



Role Play on Youth Partnership

This activity will use role play to bring to life the various degrees of youth-adult partnerships, as illustrated in Hart's Ladder.

Break participants into groups of 4-5 people. If there are 8 groups, each group will get one scenario. If there are less than 8 groups, give some groups 2 scenarios.

Give each group 10-15 minutes to discuss their scenario and think about whether they have witnessed examples of this in their own program/organization. Then have them come up with a short skit which exemplifies how this scenario might take place even in a very well-intentioned organization.

Bring the groups back together and ask each group to present their skit. After a group has presented, ask the other groups to guess which rung of the ladder this scenario represents (give out copies of Hart's ladder for them to refer to). Also, ask how a program/organization could change the scenario to go up the ladder and include more youth involvement.

After all the groups have presented their scenarios, facilitate a general discussion about the scenarios and ask if there are any other examples that people would like to give from their program/organization.

Also, stress that the top of the ladder is not always the best place to be and that different situations require different levels of participation. Emphasize that the bottom is not necessarily 'bad' and the top is not necessarily 'good', but rather it is important to reflect on where your program/organization falls on this spectrum and making sure that everyone (both youth and adults) are in agreement about the rung they are on. Things become problematic when a program thinks they are on rung #7 when they are really only on #4 or #5.

Cut along the dotted-line and give each group scenarios to act out.

Scenario #1: Manipulation

This happens when adults use young people to support causes and pretend that young people inspired those causes. *This rung of the ladder reflects adultism.*

Scenario #2: Decoration

This happens when 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 young people. *This rung of the ladder reflects adultism.*



Scenario #3: Tokenism

This happens when young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate. *This rung of the ladder reflects adultism.*

Scenario #4: Assigned but informed

This happens when young people are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved. *This rung of the ladder can be embodied by community youth boards.*

Scenario #5: Consulted and informed

This happens when young people give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The young people are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions are made by adults. *This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth advisory councils.*

Scenario #6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

This happens when projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the young people. *This rung of the ladder can be embodied by participatory action research.*

Scenario #7: Young people-initiated and directed

This happens when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role. *This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth-led activism.*

Scenario #8: Young people-initiated, shared decisions with adults

This happens when projects or programs are initiated by young people and decision-making is shared between young people and adults. These projects empower young people while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults. *This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth/adult partnerships.*
