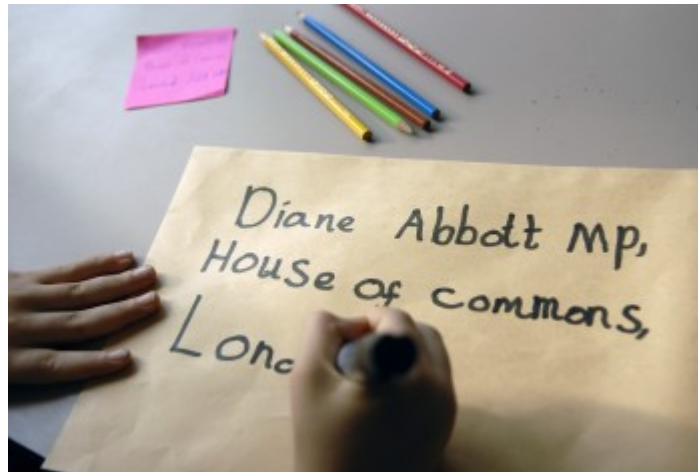


## Activity 5 – Taking Action



Caroline Irby – Oxfam GB

### Introduction

Sahena is an inspirational member of her community, leading efforts to adapt to changing climate conditions affecting her and her fellow villagers. However her efforts, and the efforts of countless others like her, do not slow down the process of global warming. For that to happen those responsible for the vast majority of the world's carbon emissions must take action to mitigate the harmful impact they are having on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. And that means us!

Oxfam promotes and supports young people taking action to mitigate the impact of climate change. We believe that this action is best initiated and sustained by young people themselves, with the support of adults, at a level appropriate to young people's responsibilities, interests and abilities. Taking action is supported by the new secondary National Curriculum under the overarching aim of 'responsible citizenship' and more specifically by the KS4 Citizenship curriculum opportunities. Taking action also strengthens critical thinking, project management and problem solving skills. We therefore believe that taking action constitutes both good learning and responsible citizenship.

This activity suggests a range of actions young people can take to mitigate climate change and provides resources to support their actions. Teachers are encouraged to use these suggestions to follow up and develop ideas students may have suggested or initiated themselves as a result of working through Activities 1 – 4.

## **Roger Hart's 'Ladder of Participation'**

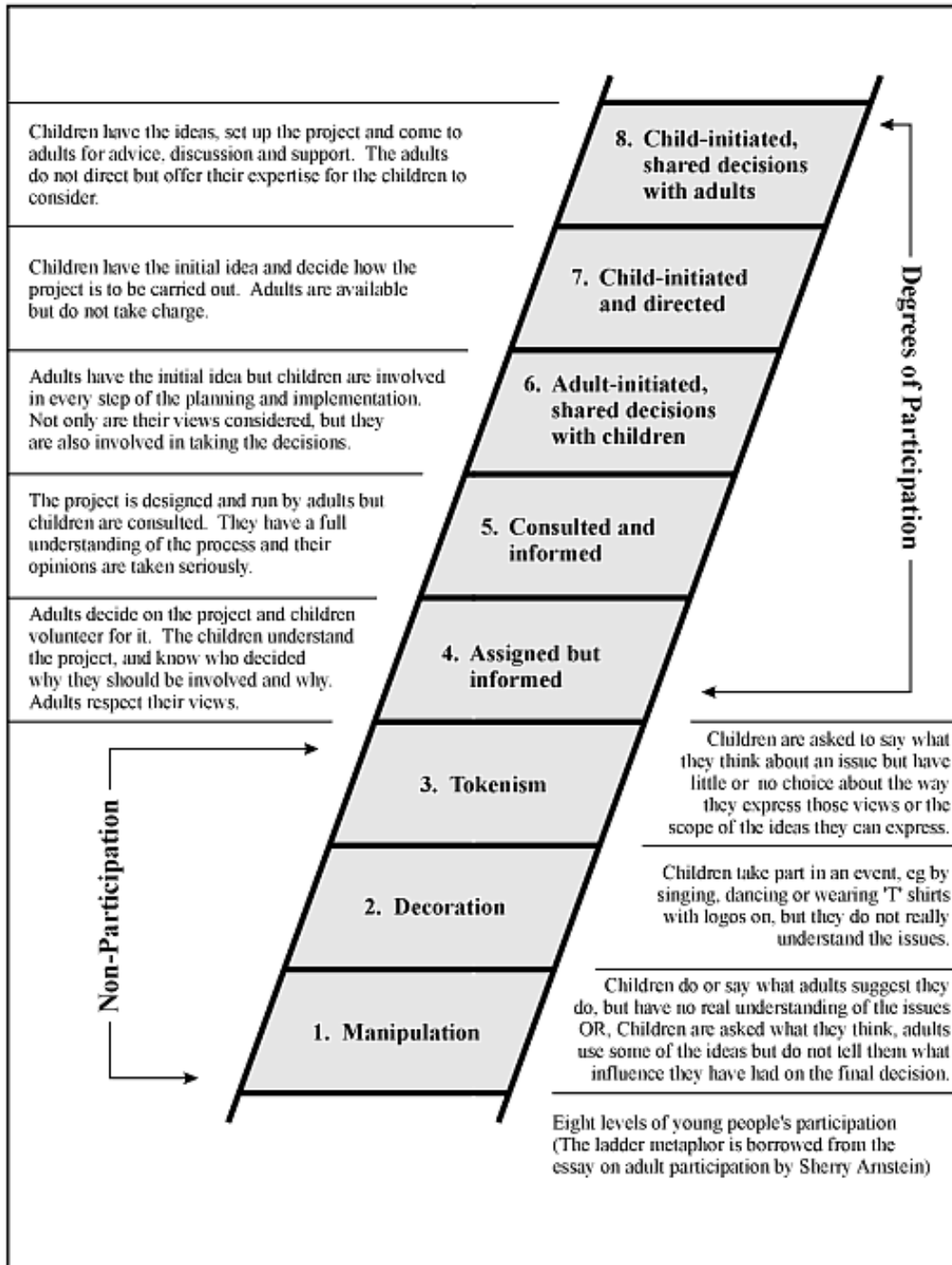
Roger Hart's *'Ladder of Participation'* provides a useful model for evaluating the degree to which activities involving young people meet the aim of engaging them as active citizens.

Rungs 4 to 8 of the ladder provide promote student voice and action with increasing levels of the autonomy and independence exercised by responsible citizens.

However the level at which teachers are able to engage young people fully as participants may well depend on the learning context in which the activity takes place. Therefore Hart's 'ladder' is suggested here as an aspirational benchmark as well as a guide to project planning.

'Manipulative', 'decorative' or 'tokenistic' activities, imposed on students without their active participation, are best avoided.

**The Ladder of Participation**



Hart, R. (1992) *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF.

The QCA's KS4 Citizenship Scheme of Work Unit 07 'Taking Part – Planning a Community Event' provides a learning framework in which many of the following activities, which aim to engage learners as participants, may take place.

For the SOW see <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/ks4citizenship/cit07/?view=get>

The 'Get Global' resource pack is a practical guidebook of skills based activities for introducing active citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4. It provides clear guidelines for how

students can be encouraged to work together to plan action around any issue of importance to them.

For more details see

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get\\_global/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get_global/)

## Young People's Actions

### Action 1 – individual action

Young people decide to initiate individual lifestyle changes to mitigate climate change within their families.

For example:

- Switching off the light
- Switching off electrical appliances on standby
- Using energy saving light bulbs
- Not leaving a phone charger on all night
- Walking, cycling or taking public transport to school

There are many more action ideas and a tracking tool at

<http://www.wearewhatwedo.org/>

### Action 2 – change your school

Young people and teachers work together to reduce the carbon footprint of their schools.

This can include helping to get the message across by

- Leading assemblies
- Peer teaching
- Designing posters, leaflets, stalls and events

Being informed about an issue and talking to other people about it so it's at the front of their minds is an important agent of change.

School communities may decide to further implement change by working towards the **Eco-School** or **Fairtrade School** award schemes

<http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/schools/>

## **Action 3 – influence decision makers**

Young people take action to have their voice heard by politicians and other decision makers.

The UN Climate Change Conference takes place in Copenhagen between December 7 and December 15 2009. This is one of the most important meetings world leaders will ever attend. Oxfam is calling for the Copenhagen Conference to avoid fudging the issue and to achieve a global solution to the urgent global problem of climate change.

Details of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference are at <http://en.cop15.dk/>

Oxfam believes a fair and equitable deal on climate change in 2009 involves two elements – a cap on carbon emissions by rich countries and a global adaptation fund to help poor countries cope with the effects of climate change.

We believe that citizens can influence decision makers to reach a fair and equitable deal and that, as a part of this process, young people's voices have a right to be heard.

Young people may

- Invite MPs, councillors or other leaders to see work they've done and hear their opinions
- Get press coverage for their activities
- Write to MPs, ministers and the Prime Minister

Oxfam offers support to people who want to engage their MP or the press  
See [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get\\_involved/campaign/activists/index.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/activists/index.html)

A full list of contact details for Members of Parliament is at <http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm>

Contact details for councillors, MPs, SMPs, Northern Ireland, Welsh and London AMs and MEPs are at <http://www.writetothem.com/>

## **Action 4 – fundraise for an adaptation project**

Young people lead fundraising projects in their schools and communities

Oxfam's target is to raise £41m from institutions and individuals over the next five years to help people in poor countries adapt to climate change.

Fundraising can provide young people with valuable organisational, problem solving and project management skills. To help young people get the most from fundraising's learning potential Oxfam has produced this guide for schools.

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/fundraising\\_support/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/fundraising_support/)

## Action 5 – recycle

Young people take action to reduce waste and carbon emissions by recycling instead of throwing unwanted items away. At a class, school or community level young people work on projects promoting recycling among their peers and neighbours.

Oxfam and the UK Youth Parliament have joined together to encourage young people to set up recycling schemes in their schools.

For more information see

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get\\_involved/recycle/recycle\\_schools.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/recycle/recycle_schools.html)

Oxfam Shops offer the ultimate in recycling and nothing donated to Oxfam goes to waste. Donating and shopping at Oxfam both reduces carbon emissions and fundraises for Oxfam projects in poor countries

See <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/default.aspx>

## Don't forget Action 6 – Tell Oxfam!

Whether you're just getting started, are well on your way or are wrapping up a great project make sure you tell Oxfam what you've been doing. We'll give you and your school a big shout on our website.

Email your actions to [schoolshere&now@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:schoolshere&now@oxfam.org.uk)



Alice Dunhill - Oxfam GB