



Copyright © 2017 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports

<http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/>

Journal of Youth Researches • July 2017 • 5(12) • 33-46

ISSN 2147-8473

Received | 11 June 2017

Accepted | 19 June 2017

# Rethinking Youth Participation For Social Development and Community Strengthening

***Angela S. Bushati\****

## **Abstract**

Youth participation constitutes an essential process for promoting access to citizenship rights and particularly in terms of community development. So far, there has been little study in terms of youth participation in different matters and dimensions. Building on the notion of youth participation and empowerment, this paper tries to argue on the importance of youth involvement in the process of decision making regarding issues that affect their life. Young people are particularly capable of engaging in decision making processes, but this ability is often denied from parents, teachers, stakeholders or other adults because they often do not consider youth as being capable enough to be able to make decisions or take responsibility. One of the main objectives of this paper is to show how such conceptualizations towards youth participation can be very frustrating or detrimental towards their individuality. The paper proposes a few recommendations in regards to youth participation especially focusing on community engagement. In addition, social awareness, education and strengthening youth /adult relationships are central in the process of overcoming the imbalance of power and promoting agency.

**Keywords:** Youth Participation, Empowerment, Social Awareness, Education, Agency, Adult/Youth Relationship, Community Development

\* Freie Universität, Fachbereich Erziehungswissenschaft und Psychologie (Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychologie), Berlin, Germany, Angela\_Angelica\_Bushati@hotmail.com



Copyright © 2017 T.C. Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı  
http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/  
Gençlik Araştırmaları Dergisi • Temmuz 2017 • 5(12) • 34-46

ISSN 2147-8473  
Başvuru | 11 Haziran 2017  
Kabul | 19 Haziran 2017

TARAMA/DERLEME

# Toplumsal Gelişme ve Toplumun Güçlendirilmesi Konusunda Gençliğin Katılımı Üzerine Yeniden Düşünmek

**Angela S. Bushati\***

## Öz

Gençlik katılımı toplumun gelişmesi ve vatandaşlık haklarının kullanımı bakımından önemli süreçlerdir. Bugüne kadar gençlik katılımının farklı konuları ve boyutları ile ilgili çok az çalışma yapılmıştır. Gençlik katılımı ve güçlendirilmesi kavramı üzerine değinen bu çalışma gençliğin hayatlarını etkileyecek konularda karar verme mekanizmalarına katılımının önemini tartışmaktadır. Gençlik karar verme mekanizmalarına katılabilme yetkinliğine sahiptir ve bu yetkinlik sıklıkla ebeveynler, öğretmenler ve diğer yetişkinler tarafından karar verme ve sorumluluk alma konularında yeterince yetkin olmadıkları gerekçesiyle reddedilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amaçlarından biri gençlik katılımına yönelik bu kavram-sallaştırmaların gençliğin bireyselliği için nasıl hayal kırıklığı yaratıcı olduğunu göstermektir. Çalışma gençlik katılımı konusunda bazı öneriler sunmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak, toplumsal bilinç, eğitim, genç-yetişkin ilişkisinin güçlendirilmesi kavramlarının toplumsal kılıcılığın gelişmesi ve gücün denge-lenmesi için temel süreçler olduğu belirtilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gençlik Katılımı, Güçlendirme, Toplumsal Bilinç, Eğitim, Kılıcılık, Yetişkin/Genç İlişkisi, Toplumun Gelişimi

\* Freie Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Psikoloji Bölümü, Berlin, Almanya, Angela\_Angelica\_Bushati@hotmail.com

## Introduction

In the last decades, there has been a greater focus on the notion of “youth” and as a result, new ways have emerged towards conceptualizing of what “youth” means and how its role can be redefined within the structures of the society. Perceptions towards young people and their involvement in the society has evolved throughout history. Youth has been problematized and been identified as both “the cause and victims of various social problems, ranging from ‘spiraling’ juvenile crime to economic crises, to ‘epidemic of delinquency’ ” (Bessant, 2003: 88) and in addition youth has also been designated as a “as a key solution to an array of problems and have thus figured prominently in proposals for remedial action and reform policies” (Hendrick, 1990, cited in Bessant, 2003:88). In the recent decades, however, youth has been the centre of a new emerging discourse on “youth at risk” and such rhetoric focuses on identifying behavioural factors that put young people in a determined state of risk, as well as proposing preventive interventions. Such risk situations include drug abuse, HIV exposure, violence, poverty etc. Duhn (2006:28) argues how the notion of ‘risk’ has become one of the truths of contemporary western societies and “the regimes of truths that surround ‘risk’ dominate global and national politics as well as everyday practices.” In this sense, youth has been affected by political rationalities, but at the same time functions as a technology of government, as Foucault would argue (see Foucault 1988, 1994a). Recent approaches towards ‘youth at risk’ have been recognizing the positive outcomes of youth participation, as an intervention strategy towards reducing risk factors for young people, as well as a way to empower and integrate youth within the nucleus of the society. It should be nevertheless mentioned that participation of children and young people in the process of decision-making is relatively new.

Youth is often denominated as the time when an individual is young, as well as the time between childhood and adulthood. Nevertheless, there is no specific definition of timing or age when youth is supposed to start or end and its consideration or approach towards it can vary according to different cultural and contextual perspectives across the globe. According to the United Nations, one general definition denominates “youth” as individuals between the age of 15 and 24 and this definition is mostly done for statistical purposes. On another level, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), every individual under the age of 18 years of age is considered as a child. The UN at the same time recognises that there exist multiple definitions within the UN bodies and that youth remains a concept that is followed by several definitions, which are also depending on culture, gender, etc. The place that young people and the category of youth in general occupies in the society can be regarded as a sort of mirror of the conceptualizations, social constructions and social policies that are being implemented towards youth. On

the other hand, and what is often failed to acknowledge, is the fact that youth occupies an important social role in the society in terms of exercising active citizenship and social equity in terms of participatory rights, and therefore, active youth participation needs to be better promoted. Having said all this, the paper will focus on the notion of participation, particularly referring to the ways how youth empowerment and youth participation contributes to community empowerment and well-being.

## **Youth Development and Participation**

With the emergence of the children's rights movement as well as more specifically youth rights movements, a much greater attention has been dedicated to the category of "adolescents" and "youth". The vision and vocabulary used towards youth have evolved on multiple levels that encircle the developmental system. Lerner et al. (2005:20) articulate on how "developmental systems theory stresses the inherent plasticity of human development, that is, the potential for systematic change throughout development". Such potential is hammered and constructed through mutual relationships between the developing individual and his nucleus, comprising the biological, psychological, ecological and historical level. When the interplays between the individual and environmental context result in mutually beneficial outcomes, this occurs as a result of adaptive developmental regulations that support such positive outcomes (Lerner et al, 2005:20). When the environment contributes to positive development, the individual is likely to develop a better set of assets and therefore, the society in general benefits as well. Bronfenbrenner (2005) argues about the bioecological theory of human development, where individuals and environments interact with each other contributing to development. The bioecological theory presents how "human development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: xxviii). The human characteristics get shaped and moulded in interaction with the inputs given from the environment, it is a mutual give and take relationship. The environment plays an important role starting early childhood and it impacts their development till they reach youth and adulthood. Lately, there has been evidenced that the way how young people might spend their time outside the frames of formal schooling might affect their development and specifically speaking about their interest in organised activities or youth organisations, which recently have been promoted in different pedagogical settings. Youth engagement and participation in extracurricular activities can result to be very beneficial on the developmental level. As Mahoney et al. (2006:3) argues how "research on organised activities has shown positive consequences of participation for academic, educational, social civic and physical development". In addition, research also shows that participation can be used as a strong tool to empower

and engage socially marginalized youth who is also often considered also at risk. As Yee (2008) argues, “youth organising has proven particularly effective at engaging diverse youth, particularly youth of color” (cited in Christens & Dolan, 2011: 529). Organised activities give often the chance to young people to express their opinions about important matters, as well as make them active in decision making processes. As a result, young people get to exercise power and agency and at the same time challenge other sources of power in order to make an impact and change realities in their communities or even larger scale. Such organisations, which focus their efforts for example on environmental, political, economic matters etc. can be of different nature. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is especially a great deal of effort needed in terms of environmental issues and the youth is central in such topics, since they are going to be the next generation that is going to take care of the planet. Environmental youth organisations have produced so far a great deal of positive effort towards ameliorating the situation of the environment as well as sensitising people from all age groups towards recycling or ecology.

Nevertheless, there seems to be also concern associated with youth that engages in organised activities, since a lot of parents or teachers fear that this might “overwhelm” young people and make them under feel under pressure or somehow inhibit their achieving abilities. On the other hand, a major concern refers to “over-scheduling”, which is designated as coming from adults’ general pressure in order to achieve good results in schools and attain long-term educational and career goals (Mahoney et al, 2002:3). On another level, especially referring to children and young people below the age of 18 years old, there is often the assumption that they are incapable of making their own decisions and judging according to their best interest and well-being. This argument is often used to prevent children or youth to take part in important issues that concern them directly and their participation rights are often denied. This aspect is particularly serious since it inhibits the ability of youth to be taken seriously when expressing ideas and trying to be part of important matters.

Turning to an important point, the right to participation is one of the main elements of taking part in decision making and be an active citizen who exercises rights. With the rise of the notion of youth rights, a bigger importance has been given to the participation of youth in the society. Participation constitutes an important basis regarding the creation of a democratic and tolerant society. In addition, it contributes to the youth well-being by taking in consideration their opinions and needs expressed in a direct way. Nevertheless, it can be stated that in most of the cases, the ideas and opinions of youth are rarely taken seriously in consideration. A lot of young people are barely asked regarding their daily routine, school work etc. and about what affects them. They are generally not involved enough or at all in the process of decision making and this starts since the early ages,

while they are children and continues till they reach the so called “phase of adulthood”. Before reaching this time, parents or adults are mainly those who take these decisions for them. This kind of approach can lead to neglecting the opinions of young people as well as how they perceive their reality.

The particular conditions, in which children live, especially in the public sector, are not taken into consideration, and this makes it impossible for their rights to be fulfilled” (Liebel, 2007: 59). Without children’s participation everything depends on adults decisions. Since these decisions concern the children’s interests and needs the first who should worry and take part in the decision making should be the children themselves. Furthermore, through participation people achieve their freedom of expression, and it also permits them to express their opinion openly without hesitation or concern. During the process of participation children gain experience, knowledge and self-involvement in the social world. Everyone should have the chance of expression and involvement with others. The opinions of young people should be taken under consideration when it comes to decision making for the improvement of the conditions that have to do with the environment or their personal lives.

There is often the idea that if you allow children to participate, adults will not be able to control them anymore. Permitting the child or adolescents to express himself/herself does not mean that the child will be deciding on everything and respectively leading to the loss of adult power. It is important that young people as well as children participate in the process of decision making and the decisions are taken in cooperation between the child and the parent. During the last few decades, a lot of schools have started to implement children’s participation through school councils and teachers try to bring information, also in accordance with the school curriculum, regarding children’s rights and youth rights in general. There is a general acknowledgement that participation helps in terms of development, but nevertheless, a lot of schools, media or the society in general lacks a deeper understanding of the right to participation. Nowadays, still many parents and adults in general do not give enough attention and space to the needs or opinions of young people and rather do what they think it is best for them.

The right to participation is a fundamental part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) and the UN in general, and stands at the core of human rights fulfillment, and as such, it requires a bigger emphasis and also a bigger commitment in order that a significant change takes place in terms of promoting youth agency and participation in decision making. Allowing children to participate is the first step to contributing to a general culture that promotes participation of all individuals in all phases of life, and such “participation rituals” should continue during youth as well. “It was for this rea-

son that the Committee on the Rights of the Child identified the right to participation as one of the guiding principles of the Convention. Participation is an underlying value that needs to guide the way each individual right is ensured and respected..." (UNICEF, 2013). Starting to invest on the right to participation since early ages constitutes an important milestone towards achieving human rights fulfillment in general and proper development on all levels.

## Youth Participation for Community Empowerment

Community strengthening requires the participation of all its members, both adults and young people. A commonly used definition of youth organisation is, "an innovative youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organising and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities" (Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organising [FCYO], 2009 ; cited in Christens & Dolan, 2011: 529). Collaboration between different age groups is quite beneficial seen from an educational perspective as well as from a developmental point of view. Building community youth groups and social organisations can contribute to positive change in many ways, especially if considering youth development and collaboration between its members for a better environment. Nonetheless, a lot of current policies all over the world do not seem to support enough structures within communities in order to facilitate participation and change. "The failure of current policy to address important quality of life issues for urban youth remains a substantial barrier to civic participation, educational equity, and healthy adulthood" (Ginwright et al., 2006). A major concern resides in the fact that a lot of young people do not find a lot of possibilities to express themselves in different social settings, such as the school environment which should be the first institution to promote and support youth participation.

The lack of access to express their opinions starts in the nucleus of the family and continues in the school environment. Skivenes & Strandbu (2006: 1-3) argue that for example children's capacities to make decisions are somehow not fully developed or encouraged from their environment. As a result, they depend on parents and also on the state which takes the decisions for them and decides what is best for them. The authors emphasise that it is important to consider the child as an active agent, as being and not becoming. Children are often viewed with a futuristic perceptivity. It is often the case that children are not considered mature enough like adults to express opinions or take decisions. Their voices are heard only once they are thought to have reached the state of adulthood. The same principles apply also to adolescents or young people in general, since they are still viewed as being still not yet ready for many important decisions. On the other hand, age

can be very relative when it comes to notions of maturity and responsibility. There are a lot of individuals that achieve maturity before the prescribed age, as there are also adults who do not fulfill the requirements of adulthood. There are often blurred lines between youth and adulthood which often cause frustration among youngsters, since their opinions are taken less under consideration than those of adults. The relation between young people and adults is framed with age segregation which “is extensive enough to deprive youth and adults to effective contact with another, yet not complete enough so that the young are required to establish institutions and activities to serve their own needs” (Coleman, 1974: 6). Children as well face the same age-segregation as youth. Lansdown (2001: V) argues that children have not been considered seriously and their voices have not been heard enough when thinking how society is organised or in the inter-personal relationships. What can be in general evidenced, especially in school environments, is this lack of consideration towards participation which is superficially understood.

The importance of youth participation for the development of communities and cities in general is much underestimated or ignored. Young people have the capacity to change their realities and exercise agency within their habitats and surroundings. Youth is encapsulated by a certain “elan” which often adults lack of and it is precisely this feature, making youth capable of changing things. They can be very zealous, enthusiastic and full of motivation to accomplish something that could be improving the society. Participating in substantial community matters and taking part in the process of problem solving helps young people develop better strategies and develop their critical thinking abilities. Incorporating participatory structures inside the educational environments is necessary, but these structures need to be present also outside the school walls, where young people can get to interact and get experienced in real life settings. Such settings can be community centers, sports centers, cinemas, libraries as well as other environments that encourage cooperation among youth. In addition, youth participation also contributes to well-being and as also argued by Park (2004: 26), the importance of positive well-being for mental health has long been recognised and it is related to healthy youth development. Strengthening youth participation means empowering the community where they live. The school needs to act as a sort of “agent” for the young people in favor of their interests and connecting them with other structures of the community.

Furthermore, the time accorded in schools for studying and learning needs to be balanced also with time that young people have the possibility to dedicate ideas and efforts to make their realities better for themselves, as well as for other members of their communities. There can be evidenced that with the emergence of youth organisations, as well as the empowerment of youth voices, an important shift occurs especially in the direction of young people constructing their own identities and experiences.



There exist certain rights of passage and transition from youth to adulthood, which include the progression from partial dependence from adults to being independent and capable of self-reliance. Nevertheless, nowadays the road to independence has become a little more complicated than previous generations and often young people do not easily find jobs that can sustain them fully and as a result they tend to also focus more on qualifications and getting a good education which will help them get access to opportunities. On the other hand, for many this is translated as a delayed access to adulthood. As Irwin argues, positioning the notion of youth between dichotomies becomes a “post hoc affair”. The author continues by arguing that “the difficulties of locating youth and transition in relation to general social arrangements have not been tackled head on” (Irwin, 2013: 3). The clash with adulthood often makes young people seem like they do not possess the capabilities that adults have already acquired. A lot of young people face difficulties especially in decision making since it is seen as a task which only adults should perform. This not only undermines young people but it also hinders the process of acquiring passage to adulthood and it inhibits their agency.

Youth should be the epitome of social change, but quite on the opposite, young people are often being portrayed as problematic or as sources of trouble. Adolescence is not even clear for many adults and it is often denominated as an “elusive period” in a life of an individual. The media, as well as schools, plays an important role in such portrayals and also inflicts a certain way of thinking or mindset. Although youth can be “ostracized” from adulthood, it does not mean that young people cannot perform important and serious tasks which require adult characteristics and maturity. Changing realities often means changing mindsets. Changing stereotypes towards youth and strengthening social structures that promote youth empowerment also means creating an environment for future generations not just as a future investment, but it means also treating youth as present beings instead of just seeing them as adult-becomings. Policy makers as well as stakeholders have an important role to play when it comes to creating the right environment and circumstances for young people to exercise agency and improve realities. Youth involvement in the cultural, economic, social etc. spheres is crucial for accessing new knowledge and personal development. But the conditions for participation are not always easy to be attained since everything depends on the context.

In addition, in order to promote participation and youth development, there needs to be initiatives which do not just promote a superficial form of participation, but instead a kind of participation which results as truly beneficial in terms of encouraging participants to change things around them and make them feel motivated for intergenerational and cultural exchange. Christens & Dolan (2011: 528) notes that “community organising groups that have built coalitions for local change over the past few decades are now involving

young people as leaders in efforts to improve quality of life". Moreover, the authors elaborate how their study shows how community organising groups are effective and how they produce impacts on multiple levels: youth and community development make an impact on the social aspect by producing change and it is all interwoven in a unified way (Christens & Dolan, 2011: 528-530). Engaging youth in civil society matters not only should be a priority in terms of youth policies but it should start first of all within the embryo of the family where adults and young people exchange their opinions. On another level, schools catalyse social change as well as institutions and therefore a major mentality shift towards youth participation is necessary in order to fulfill the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which involves building creative new solutions for communities all together, especially by including young people in decision making.

## **Discussion**

The right to participation constitutes the basis for healthy democratic societies, where everyone is able to contribute with ideas and collectively build better solutions for our environments. It is important to understand that children are not born with participation skills, but they will learn it through a gradual and systemic system which evolves through the process of socializing. Shier (2009: 35) notes that the individual acquires the capacity to participate in early years and particularly referring to contexts such as family and school. The author writes that "as adults, we must facilitate conditions so that these capacities and competences are developed: self-expression, opinion, communication, access to information and knowledge, decision-making. Thus participation is an educational process." Therefore, promoting awareness and information towards children's rights as well as youth rights is a key factor that helps in the implementation process of children's rights but also of human rights in general.

In addition, it is important to understand that the hearing of children and youth voices is beneficial for their wellbeing and has positive consequences for later years. The voices of young people should be heard, and this has to happen in a dynamic process of dialogue and exchange between both the actors. Hearing young people's voices and respecting what they have to say contribute to the increasing of their agency, as well as encourage them to be active citizens. In this process, young people socialise and learn the essentials of decision making, which are such an essential component for a well-functioning society. Moreover, "the well-being of youth who do not participate in organised activities is reliably less positive compared to youth who do participate" (Mahoney et al. 2002:3).

Although often treated with superficiality and as an underestimated subject, the right to participation is one of the most important rights that guide all other human rights. Without

the participation of youth in the process of decision making, there would be a lack of understanding towards young people's inner world and their experiences or subjectivities. There are a variety of ways how youth can participate in the community and contribute to its development. One example would be to use the "Photovoice" strategy through which young people take photographs and engage in community issues through critical dialogue and discussions through photographs (Wang, 2006:147). This method is particularly beneficial in terms of promoting community well-being as well as youth participation. In addition, young people can learn to identify new issues which are often not visible and help find solutions in collaboration with adults of the community or stakeholders in order to make a difference in their environment. Involving young people by including them in local and community initiatives contributes to their empowerment and in addition it "can create feelings of solidarity and respect for the environment, for public institutions, and for the public authorities that run and serve them" (Driskell, 2002:14). "Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth" from David Driskell (2002) provides substantial research on the importance of involving young people in decision making and it can be used as a tool for participatory projects through the help of children and youth for community development.

There are also other forms of youth organisations which serve different scopes, such as involving youth in environmental projects for example, that promote awareness and allow young people to discuss and find solutions with stakeholders and execute real life projects. Other initiatives could help young people of disadvantaged neighborhoods or communities to build sustainable solutions in terms of infrastructure, helping people in need or other forms of community services which face problems. Participating and having goals for a common cause has a positive affect and might also bring life satisfaction for young people and as shown by research this could "mitigate the negative effects of stressful life events and work against the development of psychological and behavioral problems among youth. Supportive parenting, engagement in challenging activities, positive life events, and high-quality interactions with significant others contribute to the development of life satisfaction". (Park, 2004:25). Moreover, getting involved in community issues not only boost self-esteem or satisfaction but also contributes to empowerment. Following Paulo Freire's philosophy, education and "the participation of people in group actions and dialogue efforts directed at community targets enhances control and beliefs in ability to change people's own lives" (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988: 379).

It could be concluded that there is a need for a better understanding of the practices in schools regarding youth rights and what happens regarding participation in general. Of particular interest would be also interviewing in the future teachers or parents views regarding their thinking towards youth's ability to participate or contribute meaningfully in

decision making and how they help youth in order to promote youth participation and agency. Moreover, it would be interesting to question youth opinions and experiences and especially from youth who do not come from privileged circumstances or youth belonging to specific communities such as Roma Youth. Social factors such as gender, ethnicity, class etc. play an important role also in different degrees that youth might exercise their rights or have knowledge more specifically about participation. In some regions, where income is very small and patriarchal forms of family are still existent, possibilities for youth to participate still remain very limited. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that although the notion of participation seems quite ubiquitous and it appears on all levels of concern from most policy makers and stake holders, it should not be forgotten that the way it is implemented and put to life on the ground, is really what makes the difference. Therefore, youth participation should not just be considered but also practiced through youth directly, by giving them access to resources and be granted a “carte blanche”, as well as power to act.

## **Conclusion**

The UN does indeed take under consideration youth participation, but nevertheless better attention should be provided by state parties and stakeholders towards the enforcement and the promotion of young people’s right to participation. As all other youth rights, the right to participation is crucial and should not be ignored, since this right is deeply related and works along with all other rights. If the right to participation is not taken under consideration, the voice of youth will not be heard and the opportunity to understand their needs and their best interest will not be put to life. In addition, it should be well considered that adults needs to learn how to leave space and cooperate more closely with young people in order to allow them to change their realities and make an impact in their environments. Youth organisations are a good form of youth participation since they allow young spirits to discover new solutions in a creative and collaborative way and achieve new skills and knowledge by exercising practical participation in decision making processes.

In conclusion, what should be considered the most, is the lack of knowledge and information given to youth in general regarding their rights and how they can bring change into their realities. This needs to be improved, probably by better training of both parents and teachers, but also a greater awareness of the right to participation in the society in general.

## Kaynakça/References

- Bessant, J. (2003). Youth participation: a new mode of government. *Policy studies*, 24(2-3), 87-100.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Sage.
- Coleman, J. S. (1974). Youth: Transition to adulthood. *NASSP Bulletin*, 58(385), 4-11.
- Christens, B. D., & Dolan, T. (2011). Interweaving youth development, community development, and social change through youth organising. *Youth & Society*, 43(2), 528-548.
- Driskell, D. (2002). *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation*. Stylus Publishing, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166-2012.
- Duhn, I. (2006). *Cartographies of childhood: Mapping the modern/global child* (Doctoral dissertation, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).
- Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: a seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (1994a). Governmentality. In J. Faubion (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: power. Essential works of Foucault 1954 - 1984*(pp. 201-222). London: Penguin Books.
- Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J., & Noguera, P. (2006). *Beyond resistance!*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Irwin, S. (2013). *Rights of passage: Social change and the transition from youth to adulthood* (Vol. 4). Routledge.
- Lansdown, G. (2001). Promoting children's participation in democratic decision-making. Florence, Italy: Innocenti Research Center, UNICEF.
- Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., ... & Smith, L. M. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71.
- Liebel, M. (2007). Paternalism, participation and children's protagonism. *Children, Youth and Environments* 17(2): 56-73.
- Mahoney, J. L., Harris, A. L., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Organised Activity Participation, Positive Youth Development, and the Over-Scheduling Hypothesis. Social Policy Report. Volume 20, Number 4. *Society for Research in Child Development*.
- Park, N. (2004). The role of subjective well-being in positive youth development. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 25-39.
- Shier, H. (2009) 'Children as Public Actors: Navigating the Tensions'. *Children and Society* (online early view, published January 2009)(Last accessed 25 June, 2009).
- Skivenes, M. and Strandbu, A. (2006). A child perspective and children's participation. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 16(2): 10-27.
- Wallerstein, N., & Bernstein, E. (1988). Empowerment education: Freire's ideas adapted to health education. *Health Education & Behavior*, 15(4), 379-394.

- Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth participation in photovoice as a strategy for community change. *Journal of community practice*, 14(1-2), 147-161.
- **Other resources**
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989). <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx> Consulted on 13.05.2017
- What do we mean by youth? Learning to live together - UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/> Consulted on 13.05.2017
- UNICEF. (2003). *For Every Child Health, Education, Equality, Protection*. UNICEF report. <https://www.unicef.org/sowc03/contents/pdf/SOWC03-eng.pdf> Consulted on 13.05.2017