

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT





**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

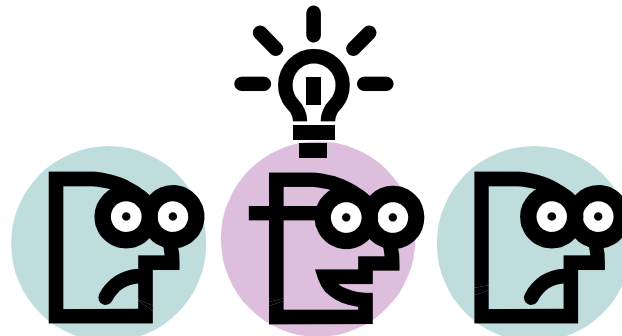
# Youth participation and empowerment

**“Strengthening Youth work in the APEC  
region”, Hanoi, Vietnam**

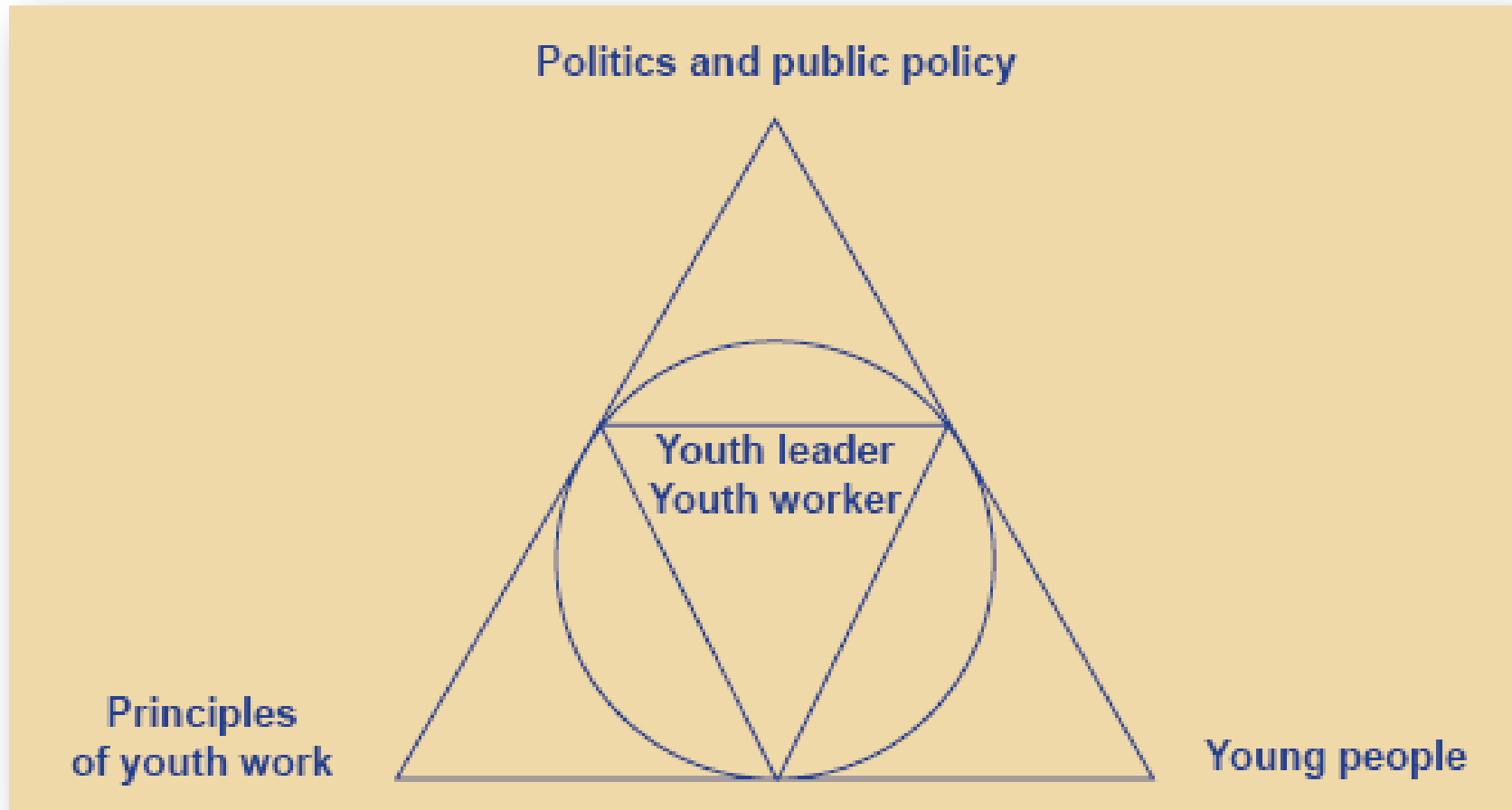
**Laimonas Ragauskas, 2008.07.30**

# A KEY QUESTIONS FOR THIS SESSION!

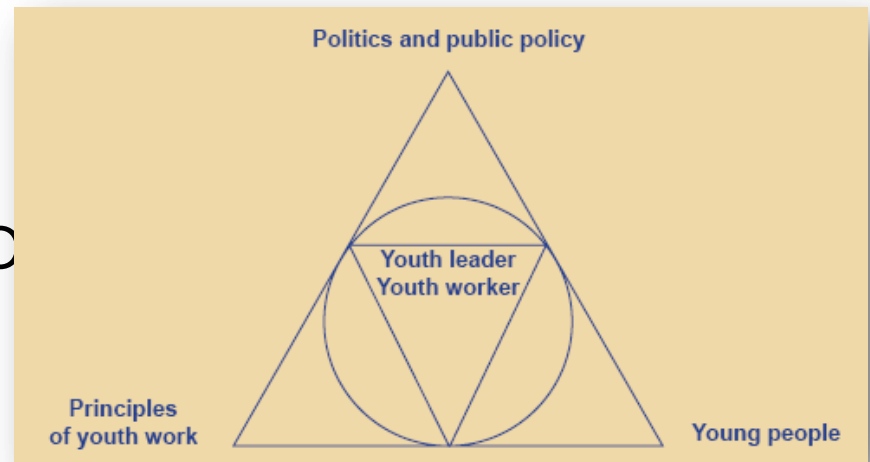
- **What is** youth participation for us and others?
- **What is not** youth participation?
- **How** young people could become more involved in making decisions, which concerns them?
- **What** are the benefits of youth participation for youth? For the rest?
- **How** active young people could contribute to strengthening the youth work and the society in general?



# THE CONTEXT: YOUTH – YOUTH WORK – YOUTH POLICY – YOUTH PARTICIPATION



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- Young people – the main subject of the youth policy. Their lives and expectations shape the youth policies and influence principles of youth work
- Principles of youth work – influenced by governmental youth policies, cultural traditions and needs of young people
- Politics and public policy – shaped by representative group of people, assigned by society
- Are young people part of this society? Do they shape policies about them? Is there a youth participation? What kind of? How people become participative?



# A QUESTION FOR NATIONAL GROUPS?

- YOUTH PARTICIPATION - What does it mean for you? (in few words or couple of sentences)
- Be ready to present it to others after 10 minutes on big paper!



# WHAT IS CHILDREN (UP TO 18) PARTICIPATION? ("CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION", ROGER A.HART, UNICEF)

- It is the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives.
- Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship
- <...Children are undoubtedly the most photographed and the least listened to members of society...>





# WHAT IS ADOLESCENT (13-19) PARTICIPATION?

(*THE PARTICIPATION RIGHTS OF ADOLESCENTS: A STRATEGIC APPROACH*, UNICEF, RAKESH RAJANI, 2001)

- adolescent participation can be defined as adolescents partaking in and influencing processes, decisions and activities.
- In this sense, participation is fundamentally about the exercise of power.





# WHAT IS YOUTH (15-25) PARTICIPATION?

(REVISED EUROPEAN CHARTER ON THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL LIFE)

- Participation and active citizenship is about having:
- the right;
- the means;
- the space;
- the opportunity;
- (where necessary) the support...
- ... to *participate in* and *influence* decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

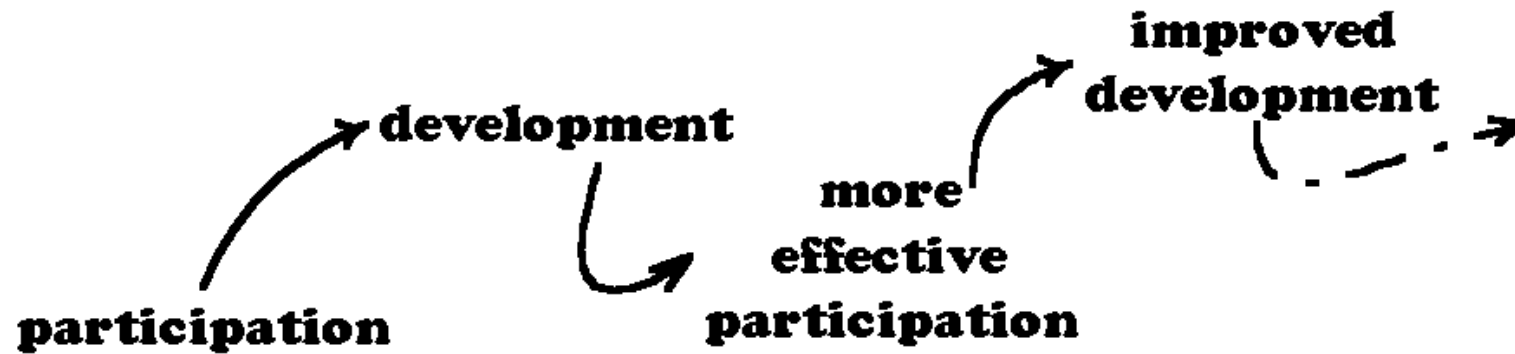


# YOUTH PARTICIPATION – EMPOWERMENT

- Through participation young people develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources.
- The more one participates meaningfully, the more experienced and competent one becomes, which in turn puts one in a position to participate more effectively.
- This refers to the **empowerment** for becoming a participative and constantly developing person



# YOUTH PARTICIPATION – EMPOWERMENT



# EMPOWERMENT

- **Youth empowerment** is the process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency (the state of being in action) to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youth and adults.
- It is about partial transfer of *Power* from *Power holders* to *young people*



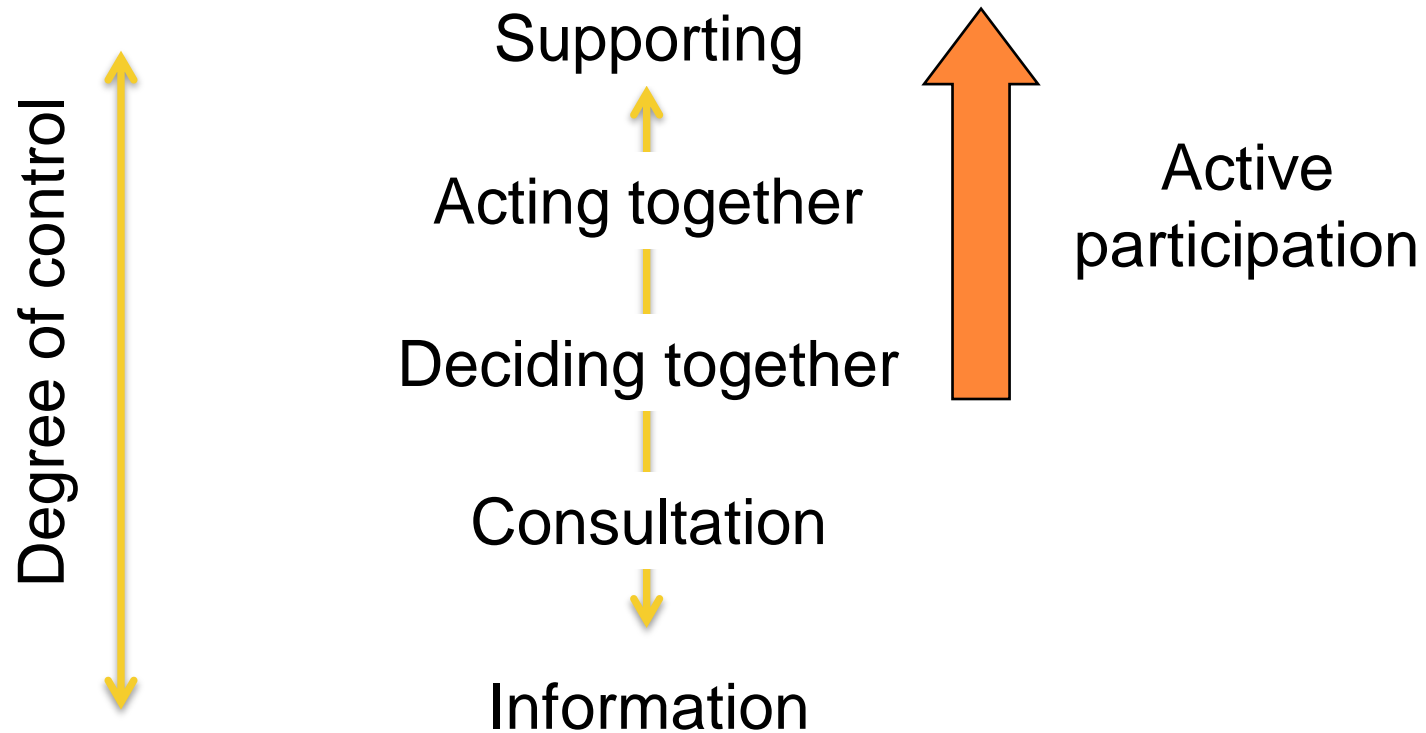
- **Power holder** (authority, leaders, youth workers, community workers) – the one, having resources, competence, status, agency to act



- **Young people** – group of society, usually having less competencies, confidence and agency to be on equal basis with Power holders



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION



Source: The Guide to Effective Participation, David Wilcox



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION –

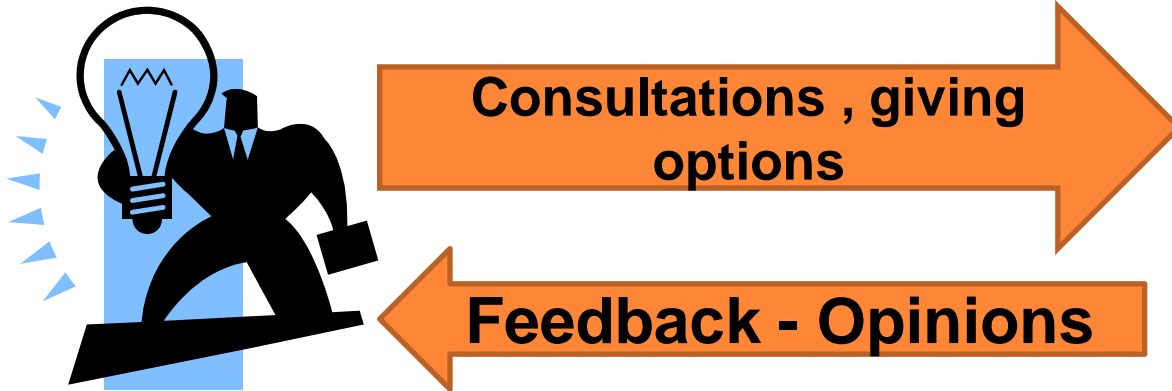
## 1. INFORMATION



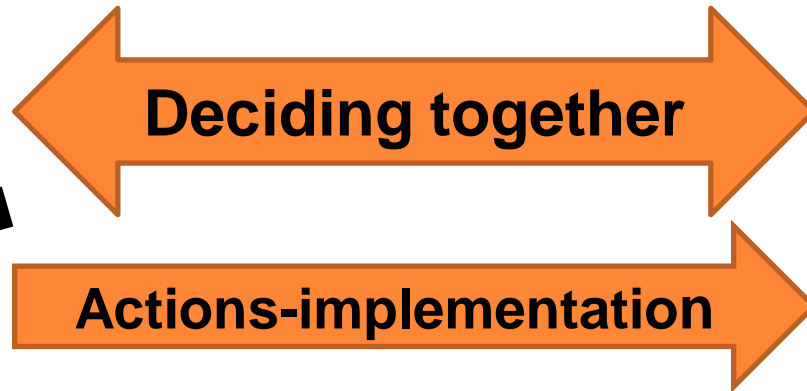


# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION –

## 2. CONSULTATION



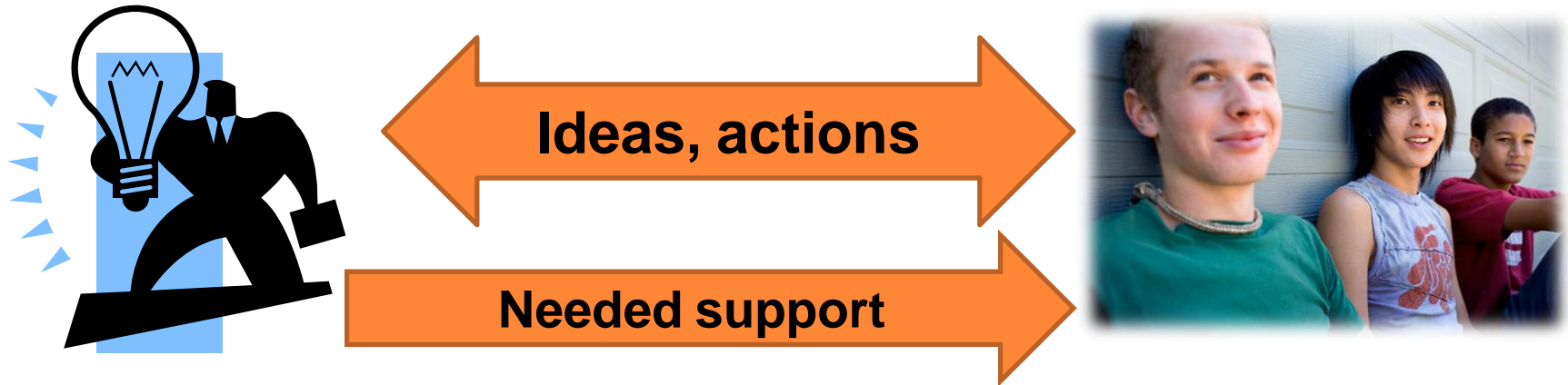
# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION – 3.DECIDING TOGETHER



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION – 4. ACTING TOGETHER, PARTNERSHIP



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION – 5.SUPPORT OF INITIATIVES



# PASSIVE - ACTIVE PARTICIPATION?

- (Passive) participation – if young people just accept an offer, take part in activities that are mainly designed by others
- Active participation – when young people plan activities and implement themselves (can be with support of others)
- - when young people challenge or question existing programmes or policies regarding youth
- Both types are very interrelated – often one can not happen without other type!

Source: Marc Jans and Kurt de Backer, Belgium



# INTERNAL - EXTERNAL PARTICIPATION

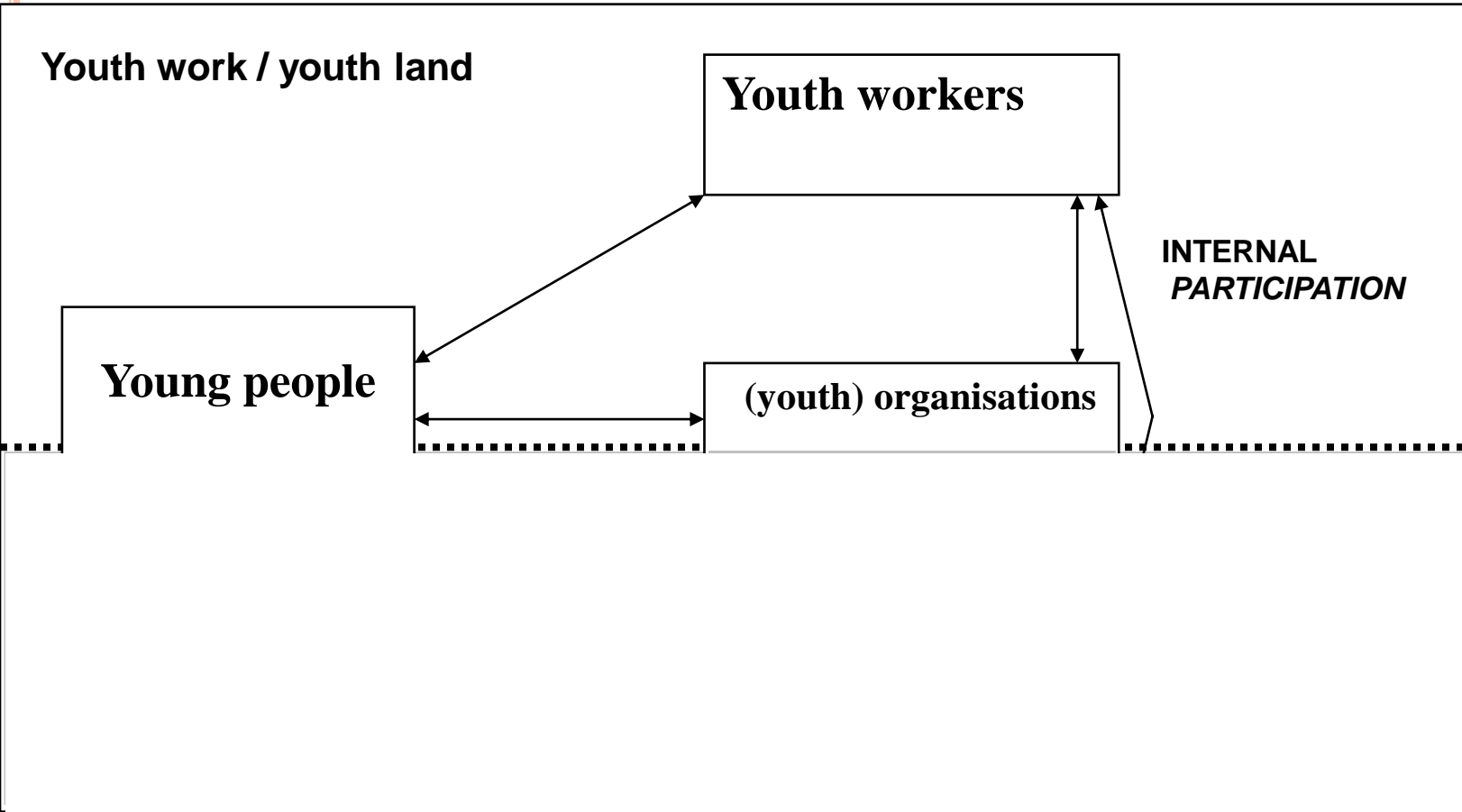
Youth work / youth land

Youth workers

Young people

(youth) organisations

INTERNAL  
PARTICIPATION



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

