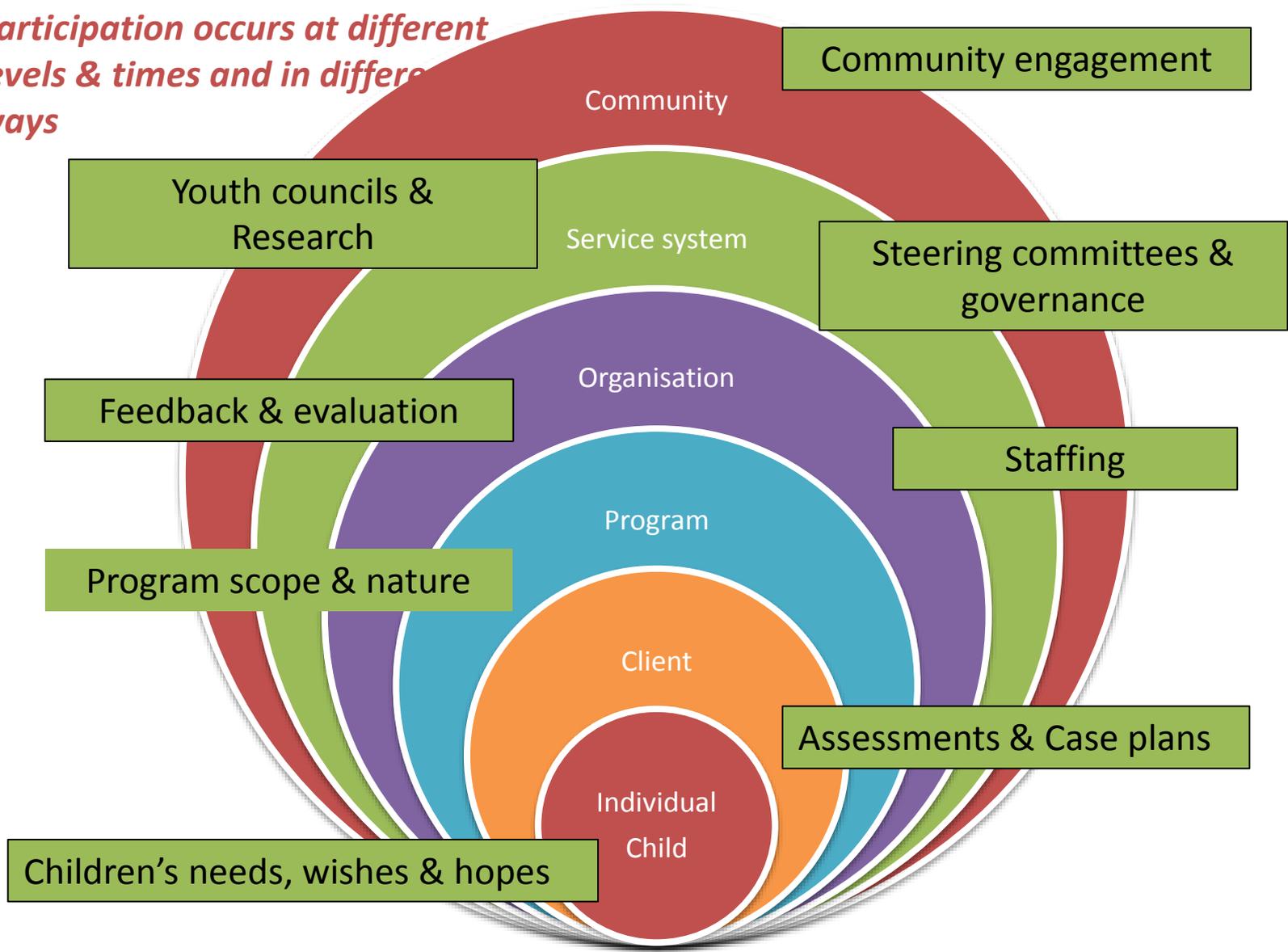




'Keeping Kids Central' Child Aware Conference 2014

Tim Moore, Morag McArthur & Debbie Noble-Carr
Institute of Child Protection Studies

*Participation occurs at different
levels & times and in different
ways*



Participation is...

- **Good for clients**

- Service is more responsive
- Service meets broader needs

- **Good for staff**

- Increased job satisfaction
- Increase sense of worth
- Increased collegiality

- **Good for program**

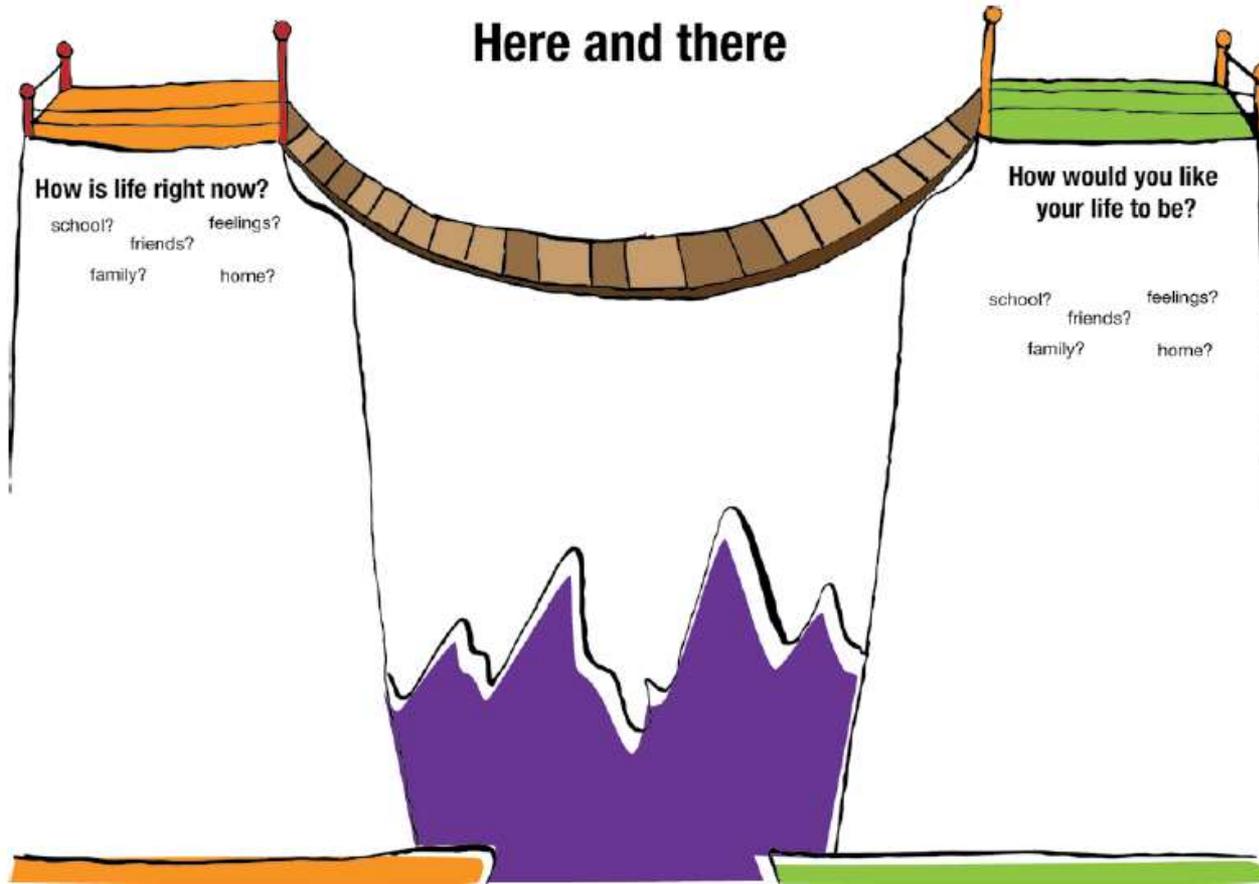
- Better outcomes
- Lower staff turnover
- More attractive for funding
- Greater sense of team accomplishment

- **Good for managers and organisations**

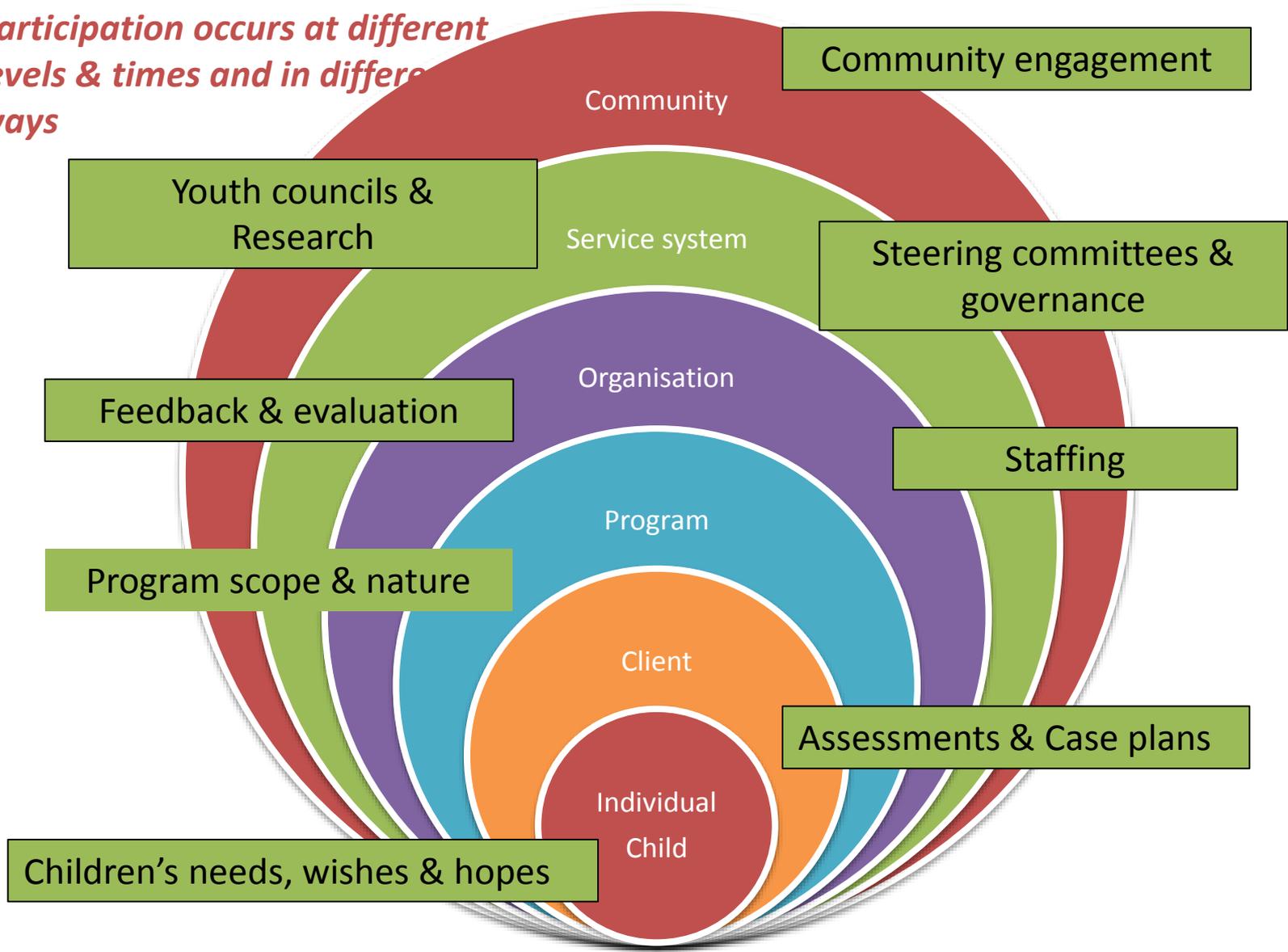


Rights and 'Not Quite Rights'

Here & there



*Participation occurs at different
levels & times and in different
ways*



Participation exists in day-to-day practice

STRATEGIES:

- Write participation into job descriptions and performance contracts;
- Ensure that all programs are passed by children and young people; and
- Allocate time to reflect on how successful you have been implementing participation.

"It is clear that listening to children, hearing children, and acting on what children say are three very different activities... There have always been people who have listened, sometimes there have been people who have heard, and perhaps less often, those who have acted wisely on what children have had to say"

Roberts 2000



Participation occurs at every stage of program development and delivery

- Participation occurs at:
 - Needs Assessment
 - Program Development
 - Community Ed & Advocacy
 - Program Implementation
 - Program Evaluation
 - Re-assessment of Need

STRATEGIES:

- Steering Committee supported by:
 - Focus groups
 - Questionnaires
 - “Research Teams”
 - Consumer feedback



Participation opportunities are accessible

It's like they don't wanna know about us cos we cant read or write or cos they reckon what we've got to say is not as good.
(Susan, 15years)



STRATEGIES:

- Use a variety of mechanisms;
- Use young people as gatherers and train them up;
- Don't make participation trivial;
- Develop collaborations with other agencies to maximise access;
- Take into account barriers (ie transport, time, respite); and
- Make sure that participation is accessible to broad groups.

Children & young people feel comfortable participating

STRATEGIES:

- Using spaces that are youth and child-friendly;
- Avoid unnecessary formality;
- Avoid exclusive language;
- Provide background info so that they can prepare;
- Recognise & acknowledge all participants (don't tokenise young people's experience); and
- Don't patronise or down-play experiences and insights.



Nah, that's crap. **They need to feel safe but that's not gonna happen if no one talks to 'em or helps 'em know what's going on.** Its gonna make 'em feel worse, kinda invisible, that no-one cares. Cos they've probably seen it all anyway **but no-one's talked to 'em so they're probably thinking all this way out there shit like its there fault or something when its not.** Nah, man, **they're not protecting nobody.** (17yr old male, *What young people want*)

Participation should adapt to children and young people's ways of working



More often than not organisations try to fit children and young people into a decision-making framework designed by and for adults.

(NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People)

STRATEGIES:

- Appoint a child / YP co-chair;
- Recognise “experts”;
- Use appropriate language;
- Choose youth-friendly spaces; and
- Provide background information.

Develop ongoing relationships

STRATEGIES:

- Have an open-door policy;
- Appoint a staff contact person;
and
- Have get-to-know-ya sessions with staff prior to involvement.

Children and young people see the world through their relationships with others. The stronger these relationships the easier and more actively they participate in their world.

Sharing the Stage 2002



Respect and reward participation



They must feel that their time and effort is valued...

STRATEGIES:

- Identify and celebrate outcomes;
- Provide training;
- Provide incentives;
- Publicly acknowledge participation; and
- Provide feedback.

Evaluate participation

STRATEGIES:

- ◎ Develop clear complaints mechanisms that are accessible;
- ◎ Regularly review - preferably by YP or externally; and
- ◎ Develop clear and varied evaluation mechanisms.



What does it look like?

- Is based on **choice**;
- Is **enjoyable, challenging and fun**;
- Is **relevant**;
- Raises **awareness**;
- Involves **training** and **skills development**;
- Provides **ongoing support**;
- Develops **belonging & ownership**;
- Provides a **sense of security & value**;
- **Responds to barriers** to young people's involvement (time, location, transport etc); and
- **Constantly reviewed**.



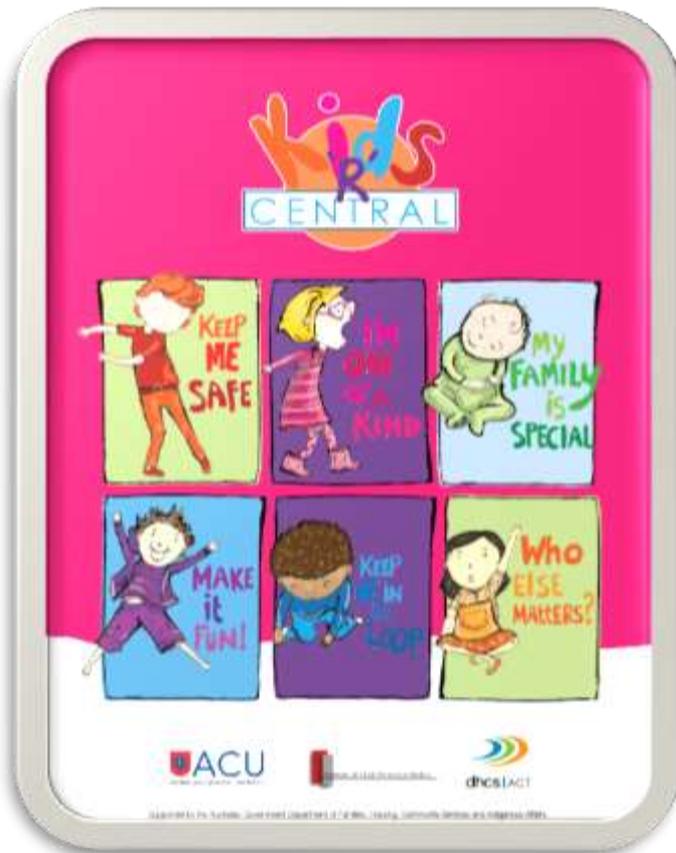
Participation leads to change

- “They expect us to put in so much effort, its such a drain, but then they don’t do anything with it.” (They’ve gotta listen)

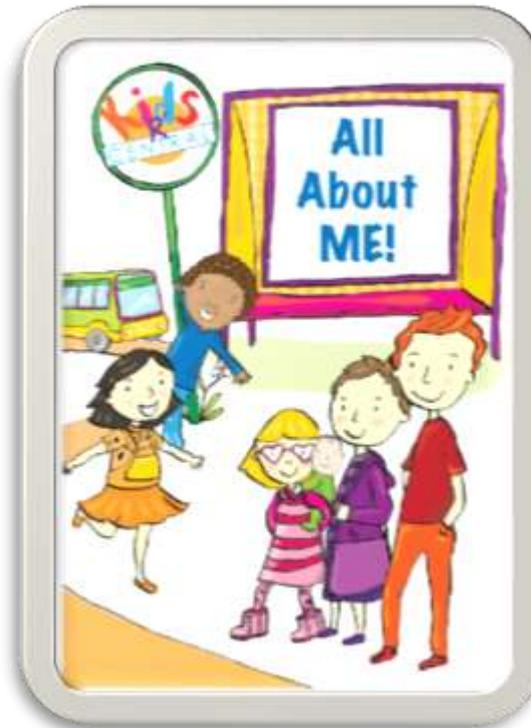


Kids Central

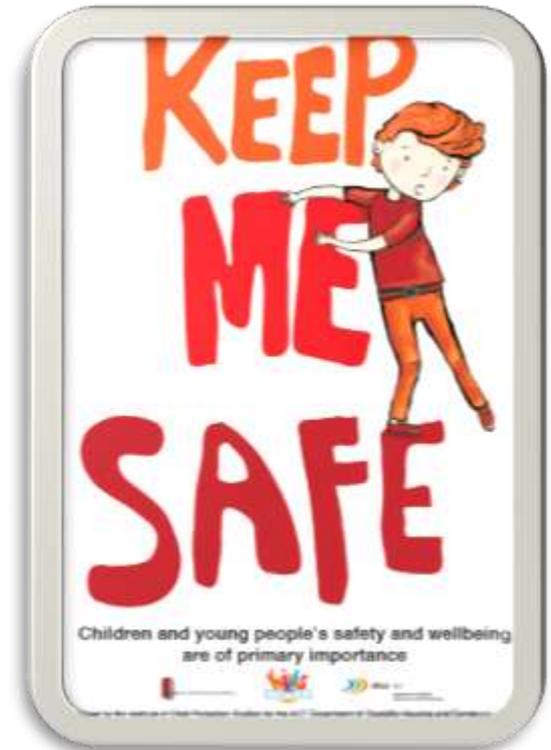
6x Guides



1x Assessment Guide



7x Posters



The resource

6 x Guides

- Stories from children: “why is this message important?”
- Guides: “what do we know?”
- Tips “what can we do?”
- Case studies: “what would we do?”
- Pulse checks: “how are we doing?”

