

## Uitnodiging tweede studiebijeenkomst DfC/ECPAT

**Wanneer:** Woensdag 18 november, 13.00-14.00, vergaderzaal.

**Tekst:** Hart, R. A. "Stepping back from 'The ladder': Reflections on a Model of Participatory Work with Children". In: A. Reid et al. (2008) *Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability*. Rotterdam: Springer.

### Introduction

Child participation is a popular subject in both children's rights research and policy. To realize the right to participation for children, a conceptual tool that is often used is the "participation ladder" as developed by Hart in 1992.<sup>1</sup> The ladder distinguishes several levels of participation, ranging from manipulation (1) and decoration (2, such as 'children singing at adult conferences') to child-initiated and directed (7) and child-initiated, shared decisions with adults (8). There is some discussion on the highest levels; some argue that independent, child-initiated and directed projects (including research) hold a higher level of participation than when children cooperate with adults.<sup>2</sup>

Hart himself discussed the participation ladder again in 2008. In this paper, he argued that the first article was written in a time where there was 'little written of a conceptual nature on the theme of children's participation in their programmes, projects, or organisations. The book was simply meant to stimulate a dialogue on a theme that needed to be addressed critically. But many people have chosen to use the ladder as a comprehensive tool for measuring their work with children rather than as a jumping-off point for their own reflections'.<sup>3</sup> Hart points out that 'a child may not want at all times to be the one who initiates a project'. However, he argues that 'they ought to know that they have the option, and to feel that they have the confidence and competence to do so on occasion'.<sup>4</sup> He further emphasizes that he never wanted to 'argue naïvely that we should think of children as repressed individuals who [need] to be liberated through a series of steps whereby all adult engagement [has been] removed'.<sup>5</sup> Instead, '[w]hat is now needed are programmes of collaboration between academics and those who work directly with children as well as with children and youth themselves'.<sup>6</sup>

### Mogelijke discussiepunten

- Bestaat er een ladder-model voor kindparticipatie? Is meer participatie beter dan minder (p. 23-25)?
- Hoe verhoudt de tekst van Hart zich tot de visie van Jenks, specifiek met betrekking tot het idee van "liberation from adults as the end goal" (p. 24)?
- Is het idee van kindparticipatie cultureel geladen (p. 26-28)?
- Wat is de rol van kindparticipatie bij DfC en/of hoe zou deze moeten zijn? Zijn de suggesties van Hart voor vooruitgang (p. 29)?

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in Priscilla Alderson, 'Research by children' (2001) 4 International journal of social research methodology 139-53 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 92-93.

<sup>3</sup> Roger A. Hart, 'Stepping Back from 'The Ladder': Reflections on a Model of Participatory Work with Children' in Alan Reid and others (eds), *Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability* (Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability, Springer 2008) 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 29.

- Hebben we een systeem om te monitoren/evalueren hoe we met kinderen werken bij DfC? Zo ja; hoe staat deze in verhouding tot wat Hart schrijft en kunnen we evt. dingen verbeteren? Zo niet: zou dat er moeten zijn, en zo ja hoe en wat?

## **Bibliography**

Alderson P, 'Research by children' (2001) 4 International journal of social research methodology 139-53

Hart RA, 'Stepping Back from 'The Ladder': Reflections on a Model of Participatory Work with Children' in Reid A and others (eds), *Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability* (Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability, Springer 2008)