

Children and HIV/AIDS:

Action Now, Action How Symposium

1 August 2008, Mexico City

**Models of Child Participation – Ways to
Strengthen Adult-Child Partnerships at
International and National Levels**

Vivi Stavrou

**Regional Psychosocial
Support Initiative**



REPSSI

Psychosocial Wellbeing For All Children

Getting it Right for Children

Moving towards universal access, prevention, care and treatment
for children affected by HIV and AIDS

- This presentation will look at different types of child participation associated with regional / international conferences.
- Examine the child participation process that is being followed for the RIATT conference.
- Review ways of strengthening mechanisms for adult-child partnerships at international and national levels, focusing on national responses to taking actions to scale for children affected by HIV and AIDS (CABA).

The Regional Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS Conference, 2008

- RIATT conference focus : how to achieve **universal access** for children affected by HIV/AIDS in East and Southern Africa from the perspectives of national, civil society and children.
- The 3rd conference in Africa to review on what progress has been made at the level of national and regional plans of action for children who are affected by HIV/AIDS:
 - Lusaka, Zambia in 2000
 - Windhoek, Namibia in 2002.

The Regional Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS Conference, 2008

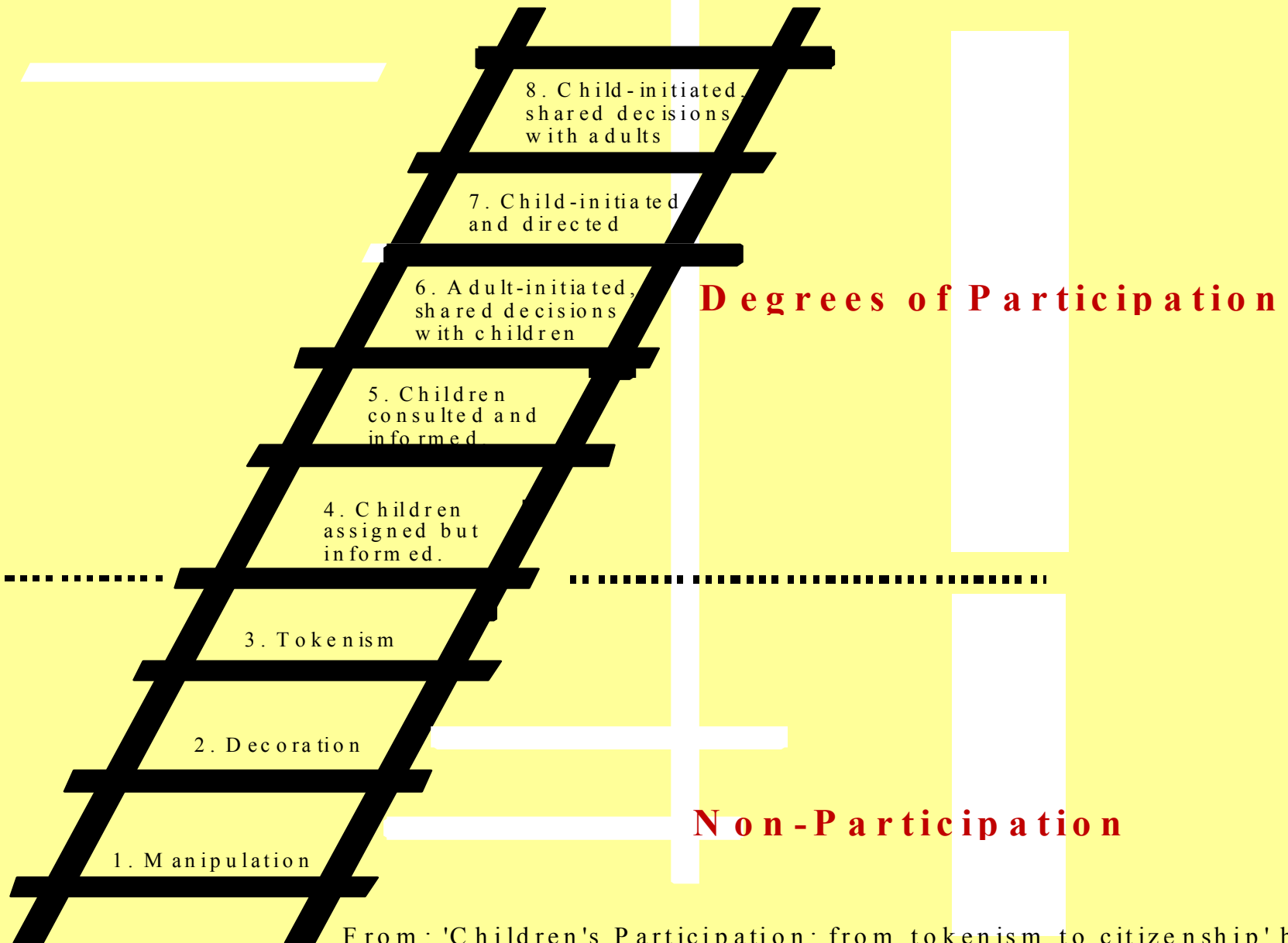
- The Dar Es Salaam 2008 conference decided (by the adult organisers) that children should be involved in assessing progress made in addressing the rights and needs of CABA, challenges still faced and recommendations for the way forward
- Rationale for involvement of children:
 - **Child Rights:** that children are participating actively in the decisions that affect them directly.
 - **Participation improves programming:** Children are experts on their own lives and have NB opinions; an opportunity to strengthen the participation of children in-country in the national plans aimed at ensuring that all CABA receive the prevention, treatment, care and support services to which they have a right.

Models of Child Participation (CP)

- ▣ Different types of CP that have taken place in international conferences and other events were examined & presented to the programme working group (PWG):
 - Planning adult conferences with children invited to participate
 - Planning conferences organised jointly for adults and children to share thinking and ideas for future action on a given issue
 - Conferences organised with and for children, with adults as facilitators.



The Ladder of Children's Participation



From: 'Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship' by Roger A. Hart, Innocenti Essays No 4, UNICEF, 1992.

RIATT Conference CP Model

- A model was chosen by the adult organisers that appeared:
 - **appropriate** (conference planning already commenced, in-country consultations, regional perspective, youth support), and
 - **relevant** to the conference aims and to the children's own concerns.

5. Children consulted and informed: adults have lead role, inform children about situation & seek their opinion. Try and give children sense of ownership over some aspects of the programme but under adult supervision. Adults control process, but flexible to include the children's suggestions & concerns.

+

6. Adult initiated, shared decisions with children: adults initiate process but sharing the decision-making space with children – a collaborative interaction, so although initiated by adults, develops into a joint process whereby adults and children take on different but mutually defined roles.

The Regional Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS Conference, 2008

The CP aspect was included from the beginning when designing, planning & budgeting for the conference:

- CP sub-committee within the RIATT Conference PWG;
- CP process, budget & work plan developed;
- Inclusion of pre-conference consultations & briefings, child protection measures, youth facilitators & adult mentors, participative methodology, (hopefully) child-friendly adult presentations, fun activities & time-out, post-conference follow-up;
- Two consultancies engaged: Tamasha (Tanzania) to facilitate the children's in-country consultations & child-focussed conference process, & Jungle Works (South Africa) to facilitate child-focussed media training & production aspect.

RIATT Conference National Children's Consultations

- **Preliminary meeting of child-serving organisations**
 - Guide to children's selection & monitoring of the process*

- **National children's consultations**
 - 1st consultation @ country level
 - Media training*
 - Consultations with other children in home areas & use of interactive media
 - Consolidation and finalisation of report & selection of 2 representatives
 - Final preparations & presentation to adult team



RIATT Conference National Children's Consultations

- **National Child-Adult consultations**
 - Final preparatory meeting in-country of child & adult delegation
- **RIATT Conference:**
 - Children's meeting
 - Adult & Children's meeting
 - Media presentations and awards
- **RIATT Conference Follow-up country consultations**



Ongoing Challenges

(Lessons have been Learnt long ago!)

- ❑ Lack of commitment to national & regional CP processes - difficult for in-country adult-led organisations to organise jointly, competition
- ❑ The CP process was relegated to a sub-committee rather than being part of the ToR of the RIATT in general & the overall PWG .
- ❑ There is flexibility - altered conception of conference from being a 3 day conference with a 2 day add-on preliminary meeting for children, to a 5 day conference for all participants starting with a 2 day meeting organised with & for children with adults as facilitators.
- ❑ Steady but slow pace of a regional, multi-agency PWG – significant delays, not on-going process so add-on work.

Ongoing Challenges

- *‘How can the most vulnerable children be involved...?’* Difficulties of **inclusion**, accessing **representative** ‘vulnerable children’s’ groupings – children’s opinions are still legitimate & worthwhile even if they are not ‘representative of the children of our country’. RIATT focus on already established child-led initiatives & networks, delegates selected by peers.
- **Accountability & appropriateness** - is it appropriate for children to consult at regional levels about broad-based policies & programmes ? RIATT country consultations, multi-media presentations, child representatives to regional conference, follow-up processes planned & budgeted.
- Critical to clarify role of government in national CP consultations – remain in hands of civil society.

★ Child Participation ★

- ★ *The extent & nature of children's participation reflects the extent & nature of participation in society as a whole – it is not realistic to expect substantive participation when the children's parents/caregivers are unable to participate.*
- ★ **The notion of participation is important from both a child rights & a child development perspective.**
- ★ *Child participation is not only an end point, but a process & an intervention in itself.*
- ★ **There is no bottom line between child participation & better practices of working with children!**
- ★ **Enjoyment is the cornerstone for healthy participation!**



Getting it Right for Children

**Moving towards universal access, prevention, care and treatment
for children affected by HIV and AIDS**

**REFLECTIONS: DO ADULTS *REALLY*
LISTEN TO CHILDREN?**

SKILLS-BUILDING SESSION

EDWINAH OROWE

**TAMASHA - VIJANA
CELEBRATING YOUTH**

orowedwinah@gmail.com

Skills- Building Session

- Self Evaluation
- Buzz groups:
 - ▣ What did I learn from the exercise? What can you apply in your work with children? What other tools or methodologies do you use in your CP work with children?
 - ▣ Feedback
- The Story
 - ▣ List and discuss responses to the story
- Wrap-up