



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENT TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF
YOUTH PROGRAMS



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TOOLKIT ORIENTATION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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1. Where can I find a definition of positive youth development?

YouthPower Learning, a USAID funded project, has developed a comprehensive definition of positive youth development (PYD), and it can be found on [page 15](#). To learn more about positive youth development, go to www.youthpower.org

2. Where do I go in the toolkit to understand more about how to conceptualize PYD measurement?

We introduce the PYD Measurement Framework in [Chapter 1](#), which is dedicated to conceptualizing PYD measurement.

3. Where can I go for a list of PYD indicators and their sources?

We developed a list of user-friendly, evidence-based illustrative indicators of PYD that youth programs in low- and middle-income countries can use. The table of PYD illustrative indicators, along with the reference sheets for indicators sources, is in [Annexes E, F and G](#). More context for the illustrative indicators is provided through a case study approach in [Chapter 2](#).

4. Where can I go if I want to see an example of how to incorporate PYD measurement for program design, monitoring and evaluation?

We walk readers through the stages of measurement, monitoring and evaluation for programs using a case study approach in [Chapter 2](#). In this case study approach, which is based on a real USAID program, we use the PYD Measurement Framework and the indicators to show how to incorporate PYD principles into measurement during all phases of program design, from developing the research questions to dissemination of PYD data.

5. Where can I go if I am interested in adapting PYD measures to new contexts?

[Chapter 3](#) orients readers to the important considerations needed for adapting PYD measures and principles in new contexts, including scale validation, developmental stage of youth, and gender.

6. Where can I go if I want to learn more about how USAID is investing in young people?

For more information on USAID's investment in young people, including highlights from the 2012 Youth in Development Policy, see [Annex A](#).

7. Where do I go to learn more about YouthPower?

For more information on YouthPower, see [Annex B](#) and www.youthpower.org. A list of individuals involved in developing the toolkit and the indicators is available in [Annex C](#).

8. Where can I find more information about PYD in general and the current state of the field?

In [Annex D](#), we briefly detail the historical context of PYD and the current state of the field, especially in terms of measurement. Further, a meta review of PYD in low- and middle-income countries is also being produced under YouthPower Learning.

There are internal and external hyperlinks in the document, denoted by underlined text.

Throughout this toolkit, three types of visual icons in the right-hand margin draw attention to specific text or resources that may be of interest:



USAID logo: This logo indicates a section of the toolkit that is of special interest to those at USAID, or those involved in the implementation of USAID programs.



RESOURCES logo: This logo represents additional reading or resources that go above and beyond what the toolkit is able to cover. For some resource icons, there will be a number inside the icon that is associated with a resource at the end of the chapter.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT logo: This logo indicates additional information about how to involve youth in the process.

INTRODUCTION

What is Positive Youth Development?

Positive youth development (PYD) refers to a broad approach that aims to build the competencies, skills and abilities of youth that they need to grow and flourish throughout life. PYD is both a philosophy and an approach to adolescent development. As a philosophy, PYD views youth as precious assets to be nurtured and developed rather than as problems to be solved. The approach that flows from this philosophy works on building mutually beneficial relationships between youth and their family, peer groups, school, workplace, neighborhood, community, other government institutions, society, and culture to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their knowledge, interests, skills, and abilities.

Youth transition through a critical developmental phase, rapidly evolving socially, emotionally and physically within a complex world. Multiple factors influence how they develop and thrive or struggle. Recognizing youth development as a function of and interaction between complex environments and systems can help us better respond to youth and to program effectively. PYD addresses youth as assets to be developed, rather than problems to be managed.

While there are several definitions of PYD, YouthPower Learning has defined it as follows:

Positive youth development (PYD) 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.¹

A PYD approach to programming has been shown to have a positive impact across an array of outcomes and sectors in the United States and other high-income countries, including the areas of sexual and reproductive health, mental health, education, crime, and violence (Catalano, 2002; Gavin et al., 2010; Roth 2003). While efforts are underway to review and collect more evidence about PYD internationally, donors, governments, practitioners and policymakers are increasingly looking to this approach to provide more holistic support for youth in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

¹ YouthPower Learning developed this definition by building on the key elements of the USAID Youth in Development Policy, the academic and grey literature, and existing definitions and frameworks of PYD and in consultation with USAID, youth-serving and youth-led organizations, and PYD researchers and experts to ensure their usefulness and applicability across youth age groups (10 to 29), sectors, and settings in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).



For more information on the ten seminal readings on positive youth development, see resource section at the end of the chapter.



For more information on USAID's vision of youth and positive youth development in their work see Annex A.



For more resources on youth, please see section at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER I

A FRAMEWORK TO MEASURE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Photo credit: © David Snyder/ICRW

Objectives of Chapter I

After reviewing this chapter, you will:

- Be familiar with the PYD Measurement Framework; and
- Understand how the PYD Measurement Framework is linked to the programs.

Building on the key elements of the USAID Youth in Development Policy, the academic and grey literature, and existing definitions and frameworks of PYD, YouthPower Learning developed a definition of PYD that could be broadly applied across youth age groups (10 to 29), sectors and settings in low- and middle-income countries. The research team held numerous consultations with experts (see [Annex C](#) for a full list of names) to solicit feedback, and also undertook online surveys and presentations with a wide range of stakeholders, including USAID implementers, youth-serving and youth-led organizations, and PYD researchers and experts.

The final definition reflects the key elements of PYD and is both applicable for the developing world context and relevant for USAID:

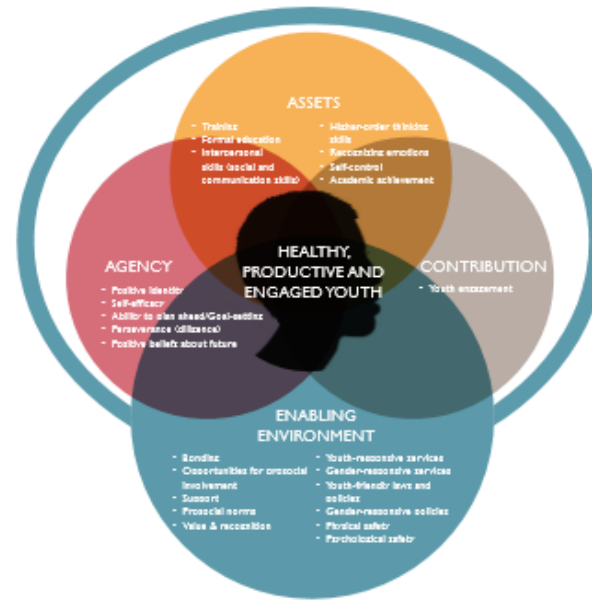
Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.

Based on the definition of PYD, YouthPower Learning synthesized the PYD literature and organized PYD constructs into four critical components, or domains, that serve as the overarching PYD Framework. Figure 3 below shows the theoretical connection among the four PYD domains used in the framework – Assets, Agency, Contribution and Enabling Environment – and to the final set of PYD constructs that map to illustrative indicators, which is further discussed in the next chapter.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential.

Figure 3: PYD Measurement Framework

This framework illustrates that to achieve the vision of healthy, productive and engaged youth, PYD programs, practices and policies must work with youth to improve their Assets, Agency, Contribution and Enabling Environment.



This framework illustrates that to achieve the vision of healthy, productive and engaged youth, PYD programs, practices and policies must work with youth to improve their:

- **Assets:** Youth have the necessary resources, skills and competencies to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Agency:** Youth perceive and have the ability to 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 in order to achieve desired outcomes.
- **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 develops and supports their assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and to stay safe, secure, and be protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and adults), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems) and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces).

PYD Framework with Program Features

Seven features of PYD are essential for strong for programs (See Table 3). These features link directly to the four domains presented in the PYD Framework. Like the domains, these features are grounded in the literature, particularly the work of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, but 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.

CHAPTER 2

PYD CONSTRUCTS AND ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS



Photo credit: © Albert González Farrán/
UNAMID

Objectives of Chapter 2

After reviewing this chapter, you will:

- Be familiar with the PYD constructs and relevant indicators for PYD outcomes;
- Understand how to use the PYD Framework throughout all phases of research; and
- Have a list of relevant PYD indicators from which you can choose.

From The PYD Framework to Measuring Core PYD Constructs

The PYD domains and features described in the previous chapter include important concepts such as life skills, engagement and bonding. Because these concepts are essential to the PYD Framework, it is important to monitor and evaluate them in the course of program development and implementation. These central concepts are referred to as “constructs” because they can be measured in a variety of ways rather than only one direct way. To effectively measure PYD outcomes, indicators should be selected that are practical to measure and pertain as directly as possible to the PYD concepts the program addresses.

This section provides a brief description of the process for selecting indicators to measure PYD constructs, and then describes ways to apply the PYD Framework at each phase of a program design and evaluation, including examples drawn from a case study of a PYD program.

Figure 2 below visualizes the relationship among the PYD definition, domains and features, and terminology associated with measurement used in this toolkit.

To effectively measure PYD outcomes, indicators should be selected that are practical to measure and pertain as directly as possible to the PYD concepts the program addresses.



Table 3. How to Use the PYD Framework to Define Primary Outcomes and Research Questions

DOMAINS	FEATURES	CONSTRUCTS AND INDICATORS
Think about your program goal and review the four domains. As your key outcomes and research questions are developing, how do they relate to the four domains? Can you include more than one domain to increase impact on positive development?	By reviewing the seven PYD features, you can ensure that you are implementing program activities that have the greatest evidence for ensuring long-term impact. Look at the list of seven features. Consider your program goal, and think about which features would support those goals. Be complete but also be focused. Include features that you expect your program activities to affect.	Review the PYD Illustrative Indicators Table in Annex E to help refine your research questions or outcomes of interest. Develop your outcomes and research questions to take into account the most relevant constructs and indicators. Review the literature and explore similar programs to see which constructs have been shown to be associated with your key sectoral outcomes of interest.

Case Study: YTP Program in Kyrgyzstan (Phase One)

The stated goal of the YTP program was “to empower youth and adults in conflict-prone communities to stimulate lasting conflict prevention and promote a culture of peace within their communities and beyond.” This overall goal is linked to two outcomes: conflict prevention and reducing violence. One can easily see elements of the PYD definition reflected in this goal; in fact, the goal itself is empowerment of young people. The program was designed to “facilitate community-based reconciliation and reflection about conflict stories and paths to resolution.”

Figure 4 provides the specific ways in which the YTP case study could use the PYD Measurement Framework to select primary outcomes and research questions.

Figure 4: Application of the PYD Measurement Framework for Selecting Primary Outcomes and Research Questions for the Youth Theater for Peace Program

DOMAINS

The overall goal of YTP was to promote sustainable conflict prevention at the community level. Elements of this program goal and key outcomes clearly map to the four domains:

- ASSETS:** The program will build youths’ skills in conflict resolution.
- AGENCY:** Youth are empowered to use these skills to engage others.
- CONTRIBUTION:** Youth engage others for a positive change, resulting in members of the larger community seeing the value of peace and peaceful conflict resolution in their community.
- ENABLING ENVIRONMENT:** Adult mentors are trained to lead the program with youth.

The program focuses most intensively on building *Assets and Agency* for youth, through support in the *Enabling Environment*, to ensure that youth *Contribute* to the greater community for positive change.

CHAPTER 3

ADAPTING PYD MEASUREMENT TO DIFFERENT CONTEXTS



Photo credit: © Albert González Farrán/
UNAMID

Objectives of Chapter 3

After reviewing this chapter, you will:

- Understand some of the challenges and considerations of adapting scales to new contexts, and potential ways to mitigate these challenges;
- Be introduced to the ethical responsibilities of doing research with youth; and
- Know more about how to engage youth in the research process for PYD programs.

This chapter introduces the major considerations that are needed in adapting the PYD indicators to different contexts. It starts with a section on methodological issues that affect adaptation of measures, followed by a larger section on key considerations. Next, this chapter will cover ethical issues for PYD measurement, including a section on how to engage young people as researchers and evaluators. It concludes with a list of “dos and don’ts” for adaptation across contexts.

Measurement

Many of the measures included in this toolkit are scales that were originally developed in English-speaking countries. For implementers of youth programs, including USAID, staff, time and resources must be invested to validate and pilot test PYD tools. To be used as intended, scales must be both validated and assessed for reliability. Scale reliability is the degree to which the items on the scale are measured consistently and predictably, both across items and over time. Scale validity is the extent to which the scale measures what it says it will measure. Further details about scale reliability and validity are beyond the scope of this toolkit, but there are key aspects that should be considered for adaptation of measures. Changes and revisions to measures must be done with careful consideration to preserve the integrity of the original items while ensuring their relevance for the target population and purpose.

Cross-cultural adaptation is a process that looks at both language (i.e. translation) and cultural adaptation of measures (i.e. culturally relevant content) for use in another setting (Beaton et al., 2000). The cross-cultural adaptation of measures for use in a new country, culture, and/ or language requires use of multiple validation methods to reach equivalence between the original source and the adapted version of the measure. There are several challenges to adapting and developing measures that are reliable and valid for diverse populations with regard to item complexity, item ordering, item wording, and response choice categories. If measures are to be used across cultures, the items must both be translated well and adapted culturally to maintain the content validity or meaning of the measure. If the questions don’t mean the same thing in the two different languages, a translated question may elicit a very different response from what was originally intended. An instrument lacking content validity results in poor reliability of the data and a tool that fails to measure its intended constructs. Even within the same culture, subculture differences in ethnicity, and dialects or languages can influence conceptual equivalence.



For more information on scale measurement, see resource section at the end of the chapter.

Additional resources for Chapter 3

Validation and Reliability of Scales

1. DeVellis, R.F (2016). Scale Development: Theory and Applications (Applied Social Research Methods), 4th Edition.
2. Save the Children (forthcoming). The Children Reliability Protocol.

Age, Developmental Stage, and Life Stage

3. NIH (2011). The Teen Brain: Still under Construction.
4. Child Trends (2015). The Developing Brain: Implications for Youth Programs.
5. FHI 360 (2016). Looking through the Lens of Adolescent Development to Strengthen Secondary Education.

Gender, Culture, Language and Literacy

6. YouthPower Learning (2016). Does Your Program Reflect Gender Transformative or Positive Youth Development Practices? A Checklist.
7. Measure Evaluation (2016). Guidelines for Integrating Gender into an M&E Framework and System Assessment.
8. Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (2014). Gender Transformative Approaches, An HC3 Primer.
9. Institute for Reproductive Health (2014). Developmental Assets and Sexual and Reproductive Health among 10 to14 Year Olds in Uganda.
10. Search Institute, (n.d) Developmental Assets Profile

Ethical and other key considerations

11. BRYCS (2009). Growing Up in a New Country: A Positive Youth Development Toolkit for Working with Refugees and Immigrants.
12. Youth.gov (n.d.). LGBT Youth - A resource repository on Youth.gov
13. USAID (n.d.). LGBT Vision for Action: Promoting and Supporting Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Individuals (Chapters 4 and 6)
14. USAID (n.d.). Advancing disability inclusive development?
15. EQUIP1 (2011). Access to Quality Education for Children and Youth With Disabilities in Conflict, Crisis and Stable Countries
16. Search Institute (2010). Strong Staff, Strong Students: Professional Development in Schools and Youth Programs.
17. Schenk, K. and Williamson J. (2005). Ethical Approaches to Gathering Information from Children and Adolescents in International Settings: Guidelines and Resources.
18. UNICEF (2016). What we know about ethical research involving children in humanitarian settings: An overview of the principles, the literature and case studies

Youth Engagement

19. YouthPower Learning (2016). Youth Engagement Community of Practice. Join the CoP at YouthPower.org
20. USAID (2014). Youth Engagement in Development: Effective Approaches and Action-Oriented Recommendations for the Field.
21. Restless Development (2012). Literature Review: What evidence is there to suggest that engaging young people in development enhances or limits development outcomes across different contexts and in different geographical locations?



ANNEX D:

OVERVIEW OF THE PYD FIELD – PAST AND PRESENT

The field of youth development has moved away from a problem behavior-based approach—which focused narrowly on adolescent behavioral health problems, including delinquency and violence, mental health problems, risky sexual behavior and substance use—to a strengths-based approach, which focuses on promoting protective factors and positive outcomes for youth in areas such as health and education (Catalano & Hawkins, 2002; Pittman, O'Brien & Kimball, 1993). Studies of programs that take this more positive approach to youth development are relatively new and have been primarily conducted in high-income countries, including Australia and, most commonly, in the United States (Patton 2000; 2006).

In 1990, the Search Institute put forth a list of 40 assets or skills, experiences, relationships and behaviors which were deemed essential to positive development for children and youth (Benson et al., 1998). Progress was made in the early 2000s in defining developmental assets, and in clarifying and honing the essential components of what was becoming known as a PYD framework. Richard Lerner developed the Five Cs model, which focuses on developmental assets organized into five core constructs (Lerner, 2004). A sixth C was later added as Contribution. Additionally, research by Catalano and colleagues (2002) identified 18 core concepts essential to PYD, which were organized under the domains of positive skills/competencies, agency and enabling environment. The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine also identified components or features of successful PYD programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The table below summarizes the key constructs, concepts and features of leading PYD models and frameworks from the literature of the 1990s and 2000s and shows the various ways that different scholars in the United States have conceptualized PYD.

Evolution of PYD Models and Frameworks in the United States

Developmental Assets Profile (Benson et al., 1998)	Focus on 40 developmental assets across eight broad areas of human development: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support• Empowerment• Boundaries & Expectations• Constructive Use of Time• Commitment to Learning• Positive Values• Social Competencies• Positive Identity
Five Cs Model of PYD (Lerner 2002, 2004)	Focus on developmental assets Core constructs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competence: social, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and moral• Confidence: self-efficacy, self-determination, belief in the future and clear and positive identity• Connection: bonding• Character: prosocial norms, spirituality• Caring: empathy and sympathy for others.

ANNEX E:

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS

Guidance for Using Positive Youth Development Illustrative Indicators

<p>Purpose of the indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help program implementers identify PYD indicators that can be used across multiple sectors. Use of these indicators in low-to-middle income countries can provide additional data on how PYD approaches and outcomes can be linked to sector-specific outcomes. Often, these PYD indicators serve as intermediate indicators, linking activities from a PYD program to long-term outcomes in specific sectors, such as workforce development, democracy and governance. To provide implementers of USAID youth programs with two youth-specific Foreign Assistance Indicators (i.e. "F-Indicators"), which are mandatory. In addition, we provide two pilot USAID youth indicators. Reference Sheets for each measurement source for indicators listed in the PYD Illustrative Indicators Table contain information such as a brief description, target age group for the tool, the relevant tool items that link to the illustrative indicators and the citation for the source (Annex E).
<p>When to use the indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During program design and Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) preparation to guide the situational/needs analysis to inform the Theory of Change. During the development of the M&E plan to identify sources of data to inform the development of project/program baseline and follow-up. During M&E to monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving specific outcomes and outputs.

Positive Youth Development Illustrative Indicators¹

FEATURE	CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
DOMAIN: ASSETS			
Skill building	Training	Training in skills specific to vocation, employment or financial capacity (e.g. money management, business development and marketing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/proportion (%) of youth enrolled in vocational or other training Number/proportion (%) of youth who completed vocational or other training
Skill building	Formal education	Exposure to formal education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/proportion (%) of youth who have completed primary education Number/proportion (%) of youth who have completed secondary education Number/proportion (%) of youth who have completed post-secondary/ tertiary education Number of months youth attended school Number/proportion (%) of youth enrolled in education Number/proportion (%) of youth re-enrolled in education

¹These PYD illustrative indicators should be reviewed with the PYD Measurement Toolkit. In addition, most of the illustrative indicators provided corresponds to a specific tool that can be found in Annex F of the Toolkit.

SECTION I

NAME OF TOOL: The Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale (CPYDS)

Developer: Daniel Shek, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Brief Description of Tool: The CPYDS contains 90 items, which are grouped into 15 sub-scales measuring aspects of positive youth development.

Constructs Measured:

PYD Construct from the PYD Measurement Toolkit	CPYDS Scale Constructs
1. Interpersonal Skills (social and communication skills)	1. Social Competence
2. Higher-order thinking skills	2. Cognitive Competence
3. Recognizing emotions	3. Emotional Competence
4. Positive identity	4. Clear and positive identity
5. Self-efficacy	5. Self-efficacy
6. Positive beliefs about future	6. Beliefs in the future
7. Prosocial norms	7. Prosocial norms

Targeted Age Group: Ages 12-18 years

Availability of Tool: Developer has provided permission to use.

Locations and Languages in which tool has been used: Hong Kong, Macau – English, Chinese

How to Administer: Self-report questionnaire administered directly to youth. Tool can also be completed in interview format.

PYD Measurement Toolkit Illustrative Indicator and Corresponding description of CPYDS scale item:

Response Options for all CPYDS subscales: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Slightly Disagree = 3; Slightly Agree = 4; Agree = 5; Strongly Agree = 6

1. Interpersonal Skills: Increased interpersonal skills at the conclusion of training/programming

CPYDS subscale on Social Competence

1. I can actively talk to a stranger.
2. I know how to communicate with others.
3. I understand the rules and expectations in interacting with others.
4. I can interact with others in a harmonious manner.
5. I enjoy joining social activities.
6. I know how to differentiate good and bad friends.
7. I know how to listen to others.

2. Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Increased higher-order thinking skills at the conclusion of training/programming

CPYDS subscale on Cognitive Competence

1. I believe there is a solution for any problem.
2. I know how to see things from different angles.
3. I will try new ways to solve my problems.
4. I know how to find the causes of and solutions to a problem.
5. I know how to develop plans to achieve my objectives.
6. I can differentiate the good and bad aspects of things.

ANNEX G: POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENT SOURCES TABLE

This document lists tools that can be used to help program implementers measure PYD effectiveness within youth-focused programs. The PYD Measurement Sources Table should be used in conjunction with the PYD Measurement Toolkit, PYD Illustrative Indicators (Annex E) and Reference Sheets (Annex F).

	CPYDS	CTCYS	IYDS	DAP	PSL-AB	Fast Track	CHKS	FCP	MSPSS	JYS	PSS	Indicator created	F indicator	Pilot USAID
ASSETS														
Training												x	x	
Formal Education												x		
Interpersonal skills (social and communication skills)	x					x								
Higher-order thinking skills	x									x				
Recognizing emotions	x													
Self-control			x			x								
Academic Achievement			x											
AGENCY														
Positive identity	x		x											
Self-efficacy	x						x							x
Ability to plan ahead/ goal-setting								x						
Perseverance (diligence)								x						
Positive beliefs about future	x													
CONTRIBUTION														
Youth engagement												x		x
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT														
Bonding		x					x							
Prosocial Involvement		x												
Support			x	x					x		x			
Prosocial norms	x		x	x										
Value and recognition		x												
Youth-friendly laws and policies												x	x	
Gender-responsive policies												x		
Youth-responsive services												x		
Gender-responsive services												x		
Physical Safety					x							x		
Psychological Safety												x		