




## ACTIVITY 03

# Participation Ladder

 DURATION: 30-40 MIN APPROX.

### Purpose

The Participation Ladder is a collaborative reflective activity used to explore levels of engagement, influence, and decision-making within student-partner initiatives. Adapted from [Barbara Molony-Oates' Involvement Engagement Ladder \(2024\)](#), the activity encourages student partners to critically reflect on their role within projects, relationships with staff and peers, and the extent to which participation is meaningful and shared.

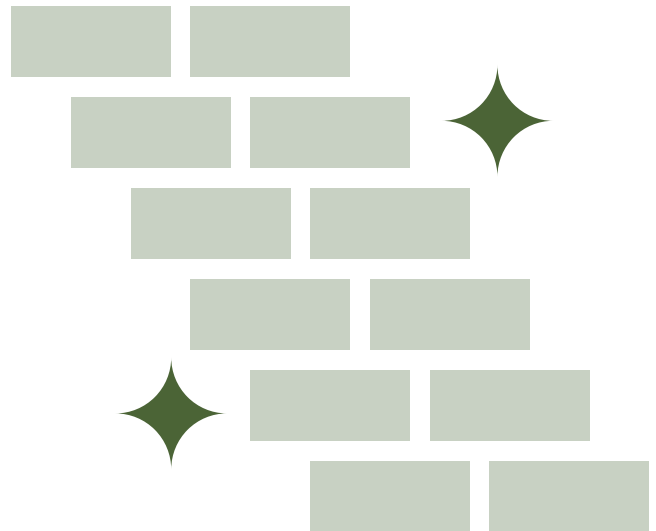
The activity supports both individual and collective reflection by helping participants identify:

- current experiences of participation,
- barriers and enablers to engagement,
- desired forms of collaboration and influence,
- opportunities for deeper involvement and co-creation.

It also creates a shared visual overview of participation across initiatives, helping groups recognise patterns, tensions, and possibilities for change.

### Materials

- Participation Ladder Template
- Sticky notes
- Pens and markers
- Large sheets of paper





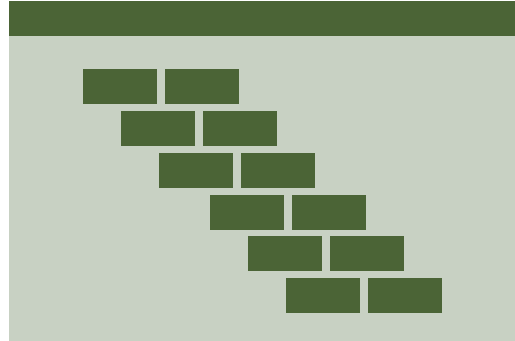
### Step 1: Introduce the Participation Ladder

🕒 DURATION: 5-10 MIN

Introduce the Participation Ladder and briefly explain each level of participation represented within the framework.

Invite participants to reflect on:

- where they currently position themselves within their initiative(s),
- how much influence or decision-making power they experience,
- how collaborative or participatory the process feels.



### Step 2: Position Yourself on the Ladder

🕒 DURATION: 10-15 MIN

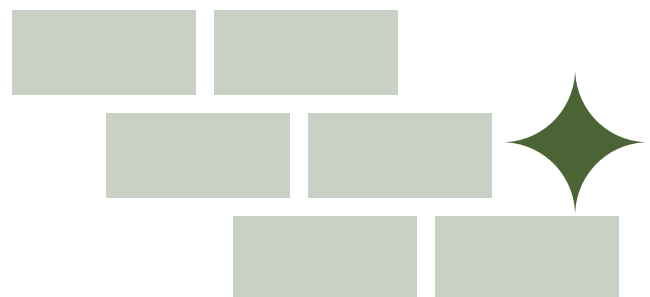
Invite participants to place themselves on the step that best represents their current level of involvement within the initiative or project.

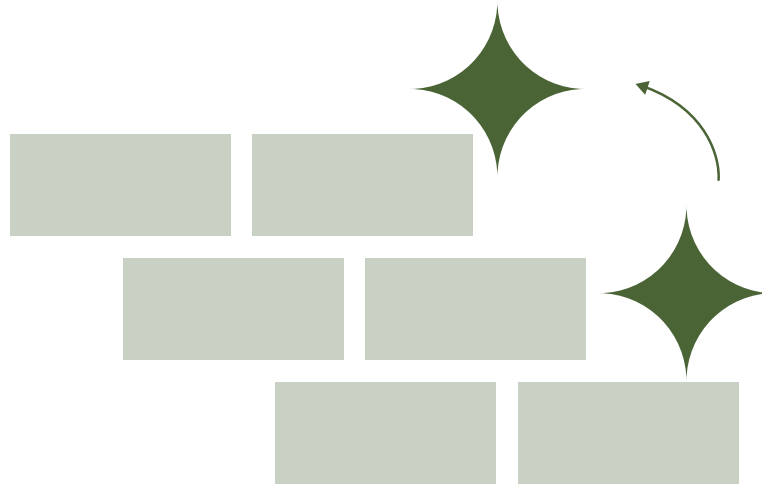
Participants involved in multiple initiatives may complete more than one participation ladder. They might also work in teams.

Encourage participants to consider:

- decision-making power,
- communication and collaboration,
- opportunities for contribution,
- recognition and ownership,
- relationships with staff, peers, or communities.

Participants may annotate their ladders using words, symbols, or notes.





### Step 3: Reflect on Movement and Change

 DURATION: 10-15 MIN

Invite participants to reflect individually or in pairs on:

- what has supported or limited their participation,
- where they would ideally like to be on the ladder,
- what changes might help deepen participation or collaboration,
- how participation has shifted over time.

Ask participants to identify at least one actionable step that could support movement towards their desired level of participation. This could include changes in communication, collaboration, decision-making, support structures, or opportunities for involvement.

Participants may write these actions directly onto their ladder template or on sticky notes for collective discussion.



### Step 4: Group Discussion and Collective Reflection

 DURATION: 15-20 MIN

Facilitate a group conversation around shared experiences, tensions, patterns, and insights emerging from the activity.

Possible prompts:

- What patterns do you notice across different projects or experiences?
- What supports meaningful participation?
- What barriers or challenges emerge?
- How can collaboration and co-creation be strengthened moving forward?

Encourage participants to share only what feels comfortable.

Participants may write on the large sheets of paper the actionable steps collectively produced.

# Indication stars



Cut out these stars and they can be used by participants to indicate their position on the ladder during Step 2 and 3.

