

Positive Youth Development: Conceptualization and Empirical Evidence



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PEDAGOŠKI INŠTITUT



Univerza v Mariboru
Filozofska fakulteta

SLODRE

SLOVENSKO DRUŠTVO RAZVOJALCEV NA PODROČJU IZOBRAŽBE



ARRS
JAVNA AGENCIJA ZA RAZISKOVALNO DEJAVNOST
REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE



Universitetet i Bergen

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Presentation Outline

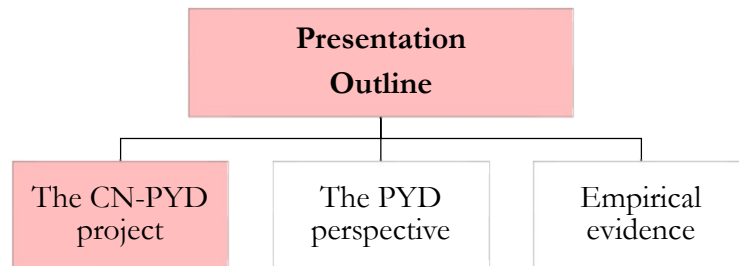
The CN-PYD
project

The PYD
perspective

Empirical
evidence

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The Cross-National PYD Project

Initiated in **2014**

Involves **40 countries** across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America, many **majority world research partners** and **samples**

Over 15,000 adolescents and emerging adults have participated so far

Mainstream & minority youth

Theoretical framework, **empirical** research, and **practical** application

Expertise from **human development**, **intervention** and **implementation science**

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**PYD Project Team Partners are located in these Countries
(with the red dot)**



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After several years of data collection by partners, focus has shifted to collaborative Writing Projects on the Positive Development of Diverse Youth.



Special Issue
on PD,
Vol. 48
(Published in
2019)



PYD in a
Global Context
(Published in
2021)



Intersections between
PD and Mental Health in
Diverse Youth
(Completed one; another
in progress)

PYD projects

- PYD Handbook and book on the PD of Roma Youth (forthcoming)
- SIs by Partners
- Individual articles
- Collaborative, national and cross-national grant applications
- Partner work groups on research, teaching, & intervention/policy

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Research Topics

Developmental assets
5Cs and Contribution
Thriving and Health behaviors
Identity development
Job crafting behaviors
Environmental concerns
Hope, Purpose in life
Mindfulness, Creativity
Mental health

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Some of the Partners



Nora Wiium, PI
Ghana & Norway



**Radosveta
Dimitrova**
Bulgaria & Italy



Ana Kozina
Slovenia



Alejandra Dominguez
Mexico



Fitim Uka,
Kosovo



Laura Ferrer-Wreder
Sweden



Bin-Bin Chen
China



**Margarida
Gaspar de Matos**
Portugal



Byron Adams
South Africa

Presentation Outline

The CN-PYD
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The Positive Youth Development perspective

PYD as a
**developmental
process**

PYD as a
philosophy or
approach to youth
programming

PYD as instances of
youth programs

- Conceptualization of the PYD perspective (*Burkhard et al., 2019*)

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A selection of the theoretical frameworks we use in our research!

- Search Institute & Benson's Developmental Assets
- Lerner's 5Cs of PYD



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But first,

how **adolescents** or
youth have been
viewed.



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Historical perspectives on adolescents

- Inclined to **contradict** their parents and **intimidate** their teachers (*Socrates*).
- Naturally **hot tempered** (*Aristotle*, cited in Arnett, 1999).
- **Antisocial behaviour**: I would there were **no age between *ten* and *three-and-twenty***, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancients, stealing, fighting ... (*William Shakespeare - The Winter's Tale*).
- An inevitable period of **developmental disturbance** in moods, family, and peer relationships (Anna Freud, 1969).
- Granville Stanley Hall's (1904) theory and research on adolescents have been that of **storm and stress**.



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**Research, programs and views on youth have adopted
the deficit model!**

BUT

- **Prevention** is **not** promotion.
- **Problem free** is **not** fully prepared.
- **Fully prepared** is **not** fully engaged.

Pittman, Irby & Ferber (2001)

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**Search Institute & Peter Benson's (2007)
Developmental Assets Framework for Positive Development**

Internal Assets

- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Social competencies
- Positive identity

**Skills, resources
& opportunities
that youth need
to thrive.**

External Assets

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries & Expectations
- Constructive use of time

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Internal assets - Search Institute & Peter Benson's (2007)

Commitment to learning

- Achievement Motivation
- School Engagement
- Homework
- Bonding to School
- Reading for Pleasure

Social competencies

- Planning and Decision Making
- Interpersonal Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Resistance Skills
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Positive values

- Caring
- Equality and Social Justice
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Restraint

Positive identity

- Personal Power
- Self-Esteem
- Sense of Purpose
- Positive View of Personal Future

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External assets - Search Institute & Peter Benson's (2007)

Support

- Family Support
- Positive Family Communication
- Other Adult Relationships
- Caring Neighborhood
- Caring School Climate
- Parent Involvement in Schooling

Boundaries & Expectations

- Family Boundaries
- School Boundaries
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Adult Role Models
- Positive Peer Influence
- High Expectations

Empowerment

- Community Values Youth
- Youth as Resources
- Service to Others
- Safety

Constructive use of time

- Creative Activities
- Youth Programs
- Religious Community
- Time at Home

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40 Developmental assets

Embedded features

Eight asset categories (*4 internal assets & 4 external assets*)

Assets in **five different contexts** (*Personal, Social, Family, School & Community*)

Universal (applicable in diverse settings/cultures)

Shared vision and responsibility

Vertical pileup, horizontal stacking & developmental breath

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Developmental Assets - **Most recent development** (Syvertsen et al., 2021)

Internal Assets

- Academic engagement
- Positive identity
- Positive values
- Social competencies

External Assets

- Support
- Mattering and belonging
- Boundaries
- Extracurricular activity participation

*A Rose by any
other name would
smell as sweet.*



For details see:

Amy K. Syvertsen, Peter C. Scales & Russell B. Toomey (2021). Developmental Assets framework revisited: Confirmatory analysis and invariance testing to create a new generation of assets measures for applied research, *Applied Developmental Science*, 25:4, 291-306, DOI: 10.1080/10888691.2019.1613155

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Behaviours, programmes and policies that nurture developmental assets (Benson, 2007)

- **Asset-building community**

- Engagement, programmes, community support (*behaviours & programmes in community*).

- **Asset-building society**

- Social norms, public policy, rituals and media promoting the asset-building capacity of individuals, systems and communities (*norms, values, rules, regulations, policies supporting the behaviours & programmes*).

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Benson's (2007) Eight thriving (PYD) indicators

- Succeeds in school
- Helps others
- Values diversity
- Maintains good health
- Exhibits leadership
- Resists danger
- Overcomes adversity
- Delays gratification



- Indicators are not only useful during adolescence but also facilitate a healthy transition into adulthood.

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The 5 (Five) Cs within the Relational Developmental Systems Model

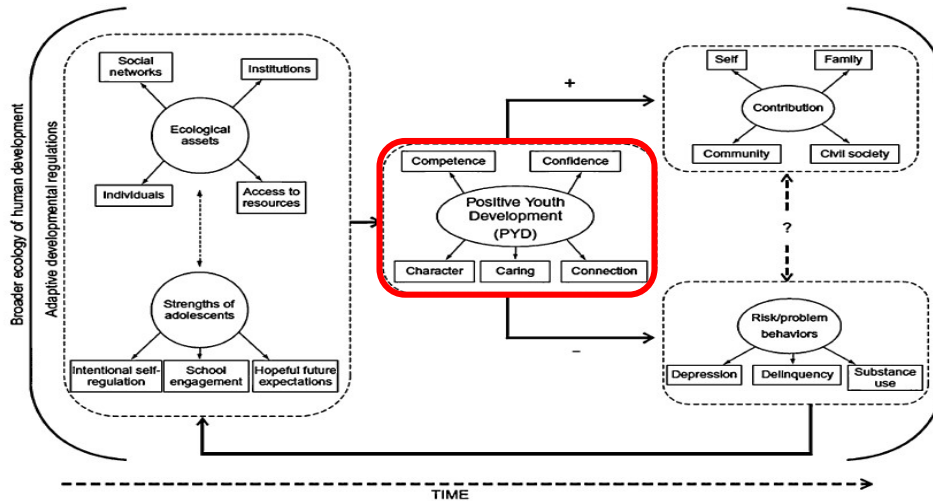


Figure: Directly from Lerner et al., 2017, p. 8

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PYD indicators

The 5 (five) Cs

- PYD outcomes (**the 5Cs**; *Lerner et., 2017*)
 - **Competence** (academic, social, vocational skills)
 - **Confidence** (a sense of **mastery** and **future, positive identity, self-worth, self-efficacy**)
 - **Connection** (healthy relation to community, friends, family, school)
 - **Character** (*integrity*, moral commitment, personal values, interpersonal values and skills, *respect* for societal and cultural rules, **spirituality** ...)
 - **Caring/Compassion** (empathy, sympathy ...)
- ❖ Thriving puts the young person on a life trajectory towards an “*idealized adulthood*”.
- ❖ Grow up *competent* and *healthy* and develop to their *full potential*.

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PYD indicators

The 6Cs and 7Cs

- **The 6th C - Contribution** (actions that add positively to the well-being of self, family, community and civil society – i.e., active and engaged citizenship) (*Lerner et al., 2017*).
- **The 7th C - Creativity** (fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality, risk taking, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, *Reisman et al., 2016; Dimitrova et al., 2021*).

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The 5 (Five) Cs within the Relational Developmental Systems Model

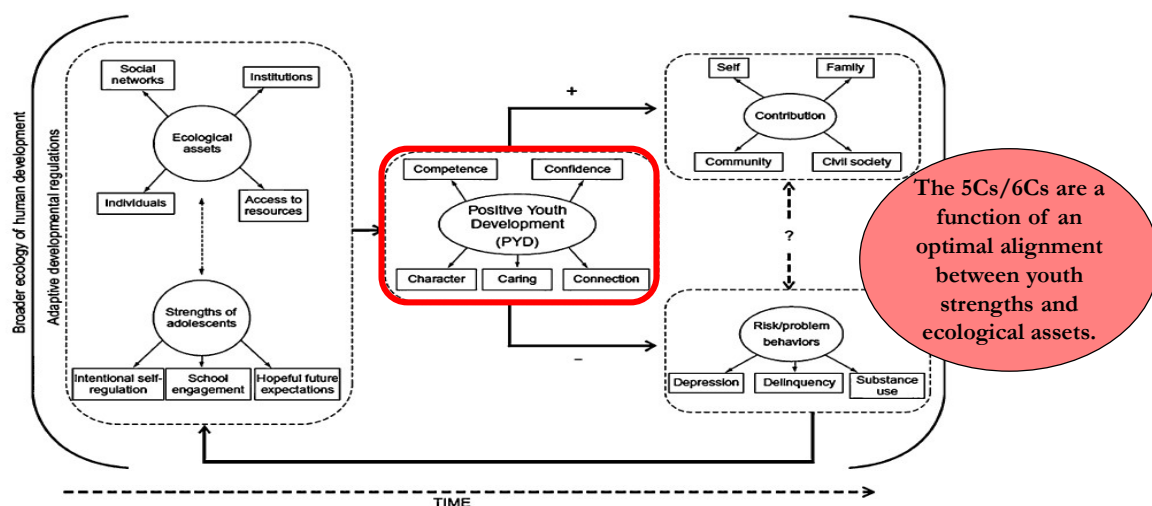
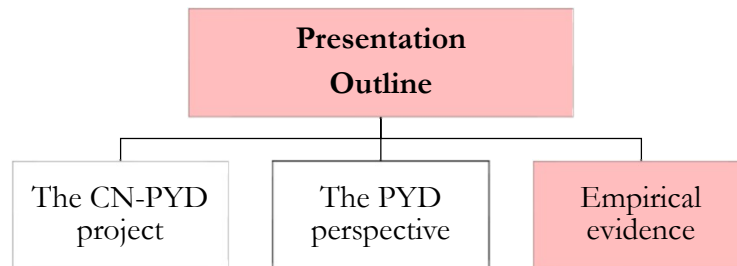


Figure: Directly from Lerner et al., 2017, p. 8

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Country Contexts and Developmental Assets

Country and Gender Differences in **Developmental Assets** Among Youth and Emerging Adults in **Ghana and Norway**. (*Wiiium & Kozina, 2021*)

Aim	<p>Across varying cultural and political contexts, how are assets reported by youth and emerging adults? With implications for informing Asset-building communities; Main construct: Self-reported developmental assets</p>
Sample & Data Collection	<p>Ghanaian (n = 483, 62% females) Norwegian (n = 625, 74% females) - All first-year university students</p> <hr/> <p>Data was collected in academic year 2014/2015. Main analysis approaches were factorial ANCOVA analyses with Bonferroni correction (after an initial measurement invariance testing).</p>

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Cultural and Political Contexts in Ghana & Norway

Ghana

- **National youth policy** introduced in 2010 to **empower youth** with skills; some focus on youth context, governance towards decentralization
- **Collective**, high on power distance
- Global **Gender Gap** index - 89 of 149 countries

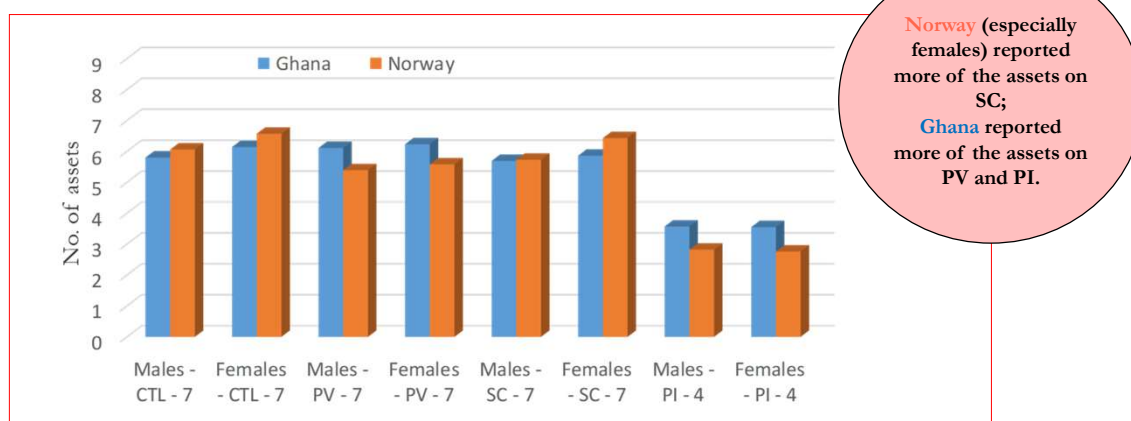
Norway

- **National youth policy** from 2002 focus on youth and youth contexts, **grassroot decentralized** governance
- **Individualistic**, feminine
- Global **Gender Gap** index - 2 of 149 countries

Wium, & Kozina, 2021

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Internal Assets as Reported by First-year University Students in Ghana and Norway

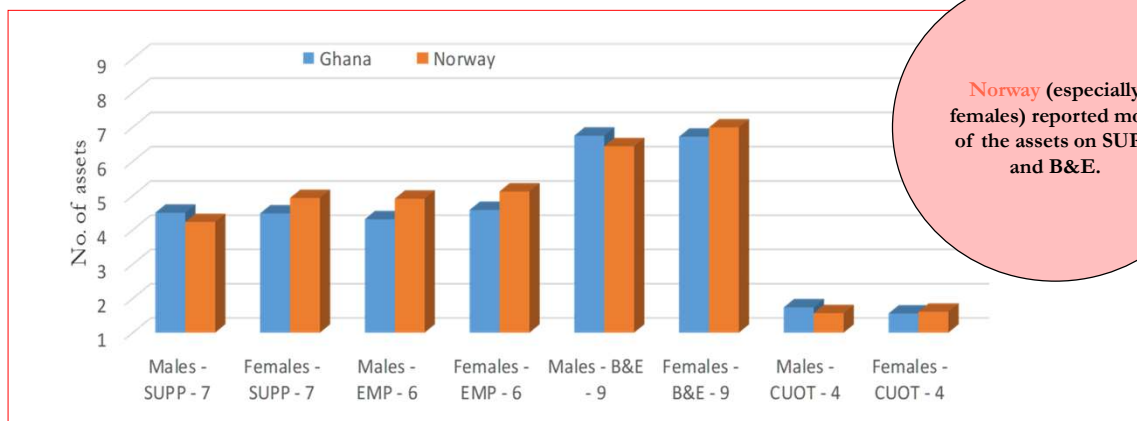


Note: CTL – Commitment to learn; PV – Positive values; SC – Social competencies; PI – Positive identity.

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External Assets as Reported by First-year University Students in Ghana and Norway



Note: SUPP – Support; EMP – Empowerment;
B&E – Boundaries & Expectations; CUOT – Constructive use of time

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Implications

- **Benson's 40 developmental assets** offers a potentially **effective tool** (showing largely adequate psychometrics and measurement invariance across samples) **to assess youth development** and guide youth initiatives **in diverse settings**.
- **Varying assets** were **reported** across samples **implying that the context-person interactions** in these settings may **favor** the development of **some assets** over others.
- More needs to be done to **nurture developmental assets**, especially **external assets** in **Ghana** and **internal assets** in **Norway**.

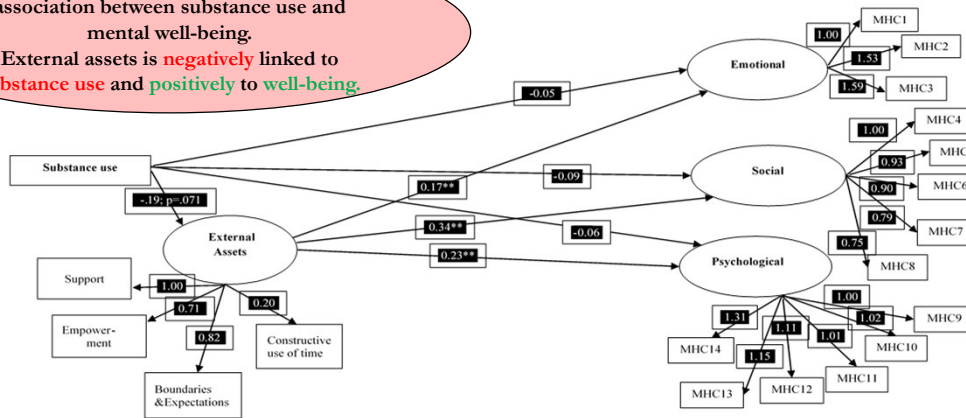
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Association between Substance Use Behaviors, External Assets and Mental Health in Latin American Young College Students. *Manrique-Millones et al. (2021).*

No indirect effect of external assets on the association between substance use and mental well-being.

External assets is **negatively** linked to **substance use** and **positively** to **well-being**.



Note. Unstandardized Coefficients from Mplus SEM Analysis (controlled for age, gender, religion, father and mother's education)

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Implications

- That **internal assets are stronger predictors** compared to external assets could reflect asset-building communities in the Latin American context that do not readily nurture external assets
- An intervention package that can nurture **developmental assets** may **protect Latin American youth from risk factors** as well as **enhance their mental wellbeing**.

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The 7Cs of PYD and Developmental Assets in Three Asian LAMICs

The **7Cs** and **Developmental Assets** Models of Positive Youth Development in
India, Indonesia and Pakistan (*Dimitrova et al., 2021*)

Sample & Data Collection

Examined the relations between PYD indicators, the Assets model and Hope;
With implications for informing important components of healthy development;
Main construct: **Self-reported developmental assets, the 7Cs (the 5Cs + Contribution) and Hope.**

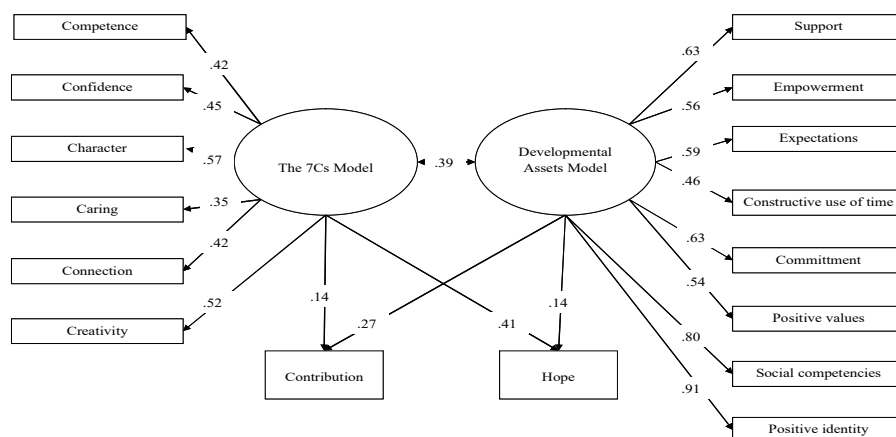
India (n = 218, 50% girls)
Indonesia (n = 234, 86% girls)
Pakistan (n = 400; 59% girls)

Data was collected in 2018.
Main analysis approaches were **SEM analyses** (after an initial measurement invariance testing).

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Relations between the 7Cs, Developmental Assets and Hope in India, Indonesia and Pakistan



Note. All factor-loadings represent standardized coefficients for the measurement weights model and are significant at $p < .001$.

Positive
relations found
between the
7Cs, **Asset**
model and
Hope.

Suggesting a
model of
healthy
development
for Asian
LAMICs.

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Implications

- Findings imply **valid adaptation** and extensive use of **PYD measurement tools** in research.
- Could be the beginning of the work to **refine PD theories**, identifying aspects of **unique contributions** and **overlaps** across models.
- The **PYD models** may be used as an assessment tool to **identify potential areas for intervention**.

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Some Limitations

- **Cross-sectional** design
- **Convenience samples**, participants mainly from urban areas.
- **Low Cronbach's alphas** and **factor loadings** for some assets (e.g., Positive values and Constructive use of time) and 5Cs (e.g., Character); **Scale validity** (e.g., substance use).
- The question of **whether the assets/5Cs sufficiently assess** youth strengths, contextual resources and positive development in our samples is unanswered and requires qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

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Summary of presentation

- The PYD theoretical frameworks to **a large extent apply to contexts** beyond the U.S.
 - Resources and opportunities in the form of **internal and external assets** tend to **influence or facilitate positive developmental outcomes**.
 - These resources and opportunities can also **reduce risk and problem behaviors**.
- **But** the theoretical frameworks **may not always capture** the developmental **inputs, processes** and **outcomes** of adolescents or youth in non-US contexts.
- **There may be assets unique** to non-US contexts and these need to be explored and nurtured for our youth.

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See link for details on CN-PYD project:
<https://www.uib.no/en/rg/sipa/pydcrossnational>

**Many thanks to all PYD partners
and to our youth and emerging adult participants!**

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