



# Handbook of Positive Youth Development: Advancing the Next Generation of Research, Policy and Practice in Global Contexts

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## Abstract

This chapter introduces the Handbook of Positive Youth Development (PYD) aiming to advance PYD scholarship among youth and emerging adults from a global international perspective. Noteworthy highlights regard (1) advancement of the theoretical and empirical knowledge base on PYD in global contexts; (2) refinement of methodological issues and measurement in under researched contexts; (3) integration of PYD scholarship with relevant research, policy, and practice. A prominent theme is the advent of a new generation of PYD scholarship in underrepresented global contexts and vast geographic regions (e.g., Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, New Zealand, North and Latin America). The *handbook* is composed by *Part I PYD in Global Contexts and Part II PYD Applications and Interventions* with a total of 37 chapters

across 38 countries. Several chapters have an original empirical basis and involve in total, responses and voices from 22,083 youth and emerging adults in diverse parts of the world. With unique contributions, large samples and global approaches to research, policy and practice, this volume presents the most comprehensive and inclusive collection of empirical evidence on PYD among youth and emerging adults yet assembled. The outstanding cast of contributors clearly documents stellar accomplishments in the current PYD field, while providing creative and promising avenues about where future outlook and initiatives would be most fruitfully and effectively implemented.

## Keywords

PYD · 5Cs model · 6Cs model · 7Cs model · Developmental assets · PYDAC project · Adolescents · Emerging adults · Research · Policy · Practice

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Over the past decades, Positive Youth Development (PYD) scholarship has exploded within the social and health sciences, delineating the conditions and specifying the processes integrated into developing optimal well-being, thriving and success among young people. Reasons

for this explosion of interest involve the operationalization of PYD as an approach to understand pathways to successful social and individual well-being, including the evidence that PYD can have substantial psychological and health benefits and improve a range of developmental competences among young people. Insights and evidence from such scholarship have provided a greater understanding of how PYD mechanisms develop, leading to new individual and population level strategies to optimize health and well-being by minimizing the impact of adversity, increasing protective factors, and targeting PYD-promoting interventions. This rise in the scope and significance of the PYD field has opened up new avenues for policy and practice to connect and be informed by this rapidly expanding evidence base that is relevant and derived from evidence in psychology, public and mental health, education, community development, social welfare, prevention and implementation science. Concomitantly, there is a strong impetus among researchers to continue to fill the substantial gaps in PYD scholarship as to ensure inclusive, methodologically sound and novel research coverage among young people in global contexts that appropriately reflect relevant findings and applications in social, psychological, clinical, public health, or public policy settings.

In response to this burgeoning knowledge, this *handbook* represents a groundbreaking effort to expand the PYD field globally with innovative conceptual and methodological approaches as to provide researchers, policymakers and practitioners with guidance regarding the kinds of interventions and actions that can be beneficial, and to lay the foundation for a research agenda that identifies high priority areas for further investigations to strategically target resources and advance PYD scholarship. In so doing, the *handbook* presents contributions that advance a new generation of PYD scholarship globally and in marginalized understudied contexts, organizing newly produced scientific knowledge and areas of growth in PYD across the globe, making available resources known for those interested in this work. Throughout the volume, the focus is on being culturally inclusive and responsive to the

diverse needs and experiences of young people in a global perspective as to provide a better contextual understanding of the variety of life experiences and settings and promote positive development as a global science.

This introductory chapter begins by providing an overview of the main models of PYD represented in the volume namely, the developmental assets (Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Shramko, 2017), the 5Cs and 6Cs models of PYD (Burkhard, Robinson, Murray, & Lerner, 2019; Geldhof et al., 2015) and the newly developed 7Cs model of PYD among young people in a variety of cultural contexts (Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al. [this volume](#)). Further, a rationale for the publication, the vision and structure of this volume is provided with information about sections and contributions of the various experts with multidisciplinary backgrounds and diverse disciplines of psychology, public health, environmental science, sociology, family studies, prevention and intervention science. This section is supplemented by a content overview including the main scope and three major aims addressed in the volume (1) advance the theoretical and empirical knowledge base on PYD among young people as well as processes by which PYD affects their developmental outcomes in a global perspective; (2) expand understanding on methodological issues and provide knowledge base on PYD measurement in under researched and neglected contexts globally; (3) integrate scholarship on PYD with relevant research, policy and practice. Finally, readers are provided with a brief overview of the unique assets and incremental contributions of the volume to the PYD field, and conclusions on some of the challenges and next steps for further field building.

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## **Positive Youth Development Models Represented in the Current Volume**

This volume embodies conceptual and empirical contributions based on the currently most widespread and influential frameworks for understanding and strengthening positive youth

development—the developmental assets (Scales et al., 2017) and the 5Cs and 6Cs models of PYD (Geldhof et al., 2015). Further, the volume advances such scholarship by introducing a newly developed 7Cs model of PYD among youth and emerging adults in a variety of cultural contexts (Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al. [this volume](#)). Despite diversity of operationalization and applications, these models share similarities in the emphases on youth strengths and potentials as well as internal and external developmental assets.

*The developmental assets model* emphasizes the alignment between individual strengths, external opportunities and supports that help young people to achieve optimal development and adequate functioning (Scales et al., 2017). The model proposes 40 developmental assets (20 internal and 20 external assets) defined as individual strengths and environmental resources, which concern developmental process, experiences, social relationships, contexts and interactions beneficial for PYD. *Internal assets* refer to the individual positive traits such as commitment to learning (young people’s appreciation of the importance of continuous learning and belief in own capabilities, including achievement motivation, school engagement, school bonding); positive values (guiding principles to make healthy life decisions, including caring, social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility); social competencies (skills for establishing effective interpersonal relationships and adapting to novel or challenging situations, including planning and decision-making, interpersonal/cultural competence, and peaceful conflict resolution) and positive identity (a sense of control and purpose as well as recognition of own strengths and potentials, including personal power, self-esteem, positive outlook). *External assets* reflect the positive features of environmental, contextual, and socializing systems of young people such as support (social and emotional support, care and acceptance including family support, positive family communication, and other adult relationships, caring neighborhood and school climate and parent involvement in schooling); empowerment (being valuable agent in making a contribution to

others and community, including community values and resources for young people, service to others and safety); boundaries and expectations (clear regulations for conduct with consequences for violating rules, and encouragement for young people to do their best, including family, school and neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence and high expectations); constructive use of time (opportunities to enjoy and develop new skills outside of school including creative activities and religious community; Scales et al., 2017).

In the past three decades, targeted instruments have been developed to measure the assets model such as the Attitudes and Behaviors: Profiles of Student Life and the Developmental Assets Profile used to survey more than five million young people around the world (Syvertsen, Scales, & Toomey, 2019). A substantial amount of cross-sectional and intervention work has provided strong empirical support for the utility of the assets model (Abdul Kadir, Mohd, & Dimitrova, [this volume](#); Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al., [this volume](#); Manrique-Millones, Pineda Marin, Millones-Rivalles, & Dimitrova, [this volume](#); Uka et al., [this volume](#); Wium & Kozina, [this volume](#)) consistently documenting that high levels of assets were related to fewer multiple risk behaviors and more thriving regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geographic area (Scales et al., 2017; Syvertsen et al., 2019).

*The 5Cs model* developed by several researchers building on one another’s work emphasizes internal characteristics of youth that help them to grow into healthy adults. Initially the model comprised 4Cs of competence, character, connection and confidence (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000) supplemented by the 5C of caring (Lerner, 1995) and the 6C of contribution (Pittman et al., 2000). *Competence* includes cognitive, social, academic and vocational competences. Cognitive competence denotes problem-solving skills, and decision-making. Social competence refers to conflict resolution skills. Academic competence reflects school grades, school attendance and achievement. Vocational competence indicates work habits and the ability to explore different

career choices. *Confidence* refers to the individual's view of own positive value and capacities. *Connection* concerns an individual's positive and healthy relationships with other people and organizations. *Character* denotes morality, integrity, internal value standards for right behaviors and respect for social and cultural regulations. *Caring* represents the ability to sympathize and empathize with others. *Contribution* signifies the need for young people to engage with their communities and the society (Geldhof et al., 2015).

As for the assets model, targeted instruments such as the PYD Short Form and the PYD Very Short Form have been developed to measure the 5Cs and 6Cs model (Geldhof et al., 2014). These instruments have been widely used in cross-sectional, longitudinal and intervention research consistently documenting that the 5Cs and 6Cs promote better developmental outcomes among adolescents in the United States (Dvorsky et al., 2019; Geldhof et al., 2014, 2015; Shek, Dou, Zhu, & Chai, 2019), Europe (Conway, Heary, & Hogan, 2015; Dimitrova, Buzea, et al. [this volume](#); Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al. [this volume](#); Dimitrova, Sam, & Ferrer-Wreder, 2021; Erentaitė & Raižienė, 2015; Kozina, Wium, Gonzalez, & Dimitrova, 2019), Latin America (Dominguez, Wium, Jackman, & Ferrer-Wreder, [this volume](#); Manrique-Millones et al., [this volume](#)), Africa (Kabir & Wium, [this volume](#); Wium, Ferrer-Wreder, Chen, & Dimitrova, 2019), Asia (Abdul Kadir et al., [this volume](#); Chen, Wium, & Dimitrova, 2018; Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al., [this volume](#); Li, He, & Chen, [this volume](#)) and the Caribbean (Hull, Ferguson, Fagan, & Brown, [this volume](#); Hull, Powell, Fagan, Hobbs, & Williams, 2020).

The 7Cs model expands on the 6Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, character, caring, connection and contribution) to include *creativity* conceived as a novel and adaptive, problem-solving ability meaningful within a social and cultural context (Batey, 2012; Said-Metwaly, Kyndt, & Van den Noortgate, 2017). The conceptualization of creativity is of particular relevance for the 7Cs model complementing the 6Cs with the vital of solving individual, organizational and social problems and potential to enhance optimal

development (Barbot & Heuser, 2017; Lubart, Zenasni, & Barbot, 2013). Such conceptualization embedded in the 7Cs model provides a supplement to currently predominant PYD models with a set of skills and knowledge to develop novel and original solutions that are useful and adaptive for success among young people in culturally diverse contexts.

The basic premise of the 7Cs model emphasizes its potential to accelerate a PYD approach to global research, policy and practice agendas. In fact, the present volume contains pioneering empirical contributions on the 7Cs model among youth and emerging adults across global cultural contexts in Asia (India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan) and Latin America (Colombia and Peru). These contributions provide evidence for the reliability and validity of the 7Cs model in terms of measurement invariance (psychometrically reliable measurement across different populations), utility (appropriate use of measures), generalizability (applicability to various populations) as well as insightful and meaningful relations with the developmental assets, increased mindfulness, hopeful expectations for the future and reduced risky behaviors among culturally diverse samples of young people (Abdul Kadir et al., [this volume](#); Dimitrova, Fernandes, et al., [this volume](#); Manrique-Millones et al., [this volume](#)).

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## Origin, Vision, Organization and Targeted Audience of the Handbook

This *handbook* originates from the *Positive Youth Development across Cultures (PYDAC)* project initiated by the editors as a collaborative effort to gather wide international PYD research network. Inspired by the PYD perspective, the project applies a strength-inspired conception of development that is rooted in and relevant to a more global and culturally informed study of adolescence. The project gathers researchers interested in expanding PYD research, measurement and applications in a global international perspective (International Test Commission, 2017; van de

Vijver et al., 2019). The project represents partners from over 30 countries with expertise in diverse disciplines (e.g., psychology, public health, environmental science, sociology, family studies, prevention and intervention science), career development and publishing opportunities such as the special issue on PYD across cultures in *Child & Youth Care Forum* (Wium & Dimitrova, 2019).

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## Editorial Vision of this Handbook

This volume was conceived with a specific editorial vision to promote and enhance visibility and work by scholars across the globe predominately from outside of the United States or Western Europe. This vision is in line with the burgeoning PYD movement and the key advances that have been made in measurement in underrepresented and under researched countries, thanks to the voluntary work and strong motivation of leading scholars in these countries. Relatedly, a very clear vision for the *handbook* is to break the mold from a traditional handbook to champion and advance a more global voices, perspectives and impact, while promoting the new generation of PYD scholars globally and in largely neglected contexts. The chapter authors include many prominent scholars from different corners of the world who incorporate the available scientific literature in their respective countries. In fact, the contributors have been prominent in their fields even if their prominence and creative contributions are in some cases unknown to international readership.

Other equal priorities were to have a multidisciplinary perspective presented in the *handbook* as a source of new ideas and findings that represent the state of the science and are cutting edge and innovative. A cutting edge and expert oriented priority is not fundamentally at odds with speaking to a multidisciplinary audience, if appropriate attention and support is given to authors to walk this delicate balance. The aspiration to speak to experts and break down disciplinary barriers is fitting, given that developmental science is at its heart a multidisciplinary science,

and PYD is well rooted in contemporary developmental science. With these priorities in mind, contributors of the volume were encouraged and able to successfully navigate the tension between a striving to represent the state of the science and allowing for multidisciplinary communication, outreach, and impact.

Based on the editorial standpoint presented here, it is possible that the vision for this volume can be viewed as a different work in the sense that new voices from less heard parts of the world have a chance to speak. Equally important, a diligent editorial work had an eye to ensure the highest scientific quality level, and represent the state of the science in each chapter produced by contributing authors in this *handbook* in line with most recent scientific writing standards (American Psychological Association, 2020). The editors are confident that a culturally sensitive readership and global impact-oriented scholarship may conform to the editorial vision for this volume and open fruitful avenues for further replications and refinements.

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## Organization and Targeted Audience of the Handbook

This volume addresses relevant gaps in the literature by organizing chapters that reflect critical themes in advancing culturally responsive PYD scholarship and promoting key realms of research, policy and practice, while exploring interconnections across these realms. A major scope is to promote and advance a new generation of PYD scholars globally and specifically in traditionally underrepresented and understudied global contexts. The list of contributors is not exhaustive. For example, the number of PYD researchers in Asia is rapidly expanding. Nevertheless, through a range of contributors, this volume presents the current status of the research on culturally sensible PYD work with young people in a variety of contexts supplemented by innovative PYD approaches within these contexts.

This volume opens up with a *foreword* by Daniel Shek (The Hong Kong Polytechnic

University), one of the leading scholars in PYD research and intervention especially in Asia. In his brief overview, Shek summarizes a number of unique features and relevant conceptual and methodological contributions of this volume. The core of these contributions regards the significant advancement of our understanding of the conceptual and empirical knowledge and PYD foundations across the globe; the measurement issues surrounding the assessment of PYD in neglected societies and cultures as well as the application of PYD theories and research to intervention programs to promote well-being of adolescents and emerging adults globally.

In addition, the volume is supplemented with commentaries by a stellar cast of leading scholars from various disciplines such as developmental science, human development, international and cross-cultural psychology, prevention and intervention science, assessment, emerging adulthood studies, relevant research, policy and practice. These colleagues further expand on the unique features, breadth and depth of PYD oriented research, policy and practice in a global international perspective. Together, these contributions provide a set of extraordinary endorsements for this volume by John Berry (Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Queen's University, Canada and Research Professor at the Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation), Gregor Burkhart (Principal Scientific Analyst at the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Cynthia García Coll (Adjunct Professor at University of Puerto Rico Medical Science Campus and Charles Pitts Robinson and John Palmer Barstow Professor Emerita, Brown University, USA), Christine McCauley Ohannessian (Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Director, Center for Behavioral Health Research Connecticut Children's Medical Center, USA), Anne C. Petersen (Research Professor at University of Michigan, USA), Ype H. Poortinga (Emeritus Professor of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Tilburg University, the Netherlands and Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium), Grant J. Rich (Senior Contributing Faculty, Walden University, USA), Eugene

C. Roehlkepartain (Senior Scholar, Search Institute, USA), Seth J. Schwartz (Professor of Public Health Sciences at the Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, USA), Laurence Steinberg (Distinguished University Professor of Psychology, Temple University, USA), Kazumi Sugimura (Professor of Psychology, Hiroshima University, Japan), Peter F. Titzmann (Professor for Developmental Psychology, Leibniz University Hanover, Germany), John Toumbourou (Professor and Chair in Health Psychology, Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development, Deakin University, Australia) and Hirokazu Yoshikawa (Courtney Sale Ross Professor of Globalization and Education, Co-Director, Global TIES for Children (Transforming Intervention Effectiveness and Scale) Center, New York University, USA).

The chapters of the *handbook* are organized along two major categories for a total of 37 chapters with empirical contributions which include a substantial number of youth and emerging adults ( $N = 22,083$ ) in major geographical continents, many of which are neglected in the research literature on adolescence. Part I *Positive Youth Development in Global Contexts* and Part II *Positive Youth Development Applications and Interventions* were structured to represent first the mostly neglected cultural contexts and populations around the globe.

*Part I Positive Youth Development in Global Contexts* is composed by 17 chapters starting with newly developed models and conceptual chapters (the 7Cs model) followed by PYD work in less represented contexts of Asia (India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia), Africa (Ghana), Latin America, Eastern Europe, as well as contributions from more established adolescent research literatures within Southern and Northern Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and two final chapters on multi-country comparisons. Most contributions contain empirical research examples from newly conducted PYD research in culturally diverse samples of young people across the globe from the *PYDAC* project. Part I begins with a chapter by the leading editor introducing the newly developed 7Cs model of PYD expand-

ing on the 6C indicators of PYD (competence, confidence, character, caring, connection and contribution) to include *creativity* by advancing conceptual and methodological contributions to the PYD field with relevant multidisciplinary applications.

Key contributions across the subsequent chapters include exploring the structure of the developmental assets, the 5Cs and the 7Cs models of PYD across cultures as a central context for healthy development, examining linkages with relevant developmental constructs (e.g., mindfulness, risky behaviors, personality traits, environmental concerns, healthy life styles, family relationships, academic achievement, identity formation, social competence, happiness, self-esteem, life satisfaction, school connectedness and engagement and hopeful expectations for the future), considering the importance of culture and gender in relation to PYD models and constructs. Collectively, the chapters in Part I elucidate the nature and relevance of PYD promotive contexts for young people, using creative quantitative and qualitative methodologies to understand the unique ways that PYD models and relevant developmental constructs relate to each other in adolescents and emerging adults across the globe. The collection of chapters composing Part I is an outstanding representation of a variety of global and cultural contexts with PYD research and empirical examples in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Ghana, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Belize, Brazil, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria and Romania.

*Part II Positive Youth Development Applications and Interventions* is composed by 18 chapters starting with a multi-country conceptual chapter on nine country international project (China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States) followed by neglected, less studied regions and cultural contexts of the Caribbean and Africa supplemented by contributions within Southern and Northern Europe, Canada, the United States and two conceptual review chapters by leading scholars on digital settings, pre-

vention and intervention for global research, policy and practice. This second part presents innovative approaches, reviews current programs and strategies that successfully focus on PYD applications and interventions from diverse contexts. Specific topics and innovations focus on work within schools and communities that consider engagement, self-efficacy, classroom climate, violent radicalization, parenting knowledge and practices, family competence, digital settings. The chapters also focus on specific PYD interventions by addressing the above mentioned topics related to culturally responsive research, policy and practice with marginalized, ethnic minority and ethnically diverse populations. The ultimate goal was to enhance the promotion of culturally competent assessment of PYD models and increase empirically sound evidence on PYD applications and interventions through a cross-cultural and contextually global lens. Together, these chapters present meaningful evidence that PYD interventions matter for optimal health, well-being and development by offering different perspectives on how PYD applications and models are intimately tied to the quality of life of young people around the world. Similar to Part I, the collection of chapters in Part II has noteworthy diversity in cultural contexts with PYD applications and interventions in China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, Jamaica, South Africa, Slovenia, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, Canada and the United States.

Parts I and II are supplemented by a final conclusive chapter by leading scholars in the PYD field. The final chapter by John Geldhof, Svea Olsen, and Asia Thogmartin (Oregon State University, USA) represents a conceptually relevant overview that draws together these unique contributions in the PYD field establishing current achievements and future steps for research, policy and practice in global contexts. The chapter reviews and integrates the main findings and implications presented in the preceding chapters by highlighting key issues prominent in the field in that (a) PYD implies a systems-level perspective; (b) PYD includes both strength promotion and deficit reduction; (c) there is no “best” model

of PYD; (d) defining PYD requires specificity; (e) PYD is holistic; (f) specificity applies to all contexts, and (g) we need to integrate etic and emic approaches.

Overall, the contributions to this *handbook* reflect a vibrant and increasingly stimulating areas of PYD scholarship that ultimately help build on the unique strengths and assets of young people to create more pathways to their optimal development, health and thriving. With unique contributions, large samples and global approaches to research, policy and practice, this *handbook* may be of interest to a wide range of social scientists, psychological, mental and public health professionals, researchers, policymakers and practitioners interested in better understanding the impact that multiple aspects of PYD can have on young people and systems in culturally diverse and global contexts. The *handbook* may be a resource for students, researchers, and youth leaders who are interested in promoting PYD scholarship and related youth activities. Leading scientists and program developers from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (positive psychology, well-being studies, developmental psychology, child and family studies, cross-cultural psychology, education, prevention, intervention, intercultural relations, social psychology, anthropology, sociology, methodology, counseling, community psychology, emerging adulthood and applied developmental science) may further benefit from the contributions of this volume. Finally, this *handbook* may assist current professionals in the PYD and related fields interested in strengthening their PYD grounded competencies for conducting research and providing psychological services to culturally diverse groups of young people in global contexts.

### **Positive Youth Development in Global Contexts: The Handbook**

A primary consideration of this volume was to advance a multidisciplinary science scholarship on PYD toward a more inclusive understanding of the psychological experiences, mechanisms and correlates of positive development among young people in a global perspective. The volume

includes specifically selected chapters that are innovative and diverse in theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g., cross-cultural, multinational, experimental, longitudinal, mixed-methods) as well as inclusive with participants from diverse cultural, ethnic and sociodemographic backgrounds, enlarging the broad U.S. literature with fresh international perspectives.

There were four specific issues covered by each contribution that each author has been asked to address where applicable. First, a careful description of the *local context* in terms of geographical, socio-political, cultural features as well as current issues affecting youth, PYD programs, available studies, PYD policy and intervention. Second, an overview of *novelty and incremental contributions*, detailing the ways in which each chapter offers unique insights, methodological and conceptual contributions to the PYD field. Third, *context/cultural specifics and universal mechanisms of PYD*, delineating what is unique in each chapter and how the knowledge provided can also be useful to understand and apply to other contexts. Fourth, a separate section dedicated to *implications for research, policy and practice*. In addition, each chapter has been enriched and supplemented by the newest and most recently published research materials inherent to various topics represented.

Based on the above considerations, this volume had three major aims to (1) advance the theoretical and empirical knowledge base on PYD among young people as well as processes by which PYD affects developmental outcomes in a global perspective; (2) expand understanding on methodological issues and provide knowledge base on PYD measurement in under researched and neglected contexts globally and (3) integrate scholarship on PYD with relevant research, policy and practice implications.

### **Advancing Theory and Knowledge on Positive Youth Development in Global Contexts**

The chapters that appear in Part I supplemented by some in Part II of this *handbook* focus primarily on the first aim, namely, what we know on



PYD among young people and the processes by which PYD affects their developmental outcomes in a variety of international settings. This is a timely and novel knowledge base to the multidisciplinary science scholarship on PYD adding to the still relatively small work in a global perspective.

The chapters included here expand upon earlier work with a more targeted and explicit framing and focus on PYD in specific cultural settings and groups of young people. Insofar, PYD processes in myriad forms structure the global and local environments in which young people live, learn, and grow as documented and framed by the chapters covering a wide array of culturally diverse populations and geographic regions around the world (i.e., Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand). Also, consistent with scholarship embodying new conceptualizations of PYD is the range of conceptual perspectives and methodological approaches included across the volume. This includes the newly proposed 7Cs model of PYD as well as novel methodological approaches to the study of the assets and the 5Cs models of PYD in a range of developmental outcomes, mechanisms and correlates of positive development among young people (e.g., risky behaviors, mindfulness, environmental concerns, personality traits, healthy life style behaviors, family processes and parenting knowledge, violent radicalization, classroom climate, vocational competence, scouting, digital settings). In so doing, the chapters in this volume address specific strengths of youth development (e.g., identity, school and student engagement, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and hopeful future expectations) that in combination with contextual resources (e.g., parents, peers, schools, neighborhoods, youth programs and interventions) provide the bases of PYD.

Additional methodological strengths regard chapters in the volume including both experimental and survey methods as well as qualitative and mixed-methods approaches. Complementary with Part I are relevant contributions from Part II incorporating longitudinal data and permitting stronger tests of process and developmental change. Yet, it is worth noting that despite the

variability in conceptual and methodological approaches, a vast majority of the contributions represent cross-sectional and correlational data thereby limiting the causal inferences on major findings. Nevertheless, this is the first in its kind globally inclusive volume on PYD with unique contributions from new and understudied contexts and samples of young people.

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### **Expand Understanding and Provide Knowledge on PYD Measurement in Globally Under Researched and Neglected Contexts**

A second aim of this *handbook* was to advance understanding on methodological issues and provide knowledge base on PYD measurement in under researched and neglected contexts from a global perspective. In fact, a key focus of the volume regards the measurement of PYD applicable to international settings marked by the use of psychometrically strong measures. Traditionally, PYD scholarship has been based on and pertinent with a quantitative paradigm because methodological issues and comparative work have been more thoroughly studied and documented in quantitative than in qualitative studies. Accordingly, this volume offers methodological advances from the roots of PYD measurement and enlarging global comparative research. Although the field of PYD methods may look as slowly developing, this volume has clarified noteworthy progress from different perspectives. The most obvious regard the tremendous increase in number and sophistication in statistical procedures such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and measurement invariance procedures.

Invariance is a concept denoting the level of comparability of measurement outcomes across cultures (van de Vijver, 2019). In international and cross-cultural comparative work, the emphasis is on three levels of invariance regarding the comparability of constructs (e.g., whether PYD measurement is the same in all cultures/groups), comparability of items and measurement procedures (e.g., whether items of PYD measures have the same meaning across cultures/groups), and

comparability of scores (e.g., whether items measuring PYD have the same meaning within and across cultures/groups). Relatedly, there are three types of invariance embedded in these levels referred to construct, metric (or measurement unit), and scalar (or full score). Levels of invariance need to be empirically confirmed usually by means of SEM and multi-group path models across main groups of comparison, and adequate fulfillment of cut-off criteria for main fit indices for the models tested (Rutkowski & Svetina, 2017).

Construct invariance is observed when there is evidence that the measured construct (PYD) has the same psychological meaning across groups or cultures. Metric invariance assures that the metric of a scale is identical across groups/cultures. This level of invariance is important because indicates that the scores of the measured construct (PYD) can be compared within cultures but not across cultures. The establishment of scalar invariance means that the scores of the measured construct (PYD) can be directly compared within and across cultures, and/or groups and that individual and cultural/group score differences have the same meaning. Scalar invariance is mandatory for conducting comparisons of means in analyses of variance or *t* tests (van de Vijver, 2019). Where applicable, all contributions included in this volume advance understanding of measurement issues and provide evidence pertaining to invariance and adaptation of PYD measures across diverse cultures and groups.

### **Integrate Scholarship on PYD with Relevant Research, Policy and Practice**

The third aim of this *handbook* was to indicate ways in which scientific knowledge on PYD can better inform research, policy and practice aimed at ensuring optimal health and well-being of adolescents and young people globally. All chapters in this volume discuss the implications of their work for research, policy and practice in a range of topic areas (e.g., family, school, neighbor-

hood, digital settings, mental health, well-being, and environment) with the scope that this knowledge base continues to grow and facilitate prosperous prevention and intervention efforts. The goal of this effort was to provide relevant stakeholders with valuable knowledge to help make informed decisions regarding the viability and applications of PYD models across diverse research, policy and practice environments.

Based on these considerations, a relevant implication regards the fact that PYD promotes more complete models of youth intervention within the perspective of an integrated intervention science (Eichas, Ferrer-Wreder, & Olsson, 2019). As most chapters in this volume clearly indicate, there exists a strong conceptual and empirical base for connecting PYD with prevention and intervention science. Promoting contextual and individual resources within the PYD perspective facilitates desired change in problematic behaviors and mitigates potentially adverse effects of such behaviors. The contributions in this volume with fresh advancements in the PYD field have the potential to realize a more fully integrated intervention science. An integrated intervention science can foster a more complete set of intervention tools and equip relevant professionals to capitalize on the strengths of young people in global, culturally diverse real-world practice settings (Ferrer-Wreder, 2013).

On the basis of these major aims, the volume furthers global research, policy and practice promoting PYD among young people across the globe. Our hope is that this *handbook* may represent valuable point of reference and useful resource for the next generation of researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and the general public interested to enhance the lives of young people globally. We view this as an imperative, given that, with a few notable exceptions, a majority of the current knowledge base derives from White, Western, educated, industrialized, democratic and rich (WEIRD) countries neglecting relevant contextual and cultural settings around the globe (Muthukrishna et al., 2020).

## Unique Assets and Incremental Contributions to the PYD Field

This volume is the first of its kind representing the largest collection to date in terms of geographical distribution, theory, research and conceptual coverage on PYD across the globe. Being not a traditional *handbook*, the wide scope of contributions cover the first large international collection of PYD work conceived by a new generation of scholars globally and in traditionally understudied contexts. In so doing, the volume offers unique conceptual and methodological contributions to the PYD field with relevant applications in a variety of settings and disciplines including social and applied sciences.

Major conceptual contributions include the development of new PYD models and the innovative application of existing models sustained by a wide research coverage and empirical evidence on neglected young populations across the globe. The inclusion of individual and/or comparative focus on diverse contexts and groups of young people, provides unique contributions to the field that prompt inferences about context specific and universally applicable features of PYD across these contexts. The volume also contributes with a wide range of PYD research, programs and interventions that identify key positive youth development constructs and the potential of PYD applications and interventions in building strengths and benefits for young people. The goal has been to contribute to the achievement of a global PYD inspired science that incorporates PYD concepts and empirical evidence from global contexts to promote human betterment.

Additional conceptual contribution of the volume regards the focus on successful development and ways to promote optimal developmental pathways in emerging adulthood covering ages 18–29. The features of this developmental stage include identity exploration, instability, later entry into stable work, later marriage, and later parenthood (Arnett, 2018). PYD is particularly relevant to these young people because of the significant potential for positive change and redirection of life pathways during this developmental period. This is a challenging transitional life

stage, characterized by both capacity for positive change and a high incidence of adaptation issues or mental health problems (Arnett, 2018; Mehta, Arnett, Palmer, & Nelson, 2020). This volume covers large samples of emerging adults in addition to youth in variety of contexts (culture, family, school, and community) and indicates how these contexts can raise young people ready to enter adulthood and contribute to own and societal prosperity on the global stage. It is with this backdrop that the current volume is an important contribution in preparing schools, families, communities, researchers, policymakers and practitioners to link theoretical and practical models to promote a wide array of positive development indicators among young people.

Major methodological contributions of this volume include the wide array of statistical methods and tools for PYD research, policy and practice from global, culturally unique and comparative perspectives. The volume presents fine applications of well-developed methodological tools and models that have been tested and refined in newly investigated samples by providing a globally relevant empirical basis for advancing such tools and models. Importantly, major contributions tackle the pressing need to develop, test and adapt PYD measures in culturally diverse samples of young people. In so doing, the volume provides evidence base for adequate measurement tools and PYD models in new understudied samples and broader areas of developmental growth.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

This *handbook* presents the most comprehensive collection of empirical evidence on PYD among youth and emerging adults yet assembled. This unprecedented collection of cutting-edge contributions promotes visibility and work by scholars across underrepresented and under researched contexts who offer the best science available on the positive development of young people globally. Collectively, the contributions provide a comprehensive view of the advancements in conceptualization, measurement and research within

the PYD field. In so doing, the volume advances a clear set of recommendations and implications for researchers, policymakers and practitioners interested in improving the lives of young people by identifying and promoting strengths and opportunities of this population globally. At the same time, the chapters presented here represent a call for more multidisciplinary and global research, policy and practice sustained by intervention to better determine what young people at different ages in variety of cultural contexts are capable of experiencing PYD and its related constructs.

The outstanding cast of contributors clearly document stellar accomplishments in the current field, while providing creative and promising avenues about where future PYD outlook would be most fruitfully implemented. We are in the midst of an extremely exciting, albeit challenging times for PYD inspired research, policy and practice. Social scientists, policymakers, practitioners and the general public interested in promoting optimal development among young people in global contexts, are putting efforts to further advance our understanding of what successful development looks like across these populations and contexts. In line with this priority, professionals of the PYD community need to work together to identify opportunities for advancing relevant scholarship in the promotion and cultivation of PYD. Moving beyond purely academic perspective, such work efforts find exciting possibilities for the application of the PYD knowledge in real-world contexts of young people. The application of this knowledge may occur when scholars are able to translate their findings to meet the needs of specific populations and contexts by making these findings appealing and accessible throughout sensitive research and dissemination process. Relatedly, scholars should consider the unique features of their specific context and most effectively cultivate PYD opportunities and outcomes for young people.

Yet, there is still much to accomplish and learn in the PYD field. Through the chapters of this volume, the contributors have indicated the way forward to advance research productivity and impact, as well as translation to programs, policy, and practice. Globally, scholars are increasingly

joining together from a variety of fields to create interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary working teams and networks. As documented through various contributions in the *handbook*, these networks and teams must include young scholars around the globe supported by generative mentors as a means to establishing a promising PYD scholarship. This volume is a prime example of the initiation of such teams being critical to the advancement of our knowledge of PYD globally. It is our conviction that this *handbook* has the potential to prompt future outlook and initiatives with research, policy and practice refinements as a means to further strengthen the cultivation of the next generation of PYD scholarship in global contexts.

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