Learning Agenda for
Positive Youth Development in Low and Middle-Income Countries

> POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
> ENGAGES YOUTH ALONG WITH THEIR FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND/OR
> GOVERNMENTS SO THAT YOUTH ARE EMPOWERED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.
> PYD APPROACHES BUILD SKILLS, ASSETS AND COMPETENCIES; FOSTER HEALTHY
> RELATIONSHIPS; STRENGTHEN THE ENVIRONMENT; AND TRANSFORM SYSTEMS.

WHY A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEARNING AGENDA

The purpose of this learning agenda is to define priority questions in the field of Positive Youth Development (PYD) in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). This PYD learning agenda builds upon the findings of the Systematic Review of PYD Programs in LMICs that highlighted gaps in the evidence for what works and for whom. It was developed in consultation with youth-serving and youth development practitioners, researchers, evaluators, and funders. The primary goal of the learning agenda is to provide collective guidance for a common agenda to address evidence gaps and invest in evidence-building activities related to PYD. This learning agenda also provide guidance for potential ways to answer those questions. The main audiences for the learning agenda are those who design, implement, and evaluate youth programs. While developed by YouthPower Learning with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), anyone who works with youth in LMICs can respond to this learning agenda and advance the PYD field.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

PYD transitions away from traditional approaches of responding to young people in a risk or problem frame towards proactively building skills, fostering healthy relationships, and supporting youth to be active partners in development efforts. It suggests that if young people have the knowledge, skills, and support they need, they will thrive as adults, enjoy good health, succeed economically, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Based on the above definition of PYD, YouthPower Learning developed a PYD Measurement Framework composed of four domains:

Assets: Youth have the necessary resources, skills, and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.

Agency: Youth perceive and can employ their assets and aspirations to make or influence their own decisions about their lives and set their own goals, as well as to act upon those decisions to achieve desired outcomes, without fear of violence or retribution.

Contribution: Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities' positive development.

Enabling Environment: Youth are surrounded by an environment that maximizes their assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, as well as their ability to avoid risks, stay safe and secure, and be protected. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical connection between the four PYD domains used in the framework:

Figure 1: PYD Measurement Framework
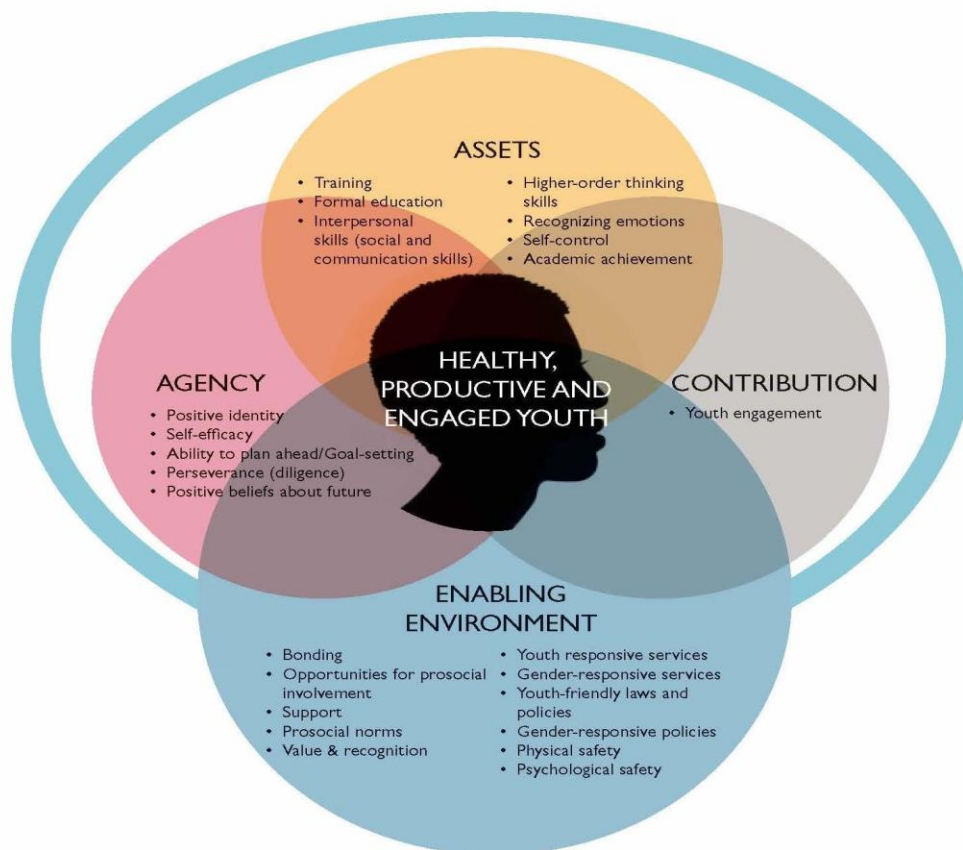
A key resource produced by YouthPower Learning is the [Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Implementers of Youth Programs](#) that provides guidance on how to apply a PYD approach to monitoring and evaluation, as well as illustrative PYD indicators and potential tools. The PYD Measurement Toolkit will help program implementers be more intentional in measuring PYD constructs. While PYD as a philosophy and approach is now well established in many high-income country (HIC) contexts, little is known about its reach and impact in LMICs.

KEY CONCEPTS USED IN THE LEARNING AGENDA

In this document, we use the term "construct" to refer to an attribute of a person or group of people that often cannot be measured directly, but can be assessed using a number of indicators or variables. Constructs are included within the four PYD domains of assets, agency, contribution, and enabling environment. For instance, problem solving is a construct within the assets domain and self-efficacy is a construct within the agency domain.

The term "feature" is used to refer to targets for activities within a program. Seven features have been identified as essential for effective PYD programs that, when intentionally integrated into program design, can improve both youth outcomes and development outcomes. The seven features that we seek to embed in all our programming targeting youth are:
   • Building skills, assets, and competencies such as life and vocational skills;

- Healthy relationships and role models such as through mentoring and family communication;
- Youth engagement and contribution to be agents of change in their communities;
- Safe spaces for constructive after school activities;
- Access to integrated youth-friendly services such as health services;
- Belonging/membership to respond to their desire and need for connection; and
- Positive social norms, expectations, and perceptions.

Like the domains, these features are grounded in the literature, particularly the work of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), and are tailored for the context of a developing country. The PYD features can help to define what activities can be incorporated within each of the four PYD domains.

BUILDING FROM THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

The impetus for and framing of this learning agenda was based in a systematic review undertaken by YouthPower Learning. In 2015, USAID commissioned the YouthPower Learning project to undertake a systematic review to synthesize the literature on evaluations of PYD programs in LMICs and identify the gaps in evidence to inform future research. The review identified 97 PYD programs in 60 LMICs and examined the evidence for successful PYD programs within and across sectors.

The review found that effective programs implemented interventions at multiple levels (e.g., individual, household, community) and in more than one setting (e.g., school, home, community-based organizations). Most of the evidence on PYD in LMICs comes from the health sector. Several high-quality studies of health-focused PYD programs showed improved knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV risk. Evidence related to outcomes in mental health and physical activity was less conclusive. Many of the programs that had strong evidence of effectiveness, although focused on improving outcomes for youth, enlisted the help of adults such as community members, parents, and teachers.

Democracy, human rights and governance (DHRG) programs focus on improving and increasing youths' assets including life skills and understanding violence prevention and human rights. DHRG programs were more likely to emphasize youth contribution to their communities than programs in other sectors. A majority of DHRG programs also include activities targeted at improving outcomes in the sectors of health, workforce readiness and employability, and education. Workforce readiness and employability programs identified focus on improving and increasing youth assets, including vocational and soft skills. Building youth agency and supporting an enabling environment for youth development were also part of most workforce readiness and employability programs.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEARNING AGENDA

The PYD learning agenda prioritizes five themes to serve as anchors to guide future research on PYD programs in LMICs:
1) Understanding how PYD programs achieve positive impact in LMICs;
2) Cross-sectoral impact of PYD programs;
3) Measurement of PYD constructs;
4) PYD for vulnerable or marginalized populations; and
5) Youth engagement in PYD programs.

We recognize that there are more gaps in the evidence beyond these five themes. In addition, there are several considerations that always need to be addressed by each project team, including context; age and developmental stage of youth participants; scope and cost of the project; ethics; and donor and

stakeholder interests. This agenda is intended to stimulate both learning and action for immediate next steps such as determining how best to sustain PYD policies, programs, and strategies that are found to be effective, and what resources are needed to implement PYD approaches at scale.

The remainder of this document presents detailed information on each of the five themes. After a brief description of the theme, there are two guiding research questions, along with illustrative sub-questions. Examples of how youth development stakeholders can contribute to answering the research questions are offered. Recognizing that organizations can choose to collect information at various points in the program or project lifecycle, the examples are organized into four categories:

> *Design*: Conceptualizing, designing, and planning a research project or an evaluation of a PYD program, project, or policy.

> *Collect*: Developing or selecting indicators, measurement tools, and collection approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) as well as collecting data.

> *Analyze*: examining the data collected in order to answer the relevant questions.

> *Amplify*: Documenting and disseminating what has been learned to ensure others can learn and build on it.

Theme 1: Understanding How PYD Programs Achieve Positive Impact in LMICs

GAP: Most of the programs identified in the systematic review did not self-identify as PYD, nor did they consistently measure PYD outcomes (e.g., self-regulation, positive identity, self-efficacy).

Although PYD programs have been implemented and tested in LMICs, and some of them have demonstrated positive effects on health, employment and/or wellbeing, few studies included measures or evaluations of how these effects were achieved. For example, a program may be designed to improve youth employment outcomes and include vocational and life skills training, mentoring, and a community service component. Through various activities, the program apply PYD features such as building skills, healthy relationships and bonding, and fostering youth contribution, which are expected to contribute to the desired outcome of employment. When a rigorous evaluation demonstrates improved employment outcomes, it is also important to determine if the program achieved PYD outcomes by improving skills, relationships, and youth contribution as intended. This kind of research would provide strong evidence PYD leads to positive sector outcomes downstream.

The effects of PYD on longer-term/sectoral outcomes are also important to analyze within various contexts. This is especially important in LMICs where activities need to be tailored to the local situation. Ongoing conflict, instability, and other local conditions can make it impossible to replicate the activities of a program that was successful elsewhere. Research on how successful programs achieve their goals can help program developers understand the complex set of PYD features that have been demonstrated to be effective in similar environments (e.g., conflict vs. non-conflict areas). Youth also live at the intersections of various marginalized identities, which may include their race, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability, and more. Programs must consider the complexities within youths' lives in order to effectively impact youth outcomes.

Key questions and illustrative sub-questions
- Do PYD programs in LMICs achieve their longer-term/sectoral outcomes by effecting PYD outcomes?
  - Do PYD programs impact their intended PYD outcomes?
  - Are changes in PYD outcomes linked to improved longer-term, sectoral outcomes for program beneficiaries?
- How can PYD programs that have proven to be effective be adapted to different contexts?
  - Are there examples of successful adaptations of evidence-based PYD programs in LMICs?
  - Are there systematic ways of adapting evidence-based PYD programs to different contexts, situations, or audiences in LMICs?
  - What are the most cost-effective ways to adapt PYD programs to specific conditions in LMICs?

Potential strategies to address Theme 1: Understanding How PYD Programs Achieve Positive Impact in LMICs

Key questions	Program phase	Illustrative examples of how you can answer the question
Do PYD programs in LMICs achieve their longer-term/sectoral outcomes by effecting PYD outcomes?	Design	Based on project logic model (model of change) include PYD outcomes in impact evaluations of PYD programs.
	Collect	Collect quantitative and qualitative data on targeted PYD constructs pre, post and follow up. Include questions about PYD outcomes in qualitative data from participants, implementers, and stakeholders.
	Analyze	Statistically test PYD constructs as an intermediary linkage to sector-specific outcomes. Extract evidence from qualitative data regarding program impact on PYD outcomes and how it influences intended and unintended sector outcomes.
	Amplify	Describe program impacts in terms of their influence on PYD constructs as well as outcomes.
How can PYD programs that have proven to be effective be adapted to different contexts?	Design	Design a systematic adaptation of an existing evidence-based program for a new context or audience followed by a small impact evaluation on targeted PYD constructs. Include the target population in the adaptation process to increase the cultural relevance of the program.
	Collect	Document all steps of the program adaptation process; include quantitative and/or qualitative data on PYD outcomes.
	Analyze	Compare impact of the adapted program on PYD outcomes to those obtained in evaluations of the original program.
	Amplify	Conduct a systematic review of peer reviewed and grey literature on program adaptations of PYD programs in LMICs with an emphasis on understanding the key components of successful adaptations, especially as related to any unique or interesting context characteristics.

Theme 2: Cross-Sectoral Impact of PYD Programs

GAP: Only 18% of the evaluations identified in the systematic review provided rigorous evidence, generally within the health sector, limiting our knowledge of PYD effectiveness in other sectors.

In high-income countries, PYD is a proven strategy for building skills, fostering healthy relationships, and supporting youth to be active partners in their communities' development, which can result in positive outcomes in health, education, sexual and reproductive health, HIV and employment. Unfortunately, less is known about the short- and long-term effects of PYD programming in LMICs due to the lack of rigorous studies and the fact that most evaluations focus on sector-specific outcomes (e.g., HIV, SRH, workforce development) rather than outcomes across multiple sectors.

Evidence from the systematic review supports the effectiveness of the PYD approach in changing PYD and sector-specific outcomes in LMICs. There is also evidence that programs that combine SRH and HIV prevention with workforce readiness and violence reduction obtain results on positive outcomes of employment, and reductions in gender-based violence, as well as health-risking behaviors. However, more research is needed to understand the short and long-term effects of PYD on cross-sectoral outcomes in LMICs. In light of the systematic review findings, tremendous opportunity exists to expand the evidence base on PYD programming in LMICs across sectors.

PYD is a holistic approach, the features of which include strengthening the environment (communities, schools, families) as well as the individual assets, agency, and contribution of young people. There is potential for such foundational supports to have positive impact on a broad range of outcomes with benefits lasting across a lifetime.

Key questions and illustrative sub-questions
- Do PYD programs have significant positive effects on outcomes in multiple sectors?
  - What are the barriers and opportunities to achieving cross-sectoral outcomes?
  - How can we apply lessons learned in one sector to another sector?
  - Can PYD strategies reduce costs and increase benefits by having impact on outcomes across multiple sectors?
- What are the best ways to design and implement PYD programs with cross-sector outcomes in LMICs?
  - Do programs with more PYD features have impact across more sectors?
  - Do PYD programs which build general life skills (e.g., social, communication, problem solving) have impact across more sectors than programs primarily focused on specific skills (e.g., how to use a condom, job training)?

Potential strategies to address Theme 2: Cross-Sectoral Impact of PYD Programs

Key questions	Program phase	Illustrative examples of how you can answer the question
Do PYD programs have significant positive effects on outcomes in multiple sectors?	Design	Based on the logic model (theory of change), design the M & E activities to include ways to discover all of the positive impacts the program has in multiple sectors.
	Collect	Collect data on program outcomes in more than one sector. Use qualitative approaches to discover unintended positive effects that are not in the targeted sector.
	Analyze	Analyze qualitative evidence to determine what impacts the program had on unintended sectors. Consider possible mediating pathways in quantitative analyses in which program effects in one sector then lead to positive effects in another sector (e.g., programs that prevent violence lead to improved education and employment outcomes).
	Amplify	Include multiple sector outcomes in reports and publications. Publish cross-sector results together rather than separately in sector-specific publications.
What are the best ways to design and implement cross-sectoral PYD programs in LMICs?	Design	Design programs that combine features from evidence-based programs in two sectors. Design multi-arm evaluations which compare different combinations of those features on outcomes in both sectors.
	Collect	Collect information on a standard set of PYD indicators across all arms of the study as well as qualitative accounts of how each feature works alone and in combination with other features to have impact in both sectors as well as possibly unintended impacts in other sectors.
	Analyze	Conduct comparisons between the intervention arm and the control arm of the study on PYD indicators as well as all relevant outcomes in multiple sectors. Incorporate qualitative data in interpreting quantitative results.
	Amplify	Present findings across all sectors for all combinations of PYD features included in the study.

Theme 3: Measurement of PYD Constructs

GAP: Most of the PYD programs identified in the systematic review did not use validated tools of PYD constructs as indicators of program impacts.

> Constructs: An attribute of a person or group of people that often cannot be measured directly, but can be assessed using a number of indicators or variables (e.g., self-regulation).

It is important to measure PYD constructs because they have been found to be an intermediary linkage to sector-specific outcomes in several different sectors. Using valid and reliable tools of PYD constructs will provide essential data on how PYD approaches work to impact outcomes in LMICs (see Theme 1). Using tools found to be valid and reliable increases our ability to make comparisons and generalizations about what does and does not work in various contexts and for different groups of young people. Tools must be implemented at baseline and at follow-ups in order to measure change over time. Therefore, it is important that PYD tools be valid and reliable with repeated assessments.

Most existing tools assess PYD constructs at the individual level, and not at the policy, agency, system, or community levels. In order to fill this gap, we will need to develop new valid and reliable measures that capture changes in policies, practices, and impacts that indicate that youth are in more enabling environments and that agencies, systems, and other organizations have greater capacity to provide PYD programs.

The PYD Measurement Toolkit provides a practical guide for program developers, implementers, and evaluators. However, there are some important questions that have not been answered.

Key questions for future research and illustrative sub-questions
- What processes or strategies are critical for adaptation of reliable and valid PYD tools to different contexts?
  - How do we determine whether a measure found to be valid and reliable in one context is appropriate to be adapted to a different context?
  - What are the costs and benefits of adapting an existing valid and reliable tool compared to creating a new tool more tailored to the context?
- How do we best measure the implementation of PYD approaches at the program, system, or agency level?
  - What (if any) measures currently exist to evaluate the extent to which a program is PYD vs. not PYD?
  - How can we evaluate the impact of efforts to increase the capacity of a system or agency to implement PYD programs and policies?

Potential strategies to address Theme 3: Measurement of PYD Constructs

Key questions	Program phase	Illustrative examples of how you can answer the question
What processes or strategies are critical for adaptation of reliable and valid PYD tools to different contexts?	Design	Lay out a step-by-step process for adapting appropriate measures of targeted PYD constructs which includes all appropriate stakeholders, and provides for iterative adaptations, feasibility testing, pilot testing, and standard measures of reliability and validity.
	Collect	Collect feasibility and pilot data from the members of the targeted audience.
	Analyze	Conduct standard tests of validity and reliability including test re-test reliability. Test for differences in validity and reliability by appropriate subgroups (e.g., gender, age, rurality, roles within agencies).
	Amplify	Include descriptions of the adaptation process (including cost) as well as psychometric properties of the adapted measure in reports and publications. Make adapted measure available to other researchers.
How do we best measure the implementation of PYD approaches at the program, system or agency level?	Design	Based on the features and indicators of PYD in the PYD Measurement Toolkit, design a semi-structured interview for key stakeholders to report on the specific PYD features and constructs they think are important, and the extent to which they are integrated into their programs and policies.
	Collect	Collect qualitative data through interviews with key stakeholders on their understanding of the PYD framework and how it is reflected in their project, program, policies, etc.
	Analyze	Analyze knowledge and concepts from key stakeholder interviews for gaps and opportunities for measurement improvement at the program, system, and agency levels.
	Amplify	Share findings with stakeholders and solicit feedback from program and agency staff.

Theme 4: PYD for Vulnerable or Marginalized Populations

GAP: None of the PYD programs explicitly addressed special needs or inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups (other than girls and women) such as LGBTI, indigenous and disabled youth, ethnic minorities, and youth offenders.

The systematic review found a major gap in evidence for PYD programming having impact on vulnerable or marginalized populations, including (but not limited to) lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) youth; youth with disabilities; youth who inject drugs; youth who engage in transactional sex; incarcerated youth; child soldiers; rural youth; youth in conflict or politically unstable settings; and ethnically minority youth. Vulnerable or marginalized youth populations are those that, for any reason, tend to be excluded from "universal" youth programming that could benefit them. These populations were also not specifically targeted for youth-focused programming.

PYD programs can be designed so that they are applicable to all youth (aka "universal" programs), or they can be tailored so that they are applicable specifically for a particular subgroup of youth. Universal prevention strategies are designed to reach the entire population, without regard to individual risk factors and are intended to reach a large audience. In many contexts, an inclusive universal approach will be the best for safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals who are discriminated against. Participation in a universal program does not reveal aspects of a person's identity that they might prefer not to share and inclusion of diverse populations in a universal program can reduce stigma. Selective (or tailored) interventions target subgroups of the general population that are known to be at risk for negative outcomes or have been denied resources or excluded from benefits. This is a useful strategy when the needs of a subgroup are known to be different than those of other youth in the population, and when being identified with the subgroup is either unavoidable or does not introduce further hardship. More evidence is needed about the context in which universal or tailored PYD programs are most appropriate.

Key questions and illustrative sub-questions
- What are the barriers to and facilitators for including vulnerable or marginalized populations in universal PYD programs?
    - How are vulnerable and marginalized groups experiencing these barriers and facilitators?
    - How effective are universal PYD programs at serving the needs of vulnerable and marginalized sub-groups?
- How effective are tailored PYD programs at serving the needs of vulnerable or marginalized populations?
    - What impact do tailored PYD programs have on reducing barriers to programming specific for this population?
    - How do we work with special populations to create, design and implement programs for them?

Potential strategies to address Theme 4: PYD for Vulnerable or Marginalized Populations

Key questions	Program phase	Illustrative examples of how you can answer the question
What are the barriers to and facilitators for including vulnerable or marginalized populations in universal PYD programs?	Design	Budget for the extra time it will take to work with vulnerable and marginalized youth. Conduct formative research (e.g., situation analyses, needs assessment) for identified vulnerable or marginalized groups to develop programming that is accessible and efficacious for them. Design evaluation research to include enough participants from the targeted groups to allow for group comparisons in universal interventions.
	Collect	Collect data from specific vulnerable, marginalized, and at-risk groups of youth. Involve vulnerable and marginalized groups in recruitment and data collection activities.
	Analyze	Make comparisons to assess similarities or differences across groups (if sample is sufficient). Test for program efficacy within groups, especially when programs are specifically adapted to include that group.
	Amplify	Document and present the most and least successful strategies for including vulnerable, marginalized, or at-risk populations in universal programs, and adaptations to programs to address their particular or unique needs.
How effective are tailored PYD programs at serving the needs of vulnerable or marginalized populations?	Design	Determine best sampling method to reach vulnerable or marginalized populations such as respondent-driven sampling, which can be effective in reaching small interconnected populations. Ensure comparison groups are as similar as possible to the intervention group.
	Collect	Collect data relevant to the specific population. Use qualitative methods to determine the most sensitive and effective methods of collecting data from the specific population or subgroup.
	Analyze	Recognize that all members of a vulnerable or marginalized subgroup are not the same. Analyze impact with appropriate control variables that may be specific to this subgroup. Debrief with program participants to understand what program design activities worked well and what did not.
	Amplify	Share your findings with groups that work with vulnerable or marginalized populations to share what works (and does not work) to effectively and positively impact vulnerable and marginalized populations; also share with the general community to amplify the importance of working with this group.

Theme 5: Youth Engagement in PYD Programs

GAP: Only about half of the programs identified in the systematic review explicitly targeted youth engagement and/or leadership as an outcome.

Increasingly, key actors in the development community have recognized the importance of meaningful youth engagement in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs and policies that affect them. A guiding principle in the USAID Youth in Development Policy is to "recognize that youth participation is vital for effective programs." While considered good practice and supported by anecdotal evidence, there is insufficient rigorous evidence that youth engagement leads to improved program outcomes.

Youth engagement is essential to PYD because it promotes youth agency and contribution. Creating an enabling environment along with promoting youth-led activities can help youth build their capacity to realize their full potential. Because meaningful youth engagement is a key component of PYD programs, it is important to consider how to measure the type and value of youth participation.

The ability of youth to contribute to the development of their societies hinges on ensuring that opportunities for inclusion and participation exist. Through active participation in decision-making about programs and policies that affect them and their peers, young people are empowered to play a vital role in decisions that inform the provision and delivery of youth-appropriate services in ways that could ultimately result in improved outcomes. However, there are personal, structural, and cultural barriers that can impede meaningful and effective youth participation. Personal barriers include personal biases and attitudes of adults towards young people, youth not being asked to be involved, and the additional time needed to meaningfully include youth. Structural barriers include inflexible organizational systems that are not conducive to facilitating effective participation and insufficient resources to support engagement efforts. Cultural barriers may include social constructs related to power structures, as well as norms and stereotypes, such as those related to age, gender, sexual orientation, and relationships. The relationship between youth and adults is a critical determinant of the success of youth engagement.

In order to examine whether the necessary conditions have been met to allow meaningful participation, it is also necessary to identify the desired outcomes of that participation, and then to measure the extent to which those outcomes have been achieved. [The United Nations conceptual framework for measuring outcomes on youth participation](#) has identified four potential outcomes for adolescent participation which include sense of self-worth/self-esteem/efficacy, being taken seriously, making decisions and public/civic engagement. Success of youth participation efforts should not only be measured by scope and impact on outcomes, but also by the quality of such engagement. There is a need to develop standardized scales or indicators to measure levels and effectiveness of youth engagement in policymaking and programming across sectors.

Key questions and illustrative sub-questions
- What strategies are effective in enabling meaningful youth engagement?
    - How do we distinguish leadership from participation?
    - What are effective strategies to prepare adults to share power with young people?
    - How can we understand and build youth leadership across developmental phases?
    - How do we develop youth-driven programs which empower youth as change agents?
    - Do particular types of youth engagement or leadership reduce program costs or increase program benefits?

- What are the best ways to measure and evaluate the impact of various levels of youth engagement on intended PYD indicators and program outcomes?
  - o Are PYD programs with high levels of youth engagement or specific types of youth engagement more effective than those without?
  - o Do youth who engage with PYD programs in depth or in specific ways get more benefit from those programs than youth who are less engaged?
  - o How does youth engagement benefit others in the community?

Potential strategies to address Theme 5: Youth Engagement in PYD Programs

Key questions	Program phase	Illustrative examples of how you can answer the question
What strategies are effective in enabling meaningful youth engagement?	Design	Assemble a youth advisory board at the outset of program development to guide and to advise on best ways to engage youth at each stage of the program lifecycle. Design evaluation comparing various strategies for engaging youth.
	Collect	Track and record data on all engagement-related activities (e.g., how were youth recruited, who invited their participation, what strategies were used to encourage more engagement and/or leadership). Collect qualitative data from youth and involved adults on barriers and facilitators to youth engagement.
	Analyze	Analyze quantitative data by comparing levels and types of youth engagement or leadership. Analyze qualitative data for themes and insights about what did and did not result in high levels and specific types of youth engagement.
	Amplify	Document and share best practices for engaging and learning from youth, and any recommendations from youth on what they need in order to be more engaged.
What are the best ways to measure and evaluate the impact of various levels of youth engagement on intended PYD indicators and program outcomes?	Design	Design programs which intentionally engage youth in a variety of roles and at a variety of levels so that youth with different levels and types of program engagement can be compared. Random assignment into conditions with differing types or levels of youth engagement provides the strongest evidence, but may not be feasible.
	Collect	Collect data using measures of types and levels of engagement at the individual and program level at each phase of the program lifecycle as well as PYD indicators and program outcomes. Collect qualitative data from youth on which types and levels of engagement were most satisfying, useful to them, and their understanding of how or if their engagement led to specific outcomes (intended or unintended/unexpected).
	Analyze	Conduct analyses comparing youth assigned to different engagement conditions. Correlate actual level or type of engagement to PYD indicators and program outcomes at the individual level. Use qualitative data to guide further analyses on unexpected outcomes or possible mediation of program effects through engagement (e.g., high levels of youth engagement was what made the program achieve its outcomes).
	Amplify	Include measures of youth engagement levels and types as well as strategies used to encourage youth engagement in program descriptions. Report the impact of various types and levels of youth engagement on PYD indicators and program outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The development of this learning agenda was designed to be the first of many steps toward better understanding when and how PYD approaches work in LMICs. The agenda supports USAID and other youth stakeholder PYD priorities. We acknowledge there are additional questions that could also be addressed. There is a tremendous need to invest in advancing the field, piloting new strategies, and rigorously evaluating and documenting programs that are being implemented. A key next step is to collectively build the evidence base about how, when, and where PYD works. Further investments in LMICs are needed to increase understanding about PYD across the five themes identified in this PYD Learning Agenda. It is our hope that the community of practitioners and researchers interested in PYD will take a role in bringing the agenda to life—contributing related findings to help answer these important questions. Ultimately our learning can lead to evidence-based programs which provide meaningful improvements in the lives of the youth we serve.

If you have learning to share or want to know how you can contribute, please contact YouthPower Learning at info@youthpower.org and visit our website at www.youthpower.org/PYD-Learning-Agenda.

REFERENCES

Alvarado, G., Skinner, M., Plaut, D., Moss, C., Kapungu, C., and Reavley, N. (2017). A Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development Programs in Low-and Middle-Income Countries. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.

Eccles, J. S., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Hinson, L., Kapungu, C., Jessee, C., Skinner, M., Bardini, M. & Evans-Whipp, T. (2016). Measuring Positive Youth Development Toolkit: A Guide for Implementers of Youth Programs. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.

United States Agency for International Development. (2012). Youth in Development Policy. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth.