



# YouthNet

Partners in Reproductive Health and HIV Prevention

## Youth Participation: The Past

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# Youth Participation

*“For me youth participation is about bringing dignity to young people. When young people participate fully and become equal stakeholders—when they feel dignified and appreciated for their efforts—then we have achieved youth participation.”*

**-Edward Registe (Youth)**



# Youth Participation

*“Sharing power with young people in decision-making, policy, and programming is not something you just do on principle—you really get a better product.”*

**-Dorothy Stoneman (Adult)**

# What is Youth Participation?



**Adolescent Participation:**  
“adolescents partaking in and influencing process, decisions and activities.” (UNICEF)

**Youth-Adult Partnership:**  
“one in which adults work in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs and policies affecting youth.”  
(Advocates for Youth)

**Youth Participation:** “Involving youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunity for planning and/or decision-making, in an activity whose impact or consequences extends to others...” (National Commission on Resources for Youth)



# History of Youth Participation

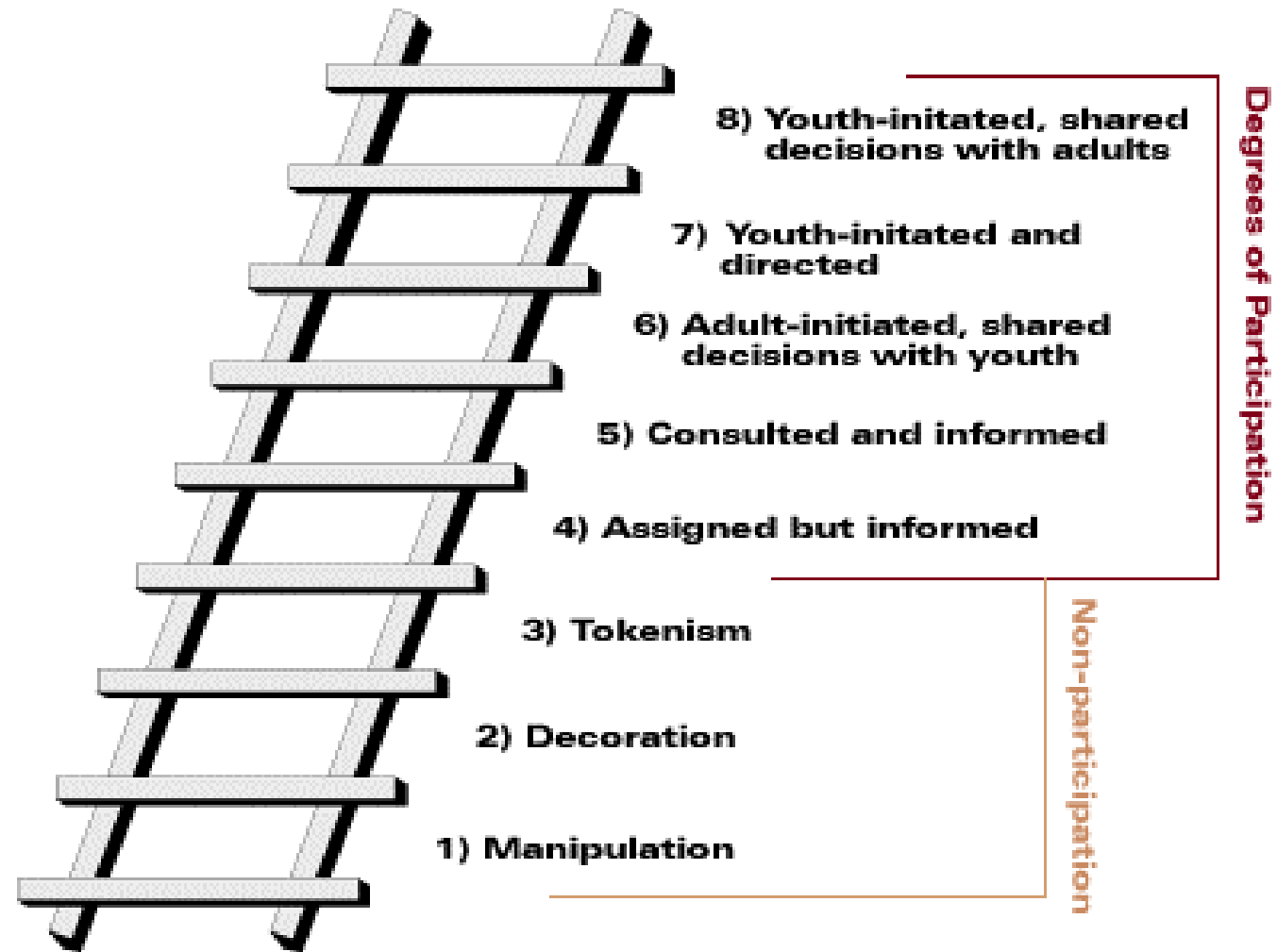
## Paradigm Shifts

- Protection → Empowerment
- Problems → Resources
- Youth-run or Adult-run → Partnership
- Ladder of Participation





# Ladder of Participation





# History of Youth Participation

## Key International Events

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**
- **International Conference on Population and Development (1994)**
- **UN General Assembly - Special Session on AIDS (2001)**
- **Barcelona International AIDS Conference - *Barcelona Youth Force* (2002)**



# Why Youth Participation?

## Benefits for Youth

- **Increased knowledge**
- **Improved skills & competencies**
- **Enhanced self-concept**
- **Increased connectedness**
- **Feeling of accomplishment, contribution**

## Benefits for Adults

- **Positive view of youth**
- **Enhanced commitment & energy**
- **Increased confidence working with youth**
- **Better understanding of youth needs**
- **Increased community connectedness**



# Why Youth Participation?

## Benefits for Organization/Program

- Principles incorporated into organizational culture
- Clarifies organization's mission
- Increases diversity in organization
- Engagement of target population increases relevance and credibility



# Key Elements of Youth Participation Programs

- **Organizational capacity and support**
- **Shift in attitudes of youth and adults**
- **Appropriate selection, recruitment and retention of youth**
- **Level of participation of youth**





# What needs to be done?

- **Research**
- **Evaluation of youth participation in programs**
- **Increasing institutional capacity for involving youth**
- **Network of organizations and individuals to share lessons learned**



# Acknowledgements

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