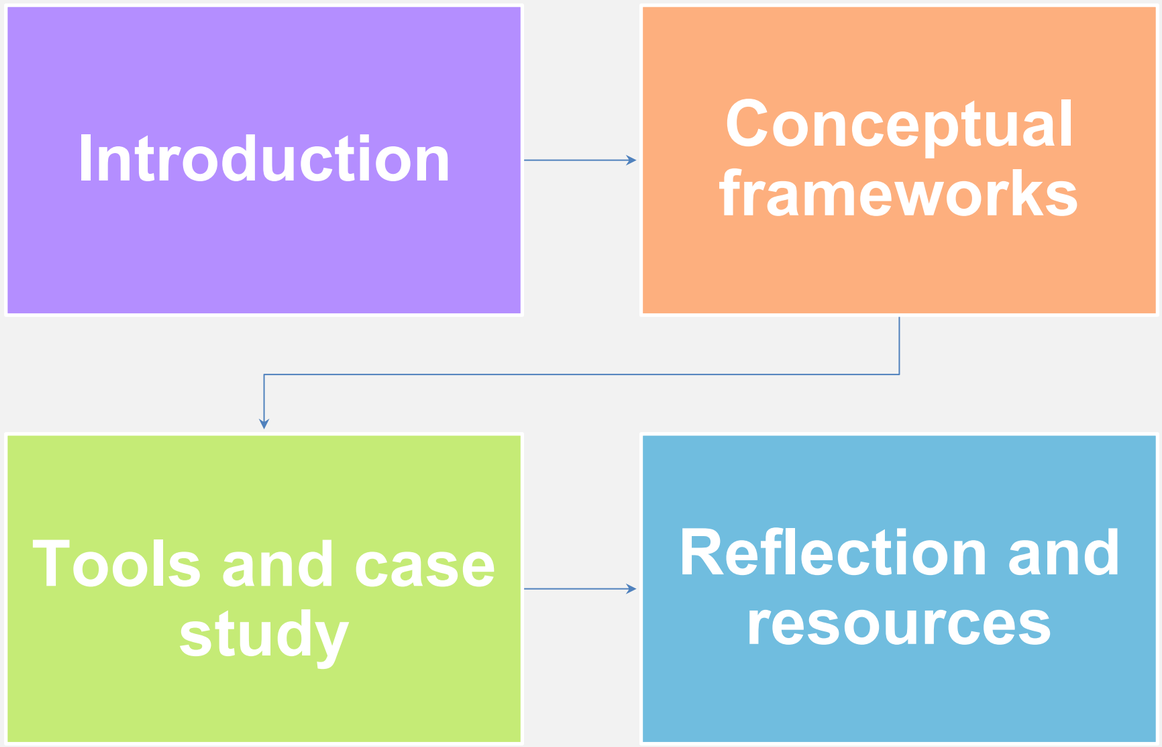
YOUTH in ROUTE

Routes for fostering sense of initiative and active citizenship among disaffiliated youth

Level 3/ Session 3 : Youth Participation

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YOUTH in ROUTE

Session 3: Building Genuine Youth Participation

Level 3: advocacy & leadership

THEMATIC FOCUS

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YOUTH in ROUTE

Level 3 represents the transition from direct field support to structural influence. While Level 2 focused on reaching and sustaining engagement with young people, Level 3 equips youth workers to transform institutions, amplify youth voices through policy, and dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate disaffiliation.

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Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to :

- Distinguish between levels of participation on the “participation ladder” and identify where current practices sit.
- Design a participation mechanism adapted to the specific constraints and assets of a given youth population.
- Facilitate a participation process that accounts for power dynamics, digital divides, and culturalbarriers.



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Key concept: Hart’s Ladder of Participation

It is the industry standard for measuring youth involvement. It distinguishes between non-participation (manipulation) and true empowerment.

- Rung 1-3 (Non-participation): Youth are used to bolster an adult's cause but have no voice or choice.
- Rung 4-5 (Assigned/Consulted): Youth are informed and their opinions are heard, but the final decisions are still made entirely by adults.
- Rung 6-8 (Co-decision/Youth-Led): Youth initiate actions and share decision-making responsibilities with adults as equal partners.



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Key concept: The Permission Gap

- Tokenism: The appearance of participation without the reality. Youth are used to bolster a cause but have no actual voice or choice in the outcome.
- Authenticity: Ensuring youth have the Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence (Lundy Model) required to move the needle.

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Practical tips and field tools

Tool: The Participation Audit

The Rubric: Provide a simple checklist based on three pillars:

- Transparency: Did the youth know exactly how their input would be used?
- Influence: Did their input actually change the final outcome?
- Inclusivity: Were the youth involved representative of "disaffiliated" groups, or were they the "usual suspects" (already engaged/privileged youth)?

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Challenge: Designing for the Edge

Pick a profile that you are more keen to work with in real life :

- Disengaged youth from underserved neighborhoods
- Migrant youth with language barriers
- NEET youth (Not in Education, Employment, Training)
- Creative youth disconnected from institutions (high distrust of authority)

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Challenge: Designing for the Edge

Step	Design element	Key question
1	the hook	What is the immediate value
2	Low-friction entry	What is the first easiest step?
3	The power shift	What specific decision do they get to make?
4	The feedback loop	How do we prove their time asn’t wasted

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Reflection



1. What is the one thing I am currently afraid to let young people decide?

1. How do we ensure that when the current 'enthusiastic' staff members leave, this participation mechanism doesn't disappear with them?



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Additional resources

- The Lundy Model Checklist : A highly practical tool for European policy-makers to ensure youth have Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation_0.pdf
- The Ladder of Participation : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEiN7ZTNKmU

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YOUTH in ROUTE



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mindshift

CEPORA
CENTER FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Louis Lumière Chelles
Lycée des métiers du Commerce et des Environnements Connectés

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