

Harry Shier's Pathways to Participation

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Youth participation is a process rather than a specific event or project. Shier's Pathways to Participation model is useful in assessing organisational readiness and commitment to youth participation beyond individual projects.

The model offers a set of questions to help organisations work out where they currently stand and identify the areas they need to improve, to develop more effective youth participation practice.

³ Adapted from: Shier, H (2001) Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations, *Young People and Society*, Vol. 15, John Wiley and Sons Ltd: United States of America, pp. 107-117.

Shier's Pathways to Participation (2001)			
LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	OPENINGS	OPPORTUNITIES	OBLIGATIONS
Level 5 Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making.	Are you ready to share some of your adult power with young people?	Is there a procedure that enables young people and adults to share power and responsibility for decisions?	Is it a policy requirement that young people and adults share power and responsibility for decisions?
Level 4 Young people are involved in decision-making processes.	Are you ready to let young people join in your decision-making processes?	Is there a procedure that enables young people to join in decision-making processes?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be involved in decision-making processes?
Shier states that level 3 of his model is the minimum practice needed to meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.			
Level 3 Young people's views are taken into account.	Are you ready to take young people's views into account?	Does your decision-making process enable you to take young people's views into account?	Is it a policy requirement that young people's views must be given weight in decision-making?
Level 2 Young people are supported in expressing their views.	Are you ready to support young people in expressing their views?	Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help young people express their views?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be supported in expressing their views?
Level 1 Young people are listened to.	Are you ready to listen to young people?	Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to young people?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be listened to?

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