cannot get the same amount of decision-making power for legal or financial reasons. Making young people aware of your organisation's constraints can help them identify other ways to make their contributions meaningful.

Giving space for expression

Finding out what young people **enjoy**, what they **want**, and what they **need** are three important aspects of meaningful participation. These three aspects can change over time. Give young people regular opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings. Make sure these are heard and reflected on by all the people with decision-making power.

Always consider

Is there time? Sometimes there is less time for an activity than planned. But every activity must be discussed, or it loses its meanings. It is often better to shorten the activity than shorten the time for discussion.

Representing young people

Young people are a diverse group, i.e. made up of many different people. Since not every sub-group of young people will be able to participate in all the activities you can try to get as much representation as possible.

Young people choose representatives for many reasons. Sometimes, these reasons are different to your organisation's aims. If participation in a project is seen as a reward, the most popular person is often chosen. If participation is seen as difficult or boring, the least popular person is likely to be chosen as a representative. Choose representatives in open and transparent ways.



There are several ways you can address these potential issues.

- Make sure young people in the project understand its aims and what representation will involve.
- Ask young people to describe what would make participation useful and fun – and incorporate their answers into the project.
- Be open about any selection criteria. This can be gender, age, social or economic situation, or previous involvement in the organisation.
- You can also choose representatives by random selection. Ask those who are interested to put their names on pieces of paper that are then folded and put in a box. Representatives are selected if their names are pulled out of the box. Pull the names out in front of all the people who put their names in the box, so that the process is transparent.

African Spirit

“A spirit is more than just air

A weakness is more than just strength

Who is afraid of peer pressure?

I’m here

One single individual

I walk with the power of change

The power of we.”

Andile, young person

(This poem was written in response to our discussion about everyone feeling some pressure to respond in ways that are expected.)

Your checklist:

Ensure young people can participate

You can use this checklist to make sure young people are able to participate.

Is the workshop or meetings at times when young people can attend?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the workshop/meetings venue accessible to young people OR is transport available?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Is food provided at the meetings or workshop?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Is equipment access and support available for the young people, if needed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organisation have clear policies and procedures about how young people are treated at workshops or in meetings?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Is appropriate training to reach the workshop or meetings' aim accessible by young people?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision making process in the meetings or workshop clear and understood?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Are the young people in the meeting or workshop representative of the programme's target population?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
Do young people have access to different ways of expressing themselves in the workshop or meetings?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>

Types of activities for young people

Now that you have decided that you want to involve young people in the various stages of the project, you can use different activities to do this. Different activities work well with different age groups. Always consider the age of participants, and how well they read or write (i.e. their literacy level).

The facilitator of the process plays an important role to assist young people to get involved in activities. STOP AIDS NOW! partners used many kinds of activities to get young people involved in the STOP AIDS NOW! Youth Participation process. These can be divided into four main areas.

1. Visual methods

Visual methods are useful ways of getting younger children and low-literacy young people to be creative. People can visually express themselves through drawing or painting. These can be:

- A piece of work by each person in the group
- A work done by several people working a large or small group
- Posters that have a message (either visual or written)
- Pictures that tell a story, or answer a question
- Photographs that capture a moment in time
- Murals on a wall that are there for the whole community to see.





Idea box

The workshops used participatory techniques such as puppetry, drama/role play, collage and fabric painting to explore young people's perceptions of how they can be actively involved in the dance4life programme.

Collage is a process of looking through old magazines and newspaper cuttings to make a piece of art which tells a message using words and pictures. Drawings can also be used as a complimentary technique. Learners browsed through the magazines and cut out pictures they found interesting which demonstrated an ideal life of a young child. These included pictures of children/parent relationships, education, communication, human rights etc. Learners used their collage to reflect how they can be involved through active participation in the work and programmes of dance4life.

2. Written work

Written work is useful for personal reflection by young people who feel comfortable with writing. They can write a poem or a story.

3. Discussion

Discussion helps young people think through their thoughts and feelings. Different kinds of theatre-based activities are useful ways of starting discussions. All these techniques use discussions during or after the activity as a means of working through the issues raised by that activity.

4. Role-plays

Role-plays are a way of getting young people to think about how someone might react in a specific situation.

5. Movement

Movement lets young people express themselves in new ways. Dancing can tell a story or just let people move around. A dance can be made up by a workshop's participants, or taught to them. Remember to keep the activities safe. Feeling metres let young people move around a room while they express their thoughts on a specific topic or question.



Idea box

Monitoring and Evaluation

Learners were given pieces of paper cut out in circles to evaluate the workshop. A range of questions were written on flipchart paper and learners were given the opportunity to either draw a happy or a sad face depending on how they found the workshop. This gave learners the freedom to give their honest opinion about their experiences.

"By doing simple activities such as making music and dancing. We have looked at and seen what would make us more comfortable in participating. Thus we can use these methods to involve other scouts."

Kerry, young person



Annexure 1

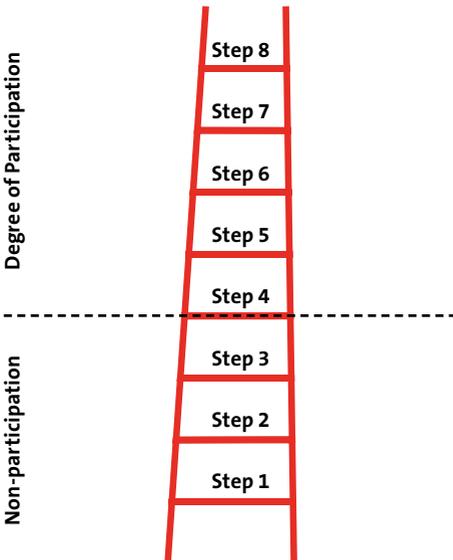
Our SYP Model grew out of the following:

Other models of meaningful participation

Ladder of Participation (Roger Hart)

The *Ladder of Participation* shows the different roles that adults, youth and children can have in developing young people's participation. The ladder shows relationships between the different stages of participation.

An organisation does not have to follow each step in order and can jump between steps, or implement more than one step at the same time. There are eight steps. The higher a step is, the more meaningful participation there is for young people. Roger Hart designed this model for UNICEF and published it in 1992.



Step 8: Young people-initiated, shared decisions with adults

This step is when young people fully participate in an organisation. They decide with adults on aims, projects and activities and propose ideas. Working with adults at this level means that young people have the adults' skills to help them make their ideas work. A youth/adult partnership describes this step.

Step 7: Young people initiated and directed

An organisation at this step has young people deciding what to do, but without adults being involved in the decisions. This means that young people do not have the adults' skills to help them, but they are in charge of what happens. Youth-led activism describes this step.

Step 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

This step has adults proposing what an organisation should do. Young people are involved in deciding if the organisation should do it. Participatory action research describes this step.

Step 5: Consulted and informed

Adults decide on projects and implement them at this step. Young people are asked for their opinion, told how their input will be used and what the adults have decided. Youth Advisory Councils describe this step.

Step 4: Assigned but informed

An organisation at this step tells young people what roles they can choose in the organisation, and why they are being involved. Young people are not asked for their opinion or asked to give input. Community Youth Boards describe this step.

Step 3: Tokenism

At this step young people are given a space in which they are heard, but they are told what roles they must take in the organisation and their involvement is not explained.

Step 2: Decoration

Adults at this step are in control of every part of an organisation. Young people are not heard, or given roles, or asked for their opinion. The organisation will use young people to help support its cause, but will not claim young people are the reason for its action.

Step 1: Manipulation

This step does not involve young people at all, though an organisation will use the idea of young people to promote its work.

Participation Spiral (Freechild Project)

The Freechild Project adapted the Ladder of Participation model in 2003 to create the Spiral.

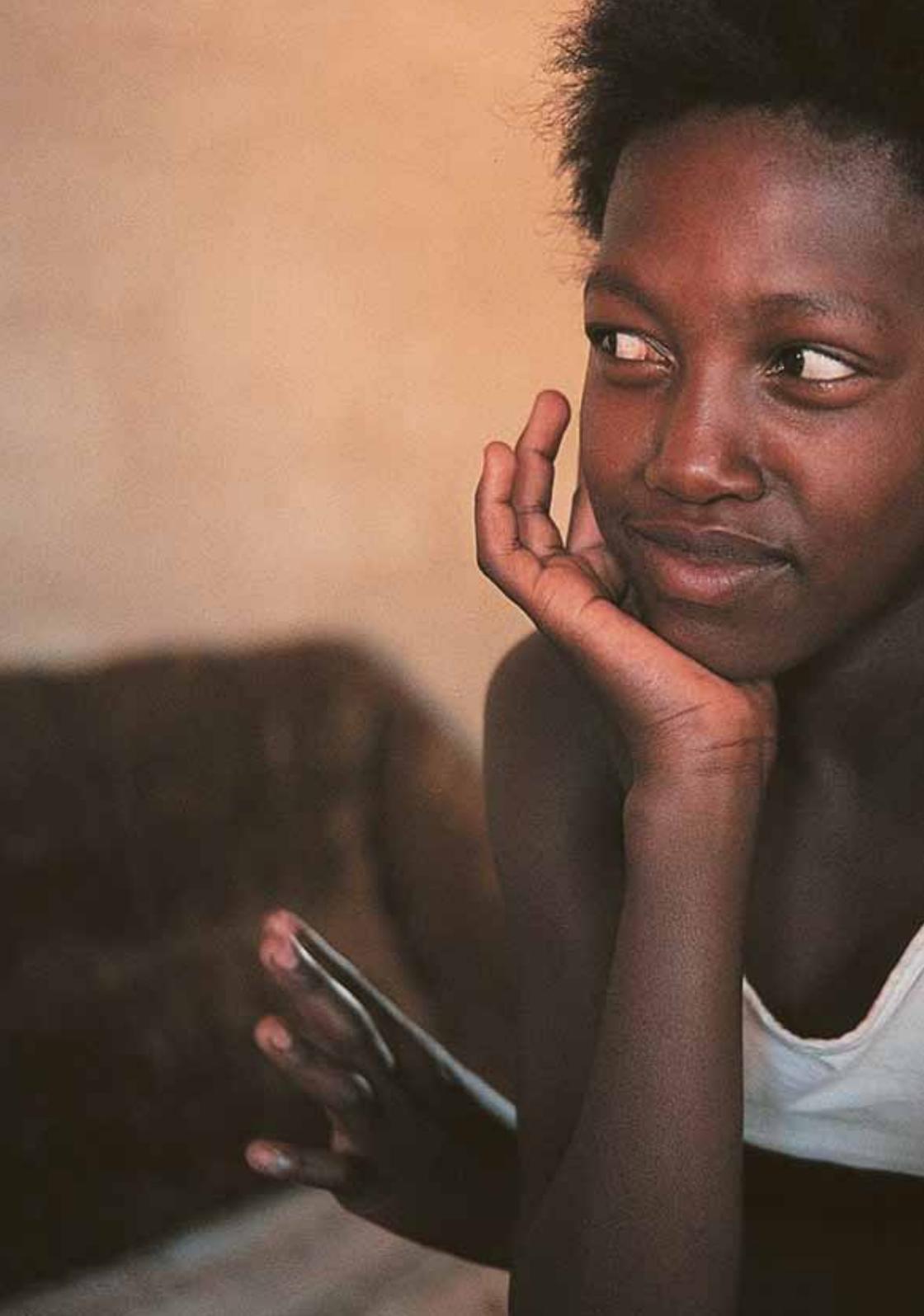
The Freechild Project Measure for Social Change by and with young people



Participation is about society as well as individual organisations. The Participation Spiral Model shows how young people can participate in society. Each organisation should think about how it helps this process.

There are many ways to participate. Different stages of participation can be used for different aspects of the same organisation. Some of the decision-making and action-taking roles that an organisation can have are:

- Oversight or guidance
- Advocacy and policy-making
- Design and planning
- Management
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation.





Stage: All community members equally make decisions and take action

Every community is made up of young people and adults. True equality is when everyone in a community shares the ability to make decisions. It also means that everyone can take action to make changes. This stage is the most complete stage of participation because everyone is equally involved.

Stage: Young people initiate change while sharing decisions and action with adults

Young people often have good ideas. This stage of participation encourages young people to say what should be changed and how. Adults then help young people make sure these changes can happen.

Stage: Young people initiate change and take action

Young people at this stage of participation decide on changes and take action. Adults are not involved.

Stage: Adults initiate change and share decisions with young people

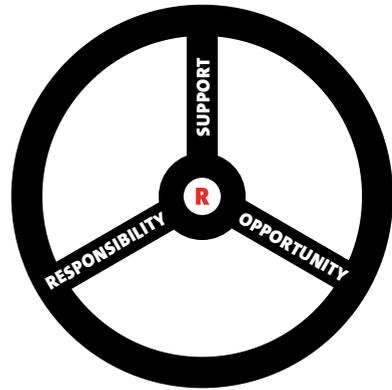
Adults often have skills and knowledge that young people do not. Young people at this stage of participation help adults decide what actions to take, and adults make sure that young people are involved in the changes.

Stage: Young people are consulted and adults take action

This stage emphasises the abilities of adults to make decisions and take action. Young people in the community advise the adults on what should change.

Wheel of Participation

The last model presented at the workshop helps people think about how to make sure young people can effectively participate.



Working with young people involves respect. This is the centre of the wheel and it keeps the wheel of participation together. Each spoke from the centre of the wheel – opportunity, responsibility and support – is important. If one of the spokes is not there then the wheel cannot work.

Respect

Every person, young or old, has ideas, wishes and knowledge. Respecting young people's strengths and experiences ensures that young people have opportunity, are able to take responsibility, and have support.

Respect involves:

- Listening to ideas
- Asking for opinions
- Explaining decisions and actions
- Treating everyone as equal in ability.

Opportunity

Young people should have the opportunity to participate in the projects that impact on them. This helps any youth-orientated project meet its aims. There are many ways for young people to participate. They can:

- Identify what problems a project should address (needs assessment).
- Think about how a project could address the identified problems (project design).
- Be part of the project's work (its implementation) and examine the project's ability to meet its aims (monitoring and evaluation).
- Reflect what can be learned from a project's work.

Some methods used to involve young people in these processes are drawing, roleplays and photographs.

Responsibility

Making decisions means being responsible. Responsibility involves awareness of what a decision can mean (the consequences) and being accountable for that decision. A young person's level of responsibility should reflect both age and maturity. It must be agreed upon with adults and other young people in the organisation before a project begins.

Support

A young person often does not have the knowledge and skills of an adult. Young people need to learn, and this often takes time and resources. New information must be presented in ways that young people can understand. Communication methods will change as young people get older, gain maturity and participate in an organisation for long periods of time.

Support is also about emotions. Recognising the abilities of young people with encouragement and praise is important. A friendly and relaxed environment helps shy or worried young people to express themselves.



Annexure 2: Case studies

Catholic Institute of Education HIV/AIDS Prevention and Gender Education Programme (CIE)



The Organisation aims to assist Catholic schools in South Africa with developing and implementing policies and procedures that seek to prevent HIV infection and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS in schools.

It has a programme that:

- Develops and implements HIV-related policies in South African Catholic Schools
- Ensures Life Orientation teachers at these schools can appropriately address HIV-related issues.

Project

The CIE in partnership with the *Centre for the Study of Peer Education in South Africa (CSPE)* trained peer education supervisors and peer educators in four schools in KwaZulu-Natal to implement a peer education programme. The CSPE model requires peer educators to facilitate five specific lessons with younger learners. This project is a pilot that could be extended to other Catholic Schools.

The process

A CIE facilitator monitored the life orientation lessons given by the trained peer educators. This was done by observation of the classes. Peer education supervisors were trained, who in turn trained peer educators. After the training, a CIE facilitator monitored the peer educators through observing life orientation lessons presented by the peer educators. The Life Orientation teachers in each participating school supervise the peer educators. The CIE facilitator assists and supports the peer education supervisors.

The participants

Peer educators were selected from Grade 10 and 11 classes to give life orientation lessons to Grade 8 and 9 classes in their school.

The CIE facilitator observed the lessons presented by the peer educators. She discussed her observations with the CSPE facilitators and they incorporated her suggestions into future training.

Outcomes

The programme is time consuming and involves commitment from supervisors (usually the Life Orientation teacher) and peer educators. Peer educators are not teachers and need careful training in facilitation techniques. The key to life

skills lessons having benefits to learners appears to be the level of interactive learning that takes place.

The programme is implemented with fewer obstacles when the principle and school management team support the programme.

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dance4life (d4l)/OneVoice South Africa



The Organisation aims to reduce HIV infection among young people aged 13-19 years, in line with the HIV & AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa (NSP 207-2011). This involves creating 'Agents of Change' who actively address HIV-related community concerns.

It works with learners aged 13-19 years, living in three South African provinces (i.e., KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape).

It has:

- Workshops for young people by trained community-based Facilitators. These workshops address HIV-related issues through the use of edutainment techniques.
- A bi-annual event that shows young people that HIV-related activism is a global concern.
- An opportunity for young people to become 'Agents of Change' in their communities.

The process

A one-day workshop was held during school holidays in each of the three provinces where d4l implements its programme, therefore participants did not have to miss school.

The participants

Each Grade 8 from participating schools chose at least two representatives to attend the workshops.

An external consultant led the three one-day workshops with the help of a d4l Project Officer and Facilitators. Workshop participants were first asked for their input into existing projects and then asked for their opinions on how to better involve young people in d4l projects. d4l found that young people wanted it to tell more people about its work. Learners identified the need for better means of communication with d4l and other learners about issues.

Activities

The workshops used participatory techniques such as puppetry, drama/role play, collage and fabric painting to explore young people's perceptions of how they can be actively be involved in the programme.

The workshop also used the communication for social change strategy, which is a participatory approach used to engage participants in the process of dialogue to inform programme content and design ways for their interaction as 'active engagers' in the programme.

Outcomes

A report was produced and included a strategy for incorporating its recommendations into d4I's work. Part of this strategy included an evaluation of the effects of this strategy on the quality and process of d4I projects.

A key recommendation from the participants was the creation of a Youth Advisory Board (YAB), to be established in all three provinces. Learners from each participating school will choose young people for their provincial YAB, who will inform d4I/OneVoice's work.

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God's Golden Acre (GGA)



*God's
Golden acre
"Khayelihle"*

The Organisation aims to strengthen the capacity of young people, living in rural areas and affected by HIV and poverty, to make healthy lifestyle choices.

It works with orphaned and vulnerable children in rural areas of a South African province with high poverty and HIV-infection rates.

It has a Youth Development Programme that runs Youth Development Camps and workshops. These develop knowledge and skills related to making healthy lifestyle choices around HIVinfection.

The process

Facilitators and Youth Leaders were trained in facilitation and presentation practices to work with young people in workshops and to record the outcomes of these workshops.

This process enabled GGA to create a group of trained peer educators from the same background as the target group, who can identify with the target group while planning and running activities.





Questionnaires were given out and focus group discussions held at 4 Youth Development Camps for grade 10 learners. The participants were asked about their lifestyle needs around poverty and HIV-infection.

The participants

17 Facilitators and 14 Youth Leaders trained to facilitate the process. Every young person attending the Youth Development Camps and workshops participated in the process. Grade 7 and 10 learners in 5 schools will participate in the next phase of the process.

The information from the Youth Development Camps is to be integrated with the learnings from workshops to be held from 28 September 2009 to 5 October 2009.

Workshops will comprise of facilitated discussion on topics which the learners identify as problems in their communities, as well as possible ways in which these problems can be addressed. Additional activities at the workshops will strengthen the capacity of young people to work with their peers as well as with adults in their communities like traditional leaders and school staff, and help them to develop the skills they need to make changes in their own lives.

Outcomes

Information from the process was used to inform the materials for workshops on life skills. The integration of Youth Development Camp learnings as well as workshop outcomes will enable GGA to develop materials and processes which will be relevant to the needs of young people and will strengthen the impact of the Youth Development programme.

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South African Scout Association (SASA)



The Organisation aims to 'encourage the spiritual, mental, social and physical development of young people (ages 7.5 to 30 years)' in South Africa. It has older youth (ages 15-18 years) who facilitate peer groups. Each group organises a range of inclusive physical, mental and social activities.

Project

SASA wanted to scale up the involvement of young people in its decision-making structures from a community to national board level. It asked youth from its programmes to examine how they would do this and what would work best.

The process

A three-day workshop was held in Gauteng during the school holidays in December 2007. This allowed participants who might be at school during the day to attend the workshop. This workshop reflected the first two strategic objectives of SASA: to ensure youth involvement in SASA's decision-making structures and in creating the image of scouting.

The participants

15 SASA members aged 16-22 years from rural, urban and semi-urban settings in six different provinces attended the workshop. Each provincial SASA structure chose its representatives.

Carrie Pratt from Vuk'uyithathe Research and Development facilitated the workshop. This meant that none of the participants knew the consultant. The consultant was asked to use different techniques to those usually used by SASA, so to encourage participation.

Activities

Some of the activities used during the workshop were:

- Making collages to express the value of Scouting in their lives of which a booklet was produced
- Dancing
- Making drawings of the current and future image of Scouts
- Making music by all participating using a musical instrument of choice.

Outcomes

A workshop report was written with recommendations on how to improve young people's participation in SASA's decision-making structures. Five representatives were chosen by the group to present the report to the SASA National Board Meeting in August 2008.

The SASA National Board used the presentation to recommend changes to the organisation structure of SASA. A new structure to include youth at all levels of decision-making was approved by the National Board in March 2009. The first two youth members were incorporated into the National Board on 15 March 2009.

Overall, the workshop was of benefit to SASA. Having participants lead the discussion meant that new issues came up during the workshop that were also included in the recommendations. The workshop helped participants and SASA identify why they felt strongly about scouting and what is important to youth about SASA's work.

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Stellenbosch University Learner involvement project



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

The Organisation aims to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes among young people aged 10-24 years in South Africa and reduce related costs for the South African public health care system. It has a life orientation programme called 'Today's Choices' that operates in schools in three South African provinces (Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape).

Project

Stellenbosch University wanted to find out what young people from 'Today's Choices' felt were important life skills. The results were used for the programme's continuous revision of materials and strategy. The programme objective is to involve youth in the developing and implementation of the life skills programme.

The process

A one-day workshop was held with local learners in three South African provinces in February 2008.

The participants

Learners at 10 schools in each province nominated two Grade 11 learners from each school to attend that province's workshop. Educators from the schools were also present at each provincial workshop.

The senior curriculum advisor from Stellenbosch University for each province organised and facilitated their provincial workshop. The learners were asked to discuss what they thought were important life themes. They were then presented with the four themes of the Today's Choices programme and asked for their feedback. This meant that the participants could relate the programme to the life orientation issues they had identified.

At the end of the workshop, learners were asked to write a poem or essay in any official South African language on their views of life orientation issues. These were then entered into a competition judged by young people. The best three essays or poems from each province were published in a book that was launched in one of the provinces on a public holiday. A copy of the book was also given to the National Minister of Education.

Activities

The workshops concentrated on group work where the learners discussed various issues posed to them. They were also taught the essentials on advocacy.

Outcomes

Stellenbosch University found that its partners in government and from the schools wanted to participate in the project. The young people in the workshops also actively participated in the activities. This re-affirmed that its life orientation programme was important

and valued. More importantly they also saw with which enthusiasm young people are willing to take on challenges.

The essays and poems showed that there has been a change in the last few years in young people's willingness to talk openly about important life issues.

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Targeted AIDS Interventions (TAI)



The Organisation aims to encourage men to be 'positive agents of change within their communities'.

It works with young men living in one province of South Africa.

It has social development projects to help mitigate the effects of HIV and AIDS in communities.

The process

TAI held a series of meetings, workshops and trainings with seven selected participants to develop the new materials. At the end of this phase, the seven young men piloted their materials and used the information they collected to finalise the materials.

The participants

The TAI staff chose seven young men they had worked with before from different TAI projects. The original plan was to have a competition amongst the young men who participate in TAI's projects, but this did not work as people did not know about it.

First, the TAI staff developed a set of 'Guiding Questions' for the new materials. This helped structure the kinds of issues that participants should consider for the new materials.

Different members of the group were given training on how to use computers, how to research and how to plan.

This happened over a number of weeks. The seven young men then participated in a one-day self-reflection workshop, a four-day workshop on discrimination, a two-day workshop on programme design and a two-day focus group discussion. TAI staff facilitated the focus group discussion.

Participants were asked to create the new 4Life Skills material using the Guiding Questions, trainings and information

from the workshops. They reported to the TAI staff on their activities every week or two weeks.

Once the materials were created, the seven participants were asked to find out what other people thought of them. Each young man identified and directed a group of 14 other young men in asking young women and parents for their opinions of the materials. The results of this evaluation were included in the final design of the 4Life Skills materials.

Outcomes

The process followed had tremendous value to the organisation and the participants as it gave them an opportunity to self-reflect, assisted with personal development and renegotiated norms. This is a long term investment in the programme.

The process does require a mentor for the young people in playing a role in providing capacity and technical support. It is important for management to “let it go”.

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We had lots of fun!



Text Milly Siebrits (South African Scouts Association)
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STOP AIDS NOW! aims to expand and improve the Dutch contribution to the global response to HIV and AIDS. In STOP AIDS NOW! five organisations, the Aids Fonds, Hivos, ICCO, Cordaid and Oxfam Novib have joined forces.

STOP AIDS NOW! aims to:

- Raise funds in order to contribute to more HIV and AIDS projects in developing countries
- Obtain political and public support for the efforts against HIV and AIDS, both nationally and internationally
- Innovate or redefine existing strategies and establish new forms of cooperation in order to improve the response to HIV and AIDS, and meet the needs of people affected.

Visit our website for a wide range of downloadable resources on HIV and AIDS in the workplace, including this report:
www.stopaidsnow.org/downloads



There is overwhelming evidence that the participation of young people leads to better outcomes for projects, programmes and organisations. Through their participation young people learn, develop and are empowered.

Hear our Voices! is about giving space to the voice of the young person and taking what they are saying seriously. This manual will show you how easy it can be to give the young people a voice in an organisation. In the manual you will be introduced to the STOP AIDS NOW! Youth Participation Model (SYP Model). This model can assist organisations in a self-assessment of the inclusion of young people and in highlighting areas for further improvement of youth participation. The model can be used by ALL organisations that work for/with young people (worldwide) and is thus not country-specific, nor AIDS-related.

