TeEACH

Transforming early Education And Child Health Research Centre

MODELS FOR REAL PARTICIPATION

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Dr. Harry Shier
Appointee Visiting International Fellow at TeEACH, WSU

OVERVIEW

"Essentially all models are wrong,
but some are useful"
(George Box, 1979)

CHAPTER 1   1993-1996: Beginnings
The Ladder of Children's Participation

CHAPTER 2   1997-2000: The Article 31 Children's
Consultancy Scheme
Pathways to Participation

CHAPTER 3   2001-2009: "Protagonsimo" in Nicaragua
The Participation Tree

♦♦♦♦

CHAPTER 4   2010-2011: Global collaborations
The Participation Matrix

CHAPTER 5   2012-2015: Return to Ireland
Space, Voice, Audience and Influence

CHAPTER 6   2016-2020: Australia calling
Which model?

2

CHAPTER 1: 1993-1996 BEGINNINGS

THE LADDER OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

3

MELBOURNE 1993, THE WORLD PLAY SUMMIT

I started my career in the 1970s, working on Adventure playgrounds in the UK.

Then I 'discovered' children's rights at the 'World Play Summit' in Melbourne in 1993

My first publication: *"Adventure Playgrounds, an Introduction". 1984.*

This experience changed the course of my life.

Whatever issue you are concerned about, children's rights provides both an underpinning framework and an overarching approach – which I have been committed to ever since
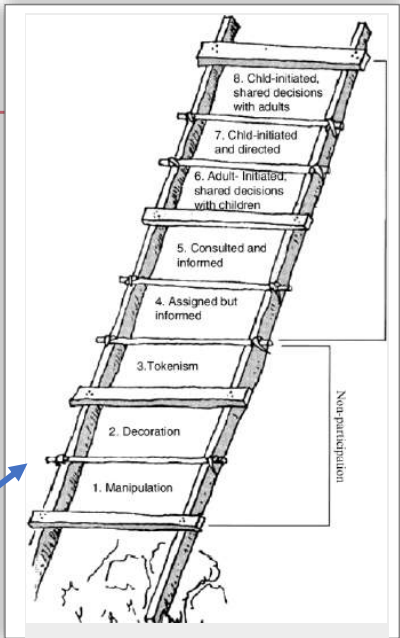
4

1994, ARTICLE 31 CONFERENCE

On my return to the UK I formed an action committee to organise the first Article 31 Conference

Roger Hart came and introduced us to his Ladder

5

HART'S LADDER

7. Child-initiated and directed: Children initiate and lead or direct a project. Adults are often (but not always) involved in supporting roles, such as logistical support (organising food and transport), technical support, liaison, facilitation, mentoring and motivation.

5. Consulted and informed: Children are consulted about their potential involvement in adult-initiated activities. They are informed in advance about how their input will be used, and afterwards about the outcomes of the activity, including decisions made by adults as a result.

3. Tokenism: Adults engineer the appearance of giving children a voice, but only the appearance. Often a small number of children are carefully selected. Their inputs are received and applauded, but only valued in so far as they suit adult expectations. There is no intention of learning from the children, and rarely any genuine dialogue. Opinions offered by selected children may then be falsely portrayed as representative of children in general.

1. Manipulation: Adults use children to advance causes or projects that are primarily of interest to themselves. Though adults may engineer the appearance of giving children a voice, the children may not understand the true purpose or significance of the activity, and are generally expected to follow instructions.

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults: Children initiate and lead projects, but invite selected adults to share decision-making, usually as equal partners, with shared responsibility.

6. Adult-initiated, decisions are shared with children: Adults initiate and lead projects, but invite children to get involved, and share the decision-making with them.
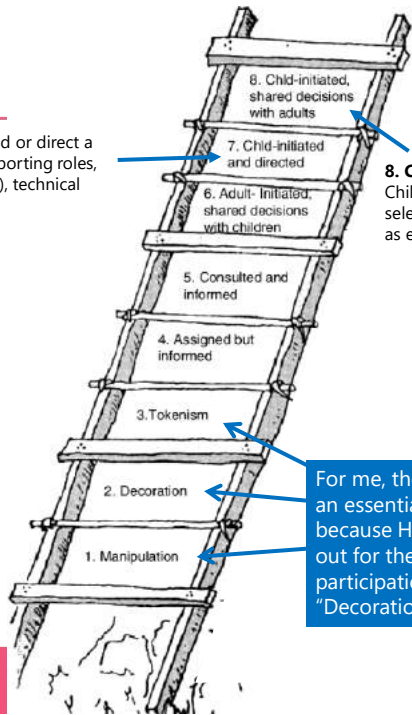
4. Assigned, but informed: In adult-led activities, children are given a specific role with a legitimate purpose, which is properly explained to them, so they understand how and why they are being involved.

2. Decoration: Adults use children as entertainment or decoration at adult-dominated events. The children's input is generally controlled by the adults, and their views are not heard at all. The archetypal example is when children present a cultural number like a folk-dance to kick off a conference; are warmly applauded but never heard from again.

6

7. Child-initiated and directed: Children initiate and lead or direct a project. Adults are often (but not always) involved in supporting roles, such as logistical support (organising food and transport), technical support, liaison, facilitation, mentoring and motivation.

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults: Children initiate and lead projects, but invite selected adults to share decision-making, usually as equal partners, with shared responsibility.

The "7 or 8 Debate":

Which of these rungs do you think should be at the top of the ladder? Which is more empowering for children and young people?

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults

7. Child-initiated and directed

6. Adult- Initiated, shared decisions with children

5. Consulted and informed

4. Assigned but informed

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

For me, the ladder model is still an essential part of our tool-kit because Hart taught us to look out for the three types of false participation: "Manipulation", "Decoration" and "Tokenism".

7

CHAPTER 2: 1997-2000
THE ARTICLE 31
CHILDREN'S
CONSULTANCY SCHEME

PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION

8

THE ARTICLE 31 ACTION NETWORK

The Article 31 Conference led to the Article 31 Action Pack

Then the launch of the Article 31 Action Network

Then in 1997, the Article 31 Children's Consultancy Scheme

[Shier (ed) 1995]

There was a fashion for making programmes and institutions "child-friendly", particularly in the arts, culture and recreation sectors. "Expert advice" was being sought.

9

SO WHERE DO WE FIND THE EXPERTS?

Children are experts on what is child-friendly and what isn't, what works for children and what doesn't, what's fun and what's boring, what makes them feel included and what makes them feel excluded.
(Shier,1999)

10

1998

Child consultants advising the management of the new Manchester City Art Gallery on how to create a child-friendly gallery.

11

1998

Child consultants commissioned by the British Waterways Board to research the educational and recreational potential of the English canal network.

12

1999

Child Consultants from the New-Age Traveller community in the South-West of England commissioned by The Children's Society to advise on play and recreation opportunities for traveller children.

13

2000

Child Consultants advise managers at the Tower of London on how to make it less boring.
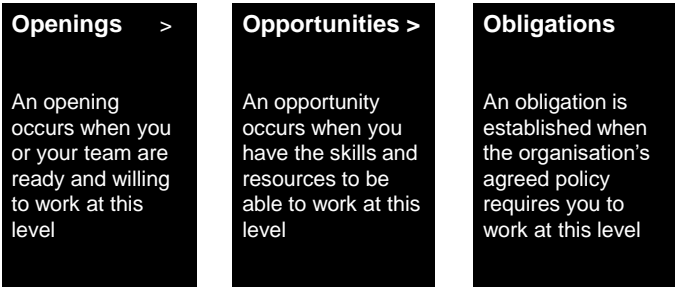

14

EMERGENCE OF A NEW ANALYSIS

Five levels of participation

1. Children are listened to.

2. Children are supported in expressing their views.

3. Children's views are taken into account.

4. Children are involved in decision-making processes.

5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.

I wanted to understand how adults interact with child citizens in these situations.

At the turn of the Millennium, my new model emerged

Three stages of commitment at each level

Openings   >

An opening occurs when you or your team are ready and willing to work at this level

Opportunities >

An opportunity occurs when you have the skills and resources to be able to work at this level

Obligations

An obligation is established when the organisation's agreed policy requires you to work at this level

15

Shier, H (2001). Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations. *Children & Society,* 15: 107-117

16
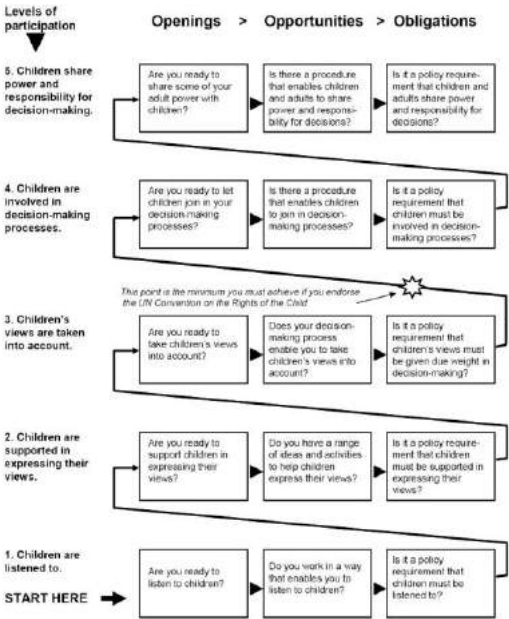
OPENINGS > OPPORTUNITIES > OBLIGATIONS

Levels of participation

▼

5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.

| Are you ready to share some of your adult power with children? | Is there a procedure that enables children and adults to share power and responsibility for decisions? | Is it a policy requirement that children and adults share power and responsibility for decisions? |

4. Children are involved in decision-making processes.

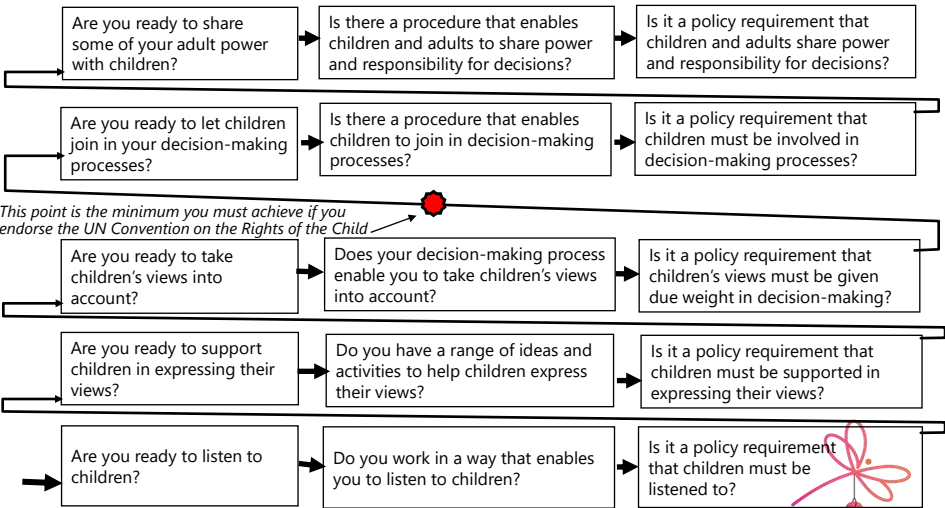| Are you ready to let children join in your decision-making processes? | Is there a procedure that enables children to join in decision-making processes? | Is it a policy requirement that children must be involved in decision-making processes? |

This point is the minimum you must achieve if you endorse the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

3. Children's views are taken into account.

| Are you ready to take children's views into account? | Does your decision-making process enable you to take children's views into account? | Is it a policy requirement that children's views must be given due weight in decision-making? |

2. Children are supported in expressing their views.

| Are you ready to support children in expressing their views? | Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help children express their views? | Is it a policy requirement that children must be supported in expressing their views? |

START HERE

1. Children are listened to.

| Are you ready to listen to children? | Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to children? | Is it a policy requirement that children must be listened to? |

17

"Pathways to Participation" was published in the UK 19 years ago, in April 2001.

Today it is one of the most widely used tools for analysing and enhancing children's participation, in academic study, policy and practice, throughout the world.

18

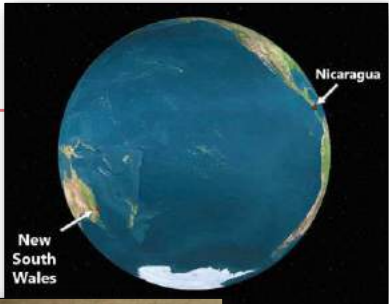CHAPTER 3: 2001-2009 "PROTAGONSIMO" IN NICARAGUA

THE PARTICIPATION TREE

19

THREE WEEKS AFTER "PATHWAYS" WAS PUBLISHED, I ARRIVED IN NICARAGUA…

Child labour on coffee plantations

The struggle for the right to education

20

CESESMA, THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION IN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

A local voluntary organisation based in San Ramón, Nicaragua.

The CESESMA team in 2010.

CESESMA's office in the town of San Ramón – bought and renovated with support from the Irish Government through Irish Aid.

21

OUR MISSION

"Contribute to the promotion and defense children and adolescents' rights through processes of learning and empowerment in rural schools and communities, in partnership with children and young people and other members of the community."

22

OUR VISION

"Children and adolescents with their families living in secure environments, with equality, equity and respect; with opportunities for an integrated education; capable of organising themselves and influencing those around them to promote and defend their rights and contribute to the development of their communities."

23

A NEW APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION: "PROTAGONISMO INFANTIL"

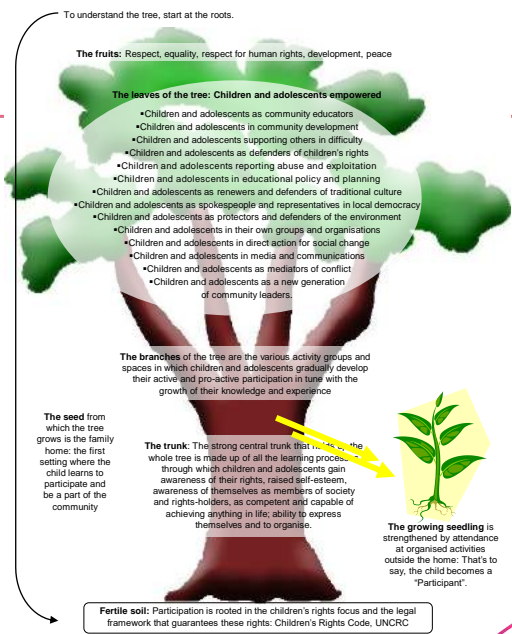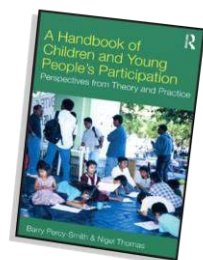Children and young people organise, advocate, take the initiative.

(Shier 2019; Taft 2019)

24

THE PARTICIPATION TREE FROM NICARAGUA

First published in Spanish in Medio Ambiente and Urbanización (Shier, 2008)

English translation appears in the 'Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation (Shier, 2010)

To understand the tree, start at the roots.

The fruits: Respect, equality, respect for human rights, development, peace

The leaves of the tree: Children and adolescents empowered

- Children and adolescents as community educators
- Children and adolescents in community development
- Children and adolescents supporting others in difficulty
- Children and adolescents as defenders of children's rights
- Children and adolescents reporting abuse and exploitation
- Children and adolescents in educational policy and planning
- Children and adolescents as renewers and defenders of traditional culture
- Children and adolescents as spokespeople and representatives in local democracy
- Children and adolescents as protectors and defenders of the environment
- Children and adolescents in their own groups and organisations
- Children and adolescents in direct action for social change
- Children and adolescents in media and communications
- Children and adolescents as mediators of conflict
- Children and adolescents as a new generation of community leaders.

The branches of the tree are the various activity groups and spaces in which children and adolescents gradually develop their active and pro-active participation in tune with the growth of their knowledge and experience

The seed from which the tree grows is the family home: the first setting where the child learns to participate and be a part of the community

The trunk: The strong central trunk that holds up the whole tree is made up of all the learning process through which children and adolescents gain awareness of their rights, raised self-esteem, awareness of themselves as members of society and rights-holders, as competent and capable of achieving anything in life; ability to express themselves and to organise.

The growing seedling is strengthened by attendance at organised activities outside the home: That's to say, the child becomes a "Participant".

Fertile soil: Participation is rooted in the children's rights focus and the legal framework that guarantees these rights: Children's Rights Code, UNCRC

25

CLOSE-UP ON...
The leaves of the tree: Children and adolescents empowered

- Children and adolescents as community educators
- Children and adolescents in community development
- Children and adolescents supporting others in difficulty
- Children and adolescents as defenders of children's rights
- Children and adolescents reporting abuse and exploitation
- Children and adolescents in educational policy and planning
- Children and adolescents as renewers and defenders of traditional culture
- Children and adolescents as spokespeople and representatives in local democracy
- Children and adolescents as protectors and defenders of the environment
- Children and adolescents in their own groups and organisations
- Children and adolescents in direct action for social change
- Children and adolescents in media and communications
- Children and adolescents as mediators of conflict
- Children and adolescents as a new generation of community leaders.

CHAPTER 4: 2010-2011
GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS

THE PARTICIPATION MATRIX

27

FOCUS ON PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL CHILDHOODS:
AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA

2011: International partnership to develop and pilot a new global framework for monitoring and evaluating children's participation

Save the Children

unicef

Plan

THE CONCERNED FOR
Working Children

World Vision
Ireland

Asia

Africa

Latin America

28

CESESMA was one of the partners

29

STARTS WITH GERISON LANSDOWN'S 3-WAY MODEL (2010)

Consultation:

Is when adults ask children for their views, and children are not involved beyond this.

Collaboration:

Is when adults and children work together, sharing roles and responsibilities in planning and carrying out an activity.

Pro-activism (child-led):

Activities initiated, organised or run by children and young people themselves (adults may still provide support, though not always necessary).

Taken from "*Every child's right to be heard*" (Lansdown 2010):

30

LESS ◀ How much decision-making power or control do children have? ▶ MORE

	No children involved	Children are consulted	Children collaborate with adults	Children initiate or direct
Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis)		Children are asked for their views about problems in the community.	Children are asked to be part of the process for finding out what the problems are.	Children undertake their own research to identify issues of concern.
Deciding what to do (planning)		Project planning takes account of the issues raised by children.	Children are involved in deciding what programmes to run and how to run them.	Children decide for themselves what issues they want to work on, and plan their own actions.
Taking action (implementation)		Children are invited to join in a programme of activities that is organised for them	Children work with adults to implement a programme of activities	Children organise their own programme and take responsibility for seeing it through (adults may support them).
Assessing and reporting what happened (monitoring and evaluation)		Children are asked for their views as part of project evaluation.	Children work with adults to plan and carry out a project evaluation.	Children decide what to evaluate and, carry out their own evaluation of the programme (may get help from adults).
Acting on findings (dissemination, feedback, advocacy and new plans)		Children are asked what they think should happen next.	Adults involve children in discussion about findings and explore options for future actions.	Children reflect on the findings, and come up with their own proposals for follow-up action (which may be shared with adults).

31

LESS ◀ How much decision-making power or control do children have? ▶ MORE

The standard model?

	No children involved	Children are consulted	Children collaborate with adults	Children initiate or direct	Who is involved and who is excluded (and why)?
Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis)		Children are asked for their views about problems in the community.	Children are asked to be part of the process for finding out what the problems are.	Children undertake their own research to identify issues of concern.	**Which children get involved in determining the problems?**
Deciding what to do (planning)		Project planning takes account of the issues raised by children.	Children are involved in deciding what programmes to run and how to run them.	Children decide for themselves what issues they want to work on, and plan their own actions.	**Which children get involved at the planning stage?**
Taking action (implementation)		Children are invited to join in a programme of activities that is organised for them	Children work with adults to implement a programme of activities	Children organise their own programme and take responsibility for seeing it through (adults may support them).	**Which children get in on the action?**
Assessing and reporting what happened (monitoring and evaluation)		Children are asked for their views as part of project evaluation.	Children work with adults to plan and carry out a project evaluation.	Children decide what to evaluate and, carry out their own evaluation of the programme (may get help from adults).	**Which children get involved in monitoring and reporting?**
Acting on findings (dissemination, feedback, advocacy and new plans)		Children are asked what they think should happen next.	Adults involve children in discussion about findings and explore options for future actions.	Children reflect on the findings, and come up with their own proposals for follow-up action (which may be shared with adults).	**Which children get involved in the follow-up actions?**

32

The global pilot programme eventually led to the Toolkit (Lansdown and O'Kane, 2014)

Save the Children Nicaragua commissioned this simplified, contextualised version from CESESMA (Shier, 2014)
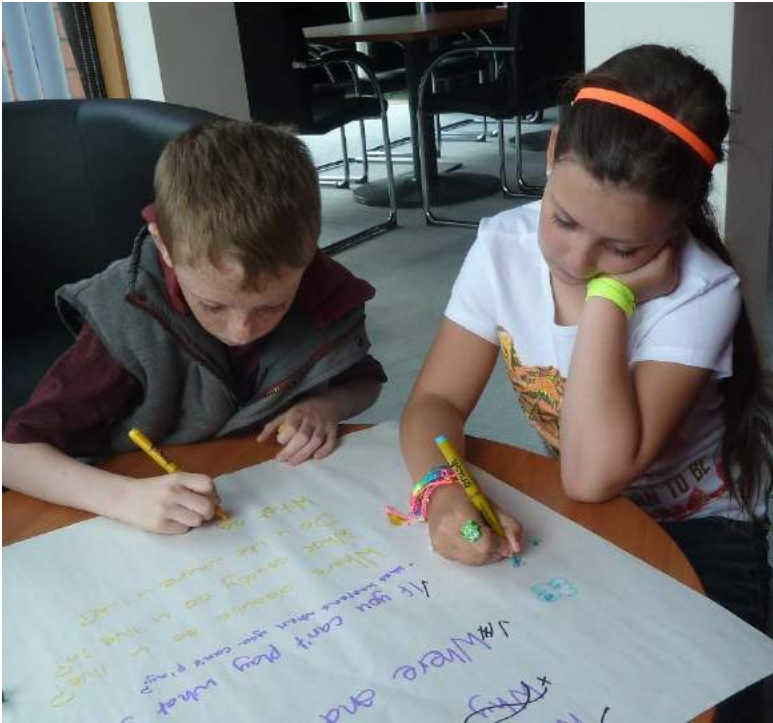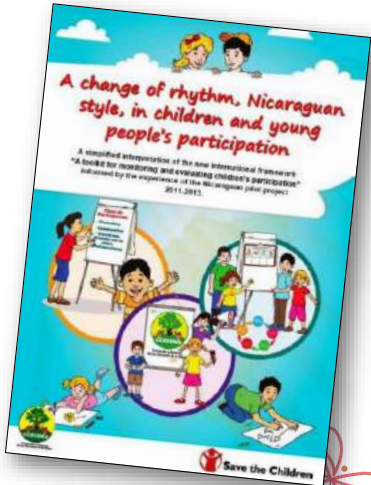
33

CHAPTER 5: 2012-2015
RETURN TO IRELAND

SPACE, VOICE, AUDIENCE AND INFLUENCE

34

DOCTORAL RESEARCH AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Studies supervised by Professor Laura Lundy, Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast

ARTICLE 12

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

35

THE LUNDY MODEL

SPACE

VOICE

The right to express views

ARTICLE 12

The right to have views given due weight

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

(Lundy 2007)
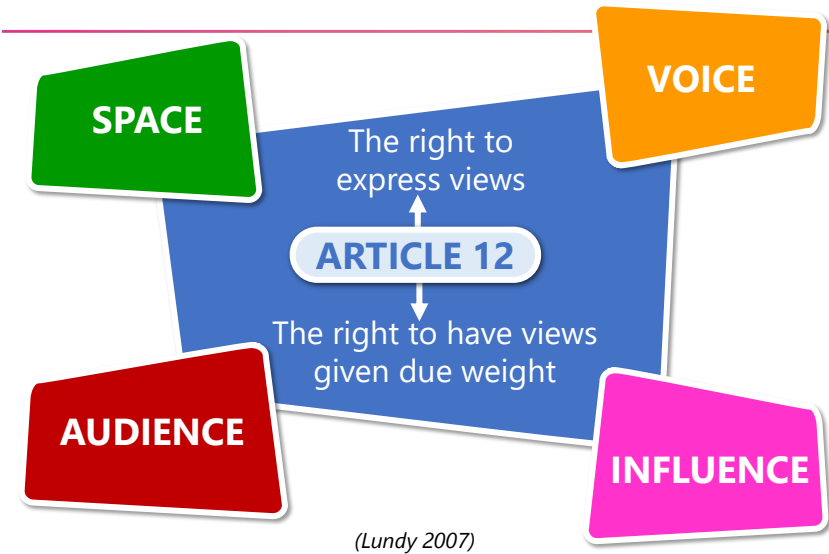
This model has been influential in public policy in Ireland, and is the official model featured in the Irish National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making *(DCYA 2015)*
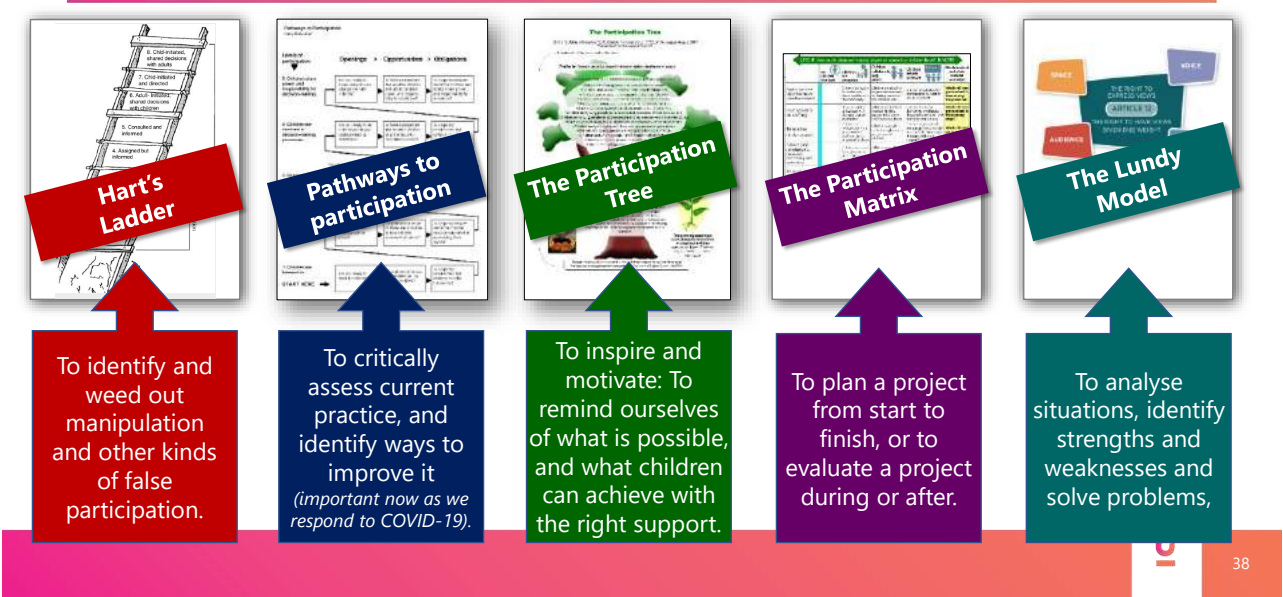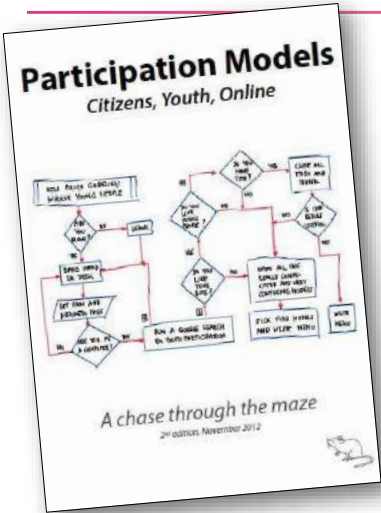
36

CHAPTER 6: 2016-2020
AUSTRALIA CALLING

WHICH MODEL?

37

WHEN DO I USE EACH MODEL?

Hart's Ladder	Pathways to participation	The Participation Tree	The Participation Matrix	The Lundy Model
To identify and weed out manipulation and other kinds of false participation.	To critically assess current practice, and identify ways to improve it *(important now as we respond to COVID-19).*	To inspire and motivate: To remind ourselves of what is possible, and what children can achieve with the right support.	To plan a project from start to finish, or to evaluate a project during or after.	To analyse situations, identify strengths and weaknesses and solve problems,

38

YOU WANT MORE MODELS?

Remember the words of George Box:

"Essentially all models are wrong, but some are useful"

Andreas Karsten's collection of participation models (2012)

A huge on-line collection of participation models from Organising Engagement (Abbott 2020)

39

A FINAL QUESTION: DO YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE?

(Yousafzai and Lamb, 2013)

(Thunberg, 2019)

40

REFERENCES

All works by Shier are available at **www.harryshier.net**

Abbott, S. (2020). *Introductions to influential and widely used organizing, engagement, and equity models*. Organizing Engagement. https://organizingengagement.org/models/

Box, G. E. P. (1979). Robustness in the strategy of scientific model building. In R. L. Launer & G. N. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Robustness in Statistics* (pp. 201–223). Academic Press.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2015). *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making 2015-2020*. DCYA.

Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Karsten, A. (2012). *Participation Models: Citizens, Youth, Online* (2nd ed.). www.nonformality.org.

Lansdown, G. (2011). *Every Child's Right to be Heard*. Save the Children.

Lansdown, G., & O'Kane, C. (2014). *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation*. Save the Children.

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(6), 927–942.

Shier, H. (1984). *Adventure Playgrounds: An introduction*. National Playing Fields Association.

Shier, H. (Ed.). (1995). *Article 31 Action Pack: Children's rights and children's play*. Play-Train.

Shier, H. (1999). Consulting Children. *Arts Business, 28*, 5–6.

Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities and obligations. *Children & Society, 15*(2), 107–117.

Shier, H. (2008). Retomando los caminos hacia la participación: Aprendiendo de los niños, niñas y adolescentes trabajadores del café de Nicaragua. *Medio Ambiente y Urbanización, 69*(1), 67–82.

Shier, H. (2010). 'Pathways to Participation' revisited: Learning from Nicaragua's child coffee workers. In N. Thomas & B. Percy-Smith (Eds.), *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives from Theory and Practice* (pp. 215–227). Routledge.

Shier, H. (2014). *A change of rhythm, Nicaraguan style, in children and young people's participation*. Save the Children Nicaragua.

Shier, H. (2019). Student voice and children's rights: Participation, empowerment and "protagonismo". In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*. Springer Nature.

Taft, J. K. (2019). *The Kids Are in Charge: Activism and Power in Peru's Movement of Working Children*. NYU Press.

Thunberg, G. (2019). *No one is too small to make a difference*. Penguin.

Yousafzai, M., & Lamb, C. (2013). *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*. Wiedenfield and Nicholson.