

# What is Positive Youth Development?



# Objectives

*By the end of this module participants should better understand:*

- What is PYD?
- What have we learned about the evidence from PYD programs in LMIC?
- Why it is important to measure youth development outcomes

# So what is PYD?

“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.*”

# What do we know about Positive Youth Development?

- Both a philosophy and an approach to programming
- A way of understanding young people that helps guide the design of policy, programs, supports and opportunities

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- Focus on strengths
  - Focus on assets
  - Youth engagement
  - For all youth
  - Every sector plays a role
  - Long term commitment
  - Holistic - based on developmental stages and needs

# PYD Achieves Multiple Sector Outcomes

Crime &  
Violence  
Prevention

Delay of Sexual  
Activity

Increased  
Academic/Soft  
Skills

Increased  
Community  
Engagement

Substance  
Abuse  
Prevention

Improved  
Relationships

## META-REVIEW OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES



Positive Youth Development (PYD) is both a philosophy and a targeted approach to youth development whereby relationships that youth have with key people and institutions in their social context provide opportunities for youth to enhance their knowledge, interests, skills and abilities. Simply put, PYD approaches expect that if young people have the knowledge, skills, and support they need, they will thrive as adults, enjoy good health, succeed economically, make meaningful contributions, and have happy families. Making sure youth thrive will foster their positive development, as well as that of successive generations. 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.

The PYD approach has been shown to have positive impacts in the U.S. and other high-income countries (Catalano, 2002) across an array of sectors, including health, education, delinquency and violence.

The PYD approach draws our attention to four broad domains:

- **Assets:** the availability of skills, tools, resources
- **Agency:** the ability to use skills, tools, and resources and to make independent decisions
- **Contribution:** the results of using assets for your own good and good of others
- **Enabling environment:** the existence of safe, supportive, encouraging places to learn and grow

### Research Questions and Methods

Given the lack of evidence about the use and effectiveness of PYD approaches in low and middle income countries (LMICs), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commissioned the YouthPower Learning project ([www.youthpower.org](http://www.youthpower.org)) to undertake a meta-review, a type of literature review that collects and critically analyzes multiple research studies. For this meta-review, we developed a comprehensive plan and search strategy by identifying, appraising, and synthesizing all relevant studies based on



For a list of low and middle income countries as classified by the World Bank as of July 2014, see: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>



# Recommendations for evaluation and learning

#1

Increase investment in process and impact evaluations of PYD programs in LMICs.

#2

Ensure robust, holistic and consistent measurement of PYD outcomes.

# Why do we care about PYD outcomes?

- There is strong evidence that PYD strategies can prevent a wide range of negative outcomes and increase positive outcomes for youth in HIC.
- The evidence from LMIC is sparse, but growing.
- You can add to that evidence! Leading to funding...
- There's high potential for USAID PYD programs to improve the lives of young people all over the world.