

FLOWER OF PARTICIPATION

Objectives:

After this lesson, the students:

- Know what the flower of participation is
- Can evaluate their form of participation in their own partnerships

Lesson Outline (1-hour sample lesson plan)

Use this outline as an example of a good and complete learning process which includes: new knowledge, skill building and changing attitudes.

- 0.00 – 0.05 Introduction:** Introduce the topic, by making a link to existing knowledge and make it real – connect to real life.
- 0.05 – 0.15 Warm up:** Get the energy going with an interactive exercise. This should create a good atmosphere and make sure everyone feels at ease.
- 0.15 – 0.30 Information:** Share the information with the students. The information should be presented clearly without difficult definitions or languages. Make sure to keep it factual and present without judgment.
- 0.30 – 0.40 Discuss:** Give students time to reflect on the information and form their own opinions.
- 0.40 – 0.55 Practice:** Let students practice the skills they need to use the new information in their own lives.
- 0.55 – 1.00 Take action:** Come up with a plan on what the students can do in their own time to use the new information.

Introduction

Start by introducing the topic. When you introduce new information, it is important to link it to existing knowledge the students already have. This can be done by:

- Referring to previous classes in case this topic is earlier discussed.
- Introducing the class by asking the opinion of the students:
Have you ever heard about the flower of participation? How might this flower of participation be important in the life of young people?
- Using the videos that are on the platform. Share a story from one of the videos and ask the students to some reflective questions like: do you recognise this situation; can you relate to the person in the story?

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Warm-up

Goal: Students explore the topic of meaningful youth participation by thinking about diverse forms of participation.

- For this warm-up you can ask students to discuss diverse forms of participation. Ask them questions such as:
 - Have you ever participated in a project with adults?
 - Did you feel your opinion mattered?
 - Was there an equal partnership?

Information

Share the information from the platform with the students.

- If they have access to the website you can ask them to read it on their own.
- You can create a Powerpoint presentation with images and the most important information.
- You can present the information to the whole group. Use keywords for yourself and if possible also write the keywords on a board as reminders for the listeners.
- You could make handouts with the key information.

Make sure that you take enough time to present everything clearly and that you build in moments where the students can reflect on the information and ask questions. The information has already been written in paragraphs – after each paragraph you can ask a reflective question.

You can use these questions to engage the group:

- What do you think happens when young people can meaningfully participate in projects?
- Can you remember a situation where you participated in a project?
- Do you think the Flower of Participation can help you?

The Flower of Participation (developed by CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and YouAct) is a tool that uses the metaphor of a blooming flower to describe the different forms of Meaningful Youth Participation and how it can grow and flourish. You can find the Flower of Participation on the YOU(TH) Do IT! website and print it.

The air: inclusivity

Inclusivity is like the air we breathe: we can't live without it! Talking about young people, it is very important to be inclusive. Because young people are not all the same: they are in fact all very different (think about age, gender, different socio-economic backgrounds). It is therefore very important to include all young people, when representing the voice of young people.

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The soil: commitment from young people

Without the commitment of young people, meaningful youth participation is simply not possible.

The roots: the core elements of meaningful youth participation

The roots of a flower are essential in enabling a flower to retrieve nutrients and water from the soil. The better the roots, the better a flower (and thus MYP) can flourish.

- Freedom of choice: represents the extent to which a young person can decide to participate, or not.
- Information: refers to the extent to which young people have access to information that is crucial for their participation.
- Decision-making power: to what extent can a young person make decisions?
- Voice: to what extent can a young person voice their views and opinions and to what extent are these being heard and respected?
- Responsibility: represents the extent to which a young person has the opportunity to act independently (for example within a program or organization).

Insects: non-meaningful youth participation

The insects represent two forms of youth participation that at first sight seem to be meaningful, but are in fact not. The first is manipulation: young people are used to support a cause. This means that young people may be involved, but cannot give their opinion, or don't enjoy any responsibility. An example: an orphan living with HIV shakes the hand of a major donor in order to make him invest in a program targeting orphans with HIV+.

Tokenism is the other form of youth participation that is not meaningful. In this case, young people are invited which gives the impression that young people are meaningfully involved. However, in reality they do not have voice, responsibility or their opinions are not being heard. An example: A young person is invited to join a meeting to represent 'the youth voice', but is not allowed to say anything.

Leaves and petals: different forms of meaningful youth participation

The leaves and the petals of the flower represent 6 forms of meaningful youth participation. It depends on the situation, the program or organization what form of meaningful youth participation is the best:

- Young people are appointed a role and informed
- Young people are consulted and informed
- Adult-led, shared decisions with youth
- Youth-led, shared decisions with adults
- Youth-led, adults have no decision-making power
- Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP)

Sun and water: preconditions for meaningful youth participation

A flower can only grow and flourish if certain preconditions are met. For instance, flowers need water and sun to grow and bloom. Likewise, meaningful youth participation cannot establish without certain preconditions. Water, in the first place, represents the capacity strengthening. This means that to be

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able to play an informed and effective role, young people should have the opportunity to develop themselves (and grow, like the flower). Capacity building can be done in various ways, for example through getting training, coaching or following (online) courses, like YOU(TH) Do IT!

In the second place, there is the sun which represents an 'enabling environment'. By this, we mean that there should be commitment from the adults too, there should be the financial means (for example reimbursement for travel costs), there should be a safe space in which people use youth-friendly language, there should be flexibility and lastly there should be policies in place which supports youth and adults working together.

Discuss

Allow students some time to reflect on the information and to form their own opinion. This is important because it helps the students to process the information by reflecting on how this information is related to their own situation. You can use the following activities:

- You can facilitate a discussion by using the reflective questions. You can use examples as a starting point for a debate.
 - Ask the students if they are currently participating in a project, program, organization, etc.
 - Now ask the students to assess their participation using the Flower of Participation.
 - Start a discussion on how they could you improve their participation according to the Flower of Participation? Assist them in providing them with ideas to strengthen their participation.
 - What form of participation is applicable to your student's situations according to the Flower of Participation? Look at the leaves and petals.
- Use the examples as a starting point for the students to come up with their own story based on their realities. This can be in the form of a roleplay, comic, story, etc.
- Use the quiz on the website to reflect on the responsibility of each type of participation. Read out the statements and ask the group if they think it is no responsibility, low, or high responsibility. Make sure you provide the correct answer without judging those who gave a wrong answer.

Quiz

The students need to match the levels with the examples. They have to choose which of the different levels of the flower of participation relate to which statement. They get the feedback below after they answered all questions.

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1. Because of lack of experience, a youth-led organisation asks support from an experienced adult from a partner organisation to co-decide on the budget within a program.	Manipulation [3]
2. A small group of young people and adults join forces to organise a fundraising event to support victims of an earthquake that happened recently. Within the group, everybody is involved in all decision-making and has an equal voice.	Adult-led, shared decisions with youth [5]
3. A teacher asks a class of students to sing the national anthem when a group of international donors visit the school.	Tokenism [7]
4. Young people decide to organise a peaceful demonstration to advocate for better quality education.	Youth-led, adults have no decision-making power [2]
5. A school teacher wants to organise a celebration day to celebrate the end of the school year, and asks students to help him organise it and decide on the activities for the day.	Youth-led, shared decisions with adults [1]
6. A 16-year old is invited to join a design session of a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, to bring a young and fresh' perspective to the discussion. However, she does not have any say in what is ultimately integrated into the curriculum.	Young people are appointed a role and informed [8]
7. A young person is invited to join a meeting to represent 'the youth voice', but is not allowed to say anything.	Youth-adult partnership [4]
8. Young people are asked to give a speech on climate change during a community awareness meeting organized by adults. They can write the speech themselves, but the adults have to check and approve the presentation before the meeting.	Young people are consulted and informed [6]

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Feedback

- **Manipulation**
Manipulation happens when young people are used to support a cause. Young people are used as decoration, to make the cause look more attractive.
- **Tokenism**
Tokenism is when young people are invited, giving the impression that young people are meaningfully involved. However, in reality, they do not have voice, responsibility or their opinions are not being heard.
- **Young people are appointed a role and informed**
Young people are asked to do a task, they can decide whether they want to participate or not and are informed about the program or project. However, they do not hold any decision-making power, and only limited voice and responsibility.
- **Young people are consulted and informed**
Young people are asked to give input and their opinion is considered. They are also informed about the goal or the program or project. Yet, the consulted young people do not make the final decision as to whether the input is actually incorporated.
- **Adult-led, shared decisions with youth**
Adults are primary in charge of the program or project. However, they include young people who do have some control in decision-making processes.
- **Youth-led, shared decisions with youth**
When a program or project is youth-led but there is shared decision-making with adults. This means that young people oversee the program or project, but they include adults who also have a say.
- **Youth-led, adults have no decision-making power**
Young people are fully in charge.
- **Youth-adult partnership**
In a youth-adult partnership, both young people and adults are equally involved and share decision-making power.

Practice

Use the outcomes from the discussion to ask the students to come up with a plan on how to do something in their own community, peer group or family.

Since such an activity requires skills, make sure you practice these first. Some of the skills you could practice for this lesson are:

Team building:

Team building is about activities to make social bonds or relations within a group stronger. It is very important if you work with a group of people towards a common goal, because it identifies personalities, roles and expectations within the group.

Read the tips below before you practice your skills!

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- Try to come up with a new and fun teambuilding activity. You can get some inspiration from the examples below, but make sure to adapt it to what YOU would find fun! Try it out with your family members and ask for their feedback.

Before planning your activity, spend some time to think about the structure of your team. What are your team's strengths? What are its weaknesses? These questions below can help you reflect:

- Is everyone getting along, or are there some tensions/conflicts in the group?
- Do all members of the team know each other?
- Are all team members working towards the same goal?
- Is there good communication in the team?
- Are people in your team working individually or collectively?
- Are all members of the team motivated?

Motivating:

Keeping yourself motivated despite coming across many obstacles is important. You need to continuously believe in yourself and your ability to bring change. This could be helped if you can motivate friends or family to join you in your cause so that you are not alone.

Therefore, motivating others is also a key skill if you want to people to reach a (common) goal.

Read the tips below and practice your motivation skills:

Think of something you find really fun to do (for example going to the movies, playing a certain game, cooking your favourite dish...) and convince a friend to do this activity together with you.

Motivation is important if you want people to reach a (common) goal. Read some tips on how to motivate the people around you:

- Listen to others: Motivation has to come from inside people. So that is why it is important you get to know people, to understand what could motivate them. Find out what people really want or believe in before starting to encourage them.
- Ask questions! If you want to know what people want, then it is not enough to listen. You have to show your interest by asking questions yourself about people's goals, dreams and motivations. Therefore, it is best to ask open ended questions, such as: 'Why do you want to do that?'
- Encourage others. You can encourage people by saying friendly things, such as; 'I think you would be a great communicator, you are so social!' This encouragement is based on your knowledge and understanding of these people and what drives them.
- Help! Ask people how you can help them, what your role can be!

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Take action

Wrap up today's lesson by asking what the students have learnt, liked, found difficult etc.

Give an assignment to put the new knowledge and skills into action:

- Make a list of clear examples of how young people can use the Flower of Participation in their own life and projects.
- Think about the situations in which you are involved in projects, activities or organisations with adults. How would you assess your form of participation according to the Flower of Participation? Make a plan on how you would like to strengthen your participation.