

Latin@ Youth Participation In Youth Development Programs

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Abstract

This literature review synthesizes research and practice-based literature to identify positive youth development program (PYD) qualities that support U.S.-based Latin@ youth participation and well-being. Beyond widely embraced PYD program qualities, we highlight five themes:

- Incorporate extended/emerging understandings of positive youth development that reflect Latin@ and immigrant youth experience;
- Contend with physiological and social effects of discrimination;
- Support positive ethnic identity development;
- Respond to economic poverty;
- Tailor efforts to the specific experience, resources, needs and interests of local and regional Latin@ youth and families.

Ramifications of these recommendations for PYD programs' conceptual frameworks, core programmatic elements, organizational infrastructure, and community relationships are discussed.

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Introduction

The 2010 U.S. Census revealed that the majority of California children and youth are Hispanic. In light of this demographic shift the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, which coordinates California’s 4-H Youth Development Program, requested a review of research on Latin@¹ youth participation in positive youth development programs. Key overarching questions were:

- What positive youth development program qualities lead to high and sustained participation rates for Latin@ youth in the United States?
- Are there specific attributes of positive youth development programs that lead to positive outcomes for Latin@ youth in the United States?²

To address these questions, this literature review taps a multi-disciplinary body of scholarship and practice-based literature. We turn to positive youth development research that includes an emphasis on Latin@ youth, which is primarily embedded in psychology and human development. We also build upon a rich tradition of studying Latin@ youth experience in Chican@ Studies, Sociology, Anthropology and Youth Studies. In addition, we consider some of the growing number of reports that document and assess Latin@-serving youth development programs.

The paper begins by describing the guiding conceptual framework and methods of the literature review. We then assess the state of the field and outline key overarching findings. We conclude by presenting implications of these findings for core elements of positive youth development programs.

Conceptual Framework

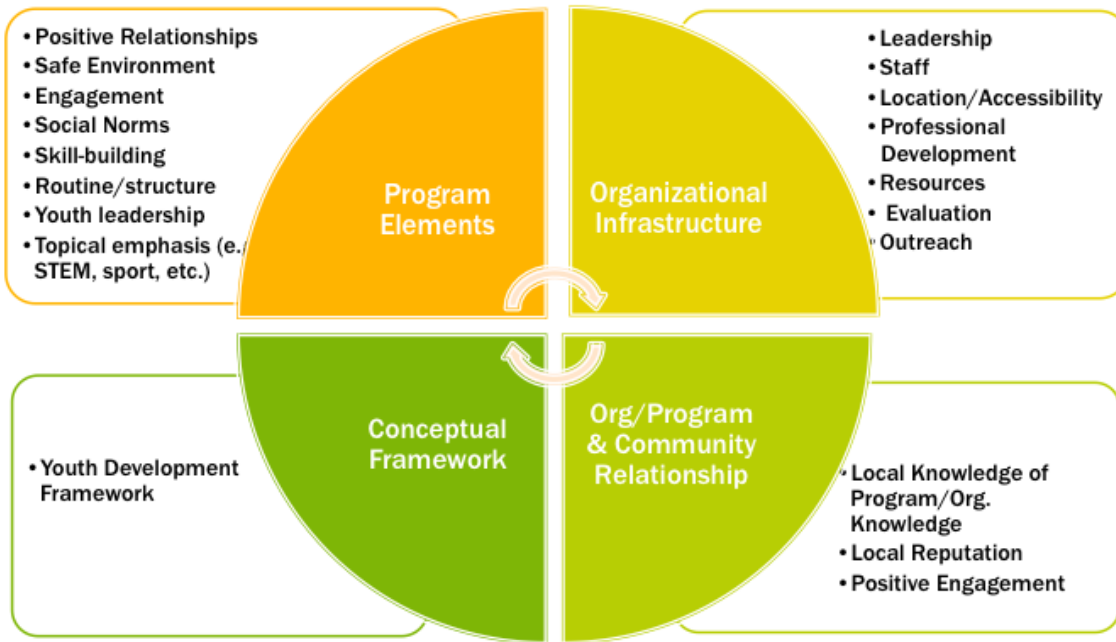
This literature review reflects an understanding of positive youth development (henceforth PYD) programs as incorporating the four key intersecting elements depicted in Figure 1:

1. underlying conceptual understandings of youth development and Latin@ youth development,
2. a set of core programmatic elements,
3. organizational and/or programmatic infrastructure, and
4. relationships between the organization/program and the communities, families and youth it intends to serve (adapted from National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002).

¹ We use the term “Latin@” to incorporate both the masculine and feminine forms of this term, which respectively end with “o” and “a.”

² This review focuses specifically on the experiences of Latin@ youth in the United States.

Figure 1: Positive Youth Development Program Elements



These aspects of PYD programs guide our consideration of program elements that are consequential for Latin@ youth participation and outcomes.

Scholarship on Latin@ youth experience emerging from Ethnic Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Youth Studies and, increasingly, Human Development suggests attending to an additional set of questions as we reviewed research on Latin@ youth participation in positive youth development programs.

- What/who do we mean by “Latin@ youth?”
- What does it mean to think about PYD with respect to this population(s) at this time in the United States and in specific localities (e.g. are there especially important developmental processes to engage, conditions that may shape experience)?
- What PYD program participation barriers do Latin@ youth experience (cultural, social/structural, institutional)?
- What unique resources/interests might Latin@ youth, families and communities bring to PYD programs? What attributes enable PYD programs to learn about/tap those?
- Do particular program attributes facilitate sensitivity to the complexity and richness of Latin@ experience in the US? If so, how do they matter in promoting Latin@ youth participation and development?

In sum, the analyses presented here reflect an effort to put in dialogue approaches to studying Latin@ participation in PYD programs and approaches to examining Latin@ youth experience in the United States.

Methods

We launched this literature review with a keyword search of central peer-reviewed, English-language article, book and dissertation databases. After testing various search terms (youth development, youth engagement, out of school time, after school program, Latino or Hispanic, positive youth development, and underrepresented), we employed the terms *youth development*, *program*, and *Latino or Hispanic* to search abstracts in ProQuest Dissertation and Theses (PDT), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Scopus. These searches were assessed to identify unique results. In addition, we conducted a full-text search of Google Scholar for pieces published 2005-2014, which yielded 4850 citations; we assessed the first 700 of these pieces as part of our selection process.³

Index	All /Unique Results
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (PDT)	33/33
Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)	30/8
Scopus	251/229
Total	314/270
Google Scholar	4,850/700/52

Finally, we employed the same key words to search key policy and practitioner-oriented research and evaluation repositories (Harvard Family Research Project, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Child Trends).

We found that this emerging area of scholarship reflected a wide variety of related questions and methodological approaches. To further narrow the literature for review, we applied the following selection criteria.

- Materials that focus specifically on Latin@ youth experiences in youth development program settings.
- Works related to dimensions of positive youth development programs successfully serving Latin@s (program elements, organizational infrastructure, framework, program/community relationship).
- Seminal studies that included Latin@s as part of their sample.

This yielded 114 unique publications.

Our review process entailed documenting each reading's research methods and findings with respect to a template reflecting core questions (see Appendix 1). The selection process and subsequent review revealed that the state of this field does not yet enable a formal meta-analysis, which would require a body of work reflecting similar questions, terminology, key constructs, and research methods. Instead we systematically reviewed and synthesized the research with respect to this project's guiding questions. While this synthesis enables us to adopt a comprehensive orientation to considering Latin@ participation in youth development programs, individual studies rarely reflect such an approach. Because we draw upon research

³ Search conducted 2/13/14. Beyond the first 700 pieces we began to note repetition of many citations.

rooted conceptually in not only positive youth development but in the fields of Ethnic and Youth Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, we pay careful attention to alignment and inconsistencies between their approaches and findings.

Findings

Overarching literature review findings are presented in six sections. The first section characterizes the state of research on Latin@ participation in youth development programs. The second through sixth sections discuss five crosscutting recommendations that emerge consistently across studies reviewed and frame our discussion of programs. They are:

- Incorporate extended/emerging understandings of positive youth development that reflect Latin@ and immigrant youth experience;
- Contend with physiological and social effects of discrimination;
- Support positive ethnic identity development;
- Respond to economic poverty;
- Tailor efforts to the specific experience, resources, needs and interests of local and regional Latin@ youth and families.

1. Studying Latin@ Participation in U.S. Youth Development Programs

In recent years, scholars of U.S.-based Latin@ youth experience writing within and beyond the field of positive youth development have pleaded for more research on the population.⁴ They describe the lack of research on Latin@ youth as alarming and of critical importance due to not only population increases but the structural inadequacies of public institutions to address needs unique to Latin@ youth and their families. Analyses of census data portray a generation of young Latin@s whose developmental needs are largely going unmet. Of specific concern are under-resourced schools, poorly developed or non-existent youth support infrastructures and high incarceration rates (Borden, 2006; Yosso, 2005; Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2009). In many communities a large proportion of Latin@ youth are growing up with a single parent, and a significant number of these families are experiencing severe poverty. Demographers note that Latin@s are now settling in areas with no previously established Latin@ communities, raising new social challenges (Fry, 2008). Low academic achievement among one of the country's largest youth populations limits opportunity to tap their considerable linguistic and cultural capital and threatens the nation's global competitiveness (Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orosco, 2009).

While describing a tremendous gap in research on Latin@ youth, these scholars also together highlight multiple challenges in addressing this need. Studying Latin@ youth development (henceforth LYD) is difficult in part due to diversity within the ethnic group (Swanson et. al., 2003). This diversity includes differences in length of residence in the United States (ranging from pre-dating U.S. existence to recent arrival), nations and regions of origin, immigration authorization status, socio-economic status, racial and ethnic background, language, education, and religion. Many national datasets do not disaggregate by Latin@ sub-

⁴ The body of scholarship on Latin@ youth development is an emerging area of study, as few empirical works on the topic have been published. The earliest of these uncovered by our search emerged in 2005.

group and formal studies rarely capture regional differences or the range of push-pull factors of immigration that shape displacement, motivation to move, or settlement patterns and experiences (Swanson et al., 2003). The steady flow of immigrants challenges efforts to describe population characteristics, as many newcomers experience extended periods of residential mobility. The unique vulnerabilities and resilience of undocumented Latin@ youth and youth growing up in mixed-status families are especially under-represented in positive youth development research.⁵

In light of Latin@ diversity, accurately interpreting PYD research focused on Latin@s and effectively translating it into practice requires detailed information about the places and populations with which interventions were implemented; however, studies of “promising practices” rarely provide adequate background. Few studies adopt the kinds of mixed-method, context-sensitive longitudinal approaches that could build upon the strengths of qualitative and quantitative analyses (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, 2014).

These research challenges reflect several understandings of race and ethnicity that are rarely discussed in mainstream youth development scholarship: racialization, panethnicity globalization and transnationalism. Contemporary race scholars argue that racial and ethnic classifications are socially constructed and highly contested; their meanings shift in different contexts and evolve over time (Hall, 1989; Omi & Winant, 1995). The dynamic nature of race/ethnicity is in part reflected in the shifting terminology used to describe different groups over time (for example Hispanic, Chican@, and Latin@; Oriental, Asian and Pacific Islander American; Negro, Black, Mulatto, African American). Therefore, race and ethnicity are best understood as a process (racialization).

The category “Latin@” is a panethnic one that encompasses multiple racial and ethnic groups and reflects the contemporary political context of race. Research on panethnicity first emerged in the 1980s as a framework to understand ethnic group identity beyond theories of assimilation and acculturation.⁶ Scholars note that historically constructions of the “foreign other” in the United States were based largely on images of peoples grouped by skin color in ways that paid little attention to an individual’s nation of origin or native or foreign born status. However, resistance to discrimination and assimilation and struggles for political representation are often a collective endeavor among groups of peoples, and panethnic identities emerged in this context (Lopez & Espiritu, 1990). However, panethnic categories can also be employed in ways that mask the tremendous ethnic diversity within them. More recently, scholarship focused on globalization and transnationalism has highlighted the broader forces that shape Latin@ immigration, labor, settlement, and communities, which sometimes include dynamics imported from home countries or regions.

These concepts—racialization, panethnicity, globalization and transnationalism— and the experiences they signify have important every day implications for Latin@ youth programs. They draw attention to the fact that “the Latin@ community” includes numerous sub-groups based on different national (and sub-national ethnic) roots with varying U.S. immigration histories (including some who were crossed by the U.S. border) and diverse racial backgrounds. Latin@ youth-serving programs should anticipate that sub-groups of local and regional Latin@ populations might not identify with one another, or even share much in common.

⁵ For related materials, see The S.I.N. Collective, 2007 and 2009.

⁶ For additional perspectives on Latin@s and panethnicity, see Padilla, 1985; Oboler, 1995, Jones-Correa & Leal, 1996; and Stokes, 2003.

Additionally, these concepts highlight the reality that many families of Latin@ youth (particularly immigrants or children of immigrants) have been displaced and/or split apart. Some young people experience trauma and have to take on significant responsibilities while dealing with alienation, isolation, and loss. These life experiences may result in special needs for support and accommodation, as well as strengths, insight and resources that can be celebrated, cultivated and tapped.

Finally, these concepts suggest that Latin@ youth navigate both inter- and intra-ethnic and racial diversity. As a population, young Latin@s experience a wide range of developmental processes around ethnic identity. For example, biculturalism can be experienced quite differently by Latin@ youth whose U.S. roots pre-date the country's existence, well-established Latin@ populations and first generation immigrant youth.

2. Incorporate Emerging Understandings of Latin@ and Immigrant Youth Development

Youth development frameworks that undergird program development have evolved rapidly over the past three decades. Early approaches focused on preventing “risk behaviors” associated with teenage pregnancy and substance abuse and often focused on young people’s deficits. Ecological models of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) provided a foundation for arguments that behavior should be understood in the context of life phases and social environments, and youth development programs should focus on cultivating assets that help young people successfully negotiate their environments (e.g. Gambone & Connell, 2004). Today’s widely employed frameworks reflect this turning point. Richard Lerner (2011), for instance, summarizes and synthesizes various contemporary models of youth development to offers his own framework, “the relational developmental systems model.” His work focuses on why some youth, including those coming of age in challenging environments, “thrive.”

Despite these advancements, LYD scholars and others argue that Latin@ youth often face structural and cultural challenges that are not adequately addressed in widely used models of development (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). Matters noted as often affecting Latin@ youth include cultural dimensions of immigration, generation/nativity status, language, discrimination, poverty and navigating what might be new social, cultural and institutional contexts (Easter & Refki, 2004; Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008; Valladares & Ramos, 2011). They argue in particular that PYD research should attend to the role of racial and ethnic identity—individuals’ understanding and emotions regarding the meaning and importance of their racial and ethnic backgrounds— as a central element of adolescent development (Williams et al, 2012). Studies of Latin@ adolescence more specifically focus on the effects of structural factors on Latin@ youth experience and highlight the ways that relationships among family, extended family, and ethnic community often shape development in ways that differ from the dominant culture (Borden, 2006; Dorner, Orellana, Jiménez, 2008; Schofield et. al. 2011). These dimensions of Latin@ youth experience tend to inform youth development policies, programs and practices that effectively serve Latin@ youth. Conversely, youth development programs that assume dominant cultural norms and ignore factors that influence local Latin@ youth choices and chances can produce inadequate and unsupportive environments (Borden, 2006).

3. Contend with Discrimination and its Physiological and Social Effects

Conceptual frameworks highlighting the ecology of youth development have led scholars and practitioners to consider social context; however, focus on discrimination as an aspect of that context has been more recent (Fisher, Wallace and Fenton 2000; Lee and Ahn

2012). Latin@ youth, it is repeatedly argued, face individual, organizational, and societal forms of discrimination based on race, language and culture, national and/or indigenous group background, immigration status and/or economic poverty (Edwards & Romero, 2008). Building on early work focused on the experiences of Black youth and more recent work with Latin@ populations, LYD researchers stress the critical importance of addressing the effects of discrimination on Latin@ youth development.

The recent blending of scholarship on youth development reflects a variety of concerns. Studies focus on Latin@ youth perceptions and experiences of intra- and inter-ethnic discrimination, the relationship between discrimination and stress, the relationship between discrimination and educational, physical and mental health outcomes, and protective factors for contending with discrimination (Edwards & Romero, 2008; Córdova & Cervantes, 2010). Scholars also draw attention to intersecting aspects of identity in relationship to discrimination, for example underscoring that LBGT youth of color are especially vulnerable, which is in turn linked to high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse and attempts at suicide (Russell, 2002). Together, these studies highlight the need for youth development programming to directly support eliminating individual and structural discrimination while enabling young people to contend with its effects.

Ricardo Stanton-Salazar and Stephanie Spina (2003) explore the networking patterns of Mexican-origin adolescents in San Diego, California to distill methods for accessing opportunity in the face of structural factors prevalent in urban contexts such as poverty, racial segregation, and underfunded youth-serving institutions. The scholars posit that youth who “make it” often do so because of crucial assistance by informal, non-familial adult mentors from within the Latin@ community. Among their conclusions is that structural discrimination will likely remain the norm unless institutional agents with strong cultural capacities are recruited, compensated, and positioned in key mentoring and leadership roles vis a vis youth. This particular example of social support and Stanton-Salazar’s subsequent analyses (2011) argue that coupling positive racial and ethnic identity development and mentorship is a key strategy to address the effects of discrimination.

4. Support Positive Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

Though adolescent development scholars have long studied identity development, the role of racial and ethnic identity in healthy youth development and positive youth development programs has received more attention in recent years (Swanson et al, 2003, Williams et al 2013). This body of work argues that positive racial/ethnic identity is an important and unique protective factor (Acevedo-Polakovich et al., 2014; Rivas-Drake et al, 2014; Williams et al, 2012) and therefore an asset to be cultivated.

LYD scholars discuss approaches to fostering positive ethnic identity in multiple ways, but share a strong critique of “colorblind” orientations to youth development. Some focus on celebrating and having pride in ones heritage (Eater & Refki, 2004), learning racial and ethnic group histories, and participating in cultural activities. Others recognize the power of ethnic traditions and deep-rooted connection to ancestors as a foundation for healing and growth (National Latino Fatherhood and Families Institute, 2012). A strand of work adds to these strategies opportunities to redress social inequality related to race and ethnicity. This approach helps youth to critically analyze how Latin@s are situated in the world, society, and their community by bringing together historical and political knowledge and local advocacy to foster

individual and collective agency (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2006). These strategies incorporate an emphasis on young Latin@s not only learning about themselves (and their intra-ethnic diversity) but also learning about others in order to facilitate cross-racial/ethnic relationship development, which evidence suggests is also an important asset and protective factor (Graham, Munniksma & Juvonen, 2014).

5. *Respond to Economic Poverty*

Although economic poverty is a commonly discussed ecological factor in youth development contexts, the intersection of race, class and poverty has received more limited attention. In California, over 25% of Latin@ youth ages 12-17 are growing up in families with annual earnings below the federal poverty line.⁷ The majority of publications reviewed express concern about the impact economic poverty⁸ on Latin@ youth development and program participation. Impacts discussed reflect four interrelated topics: immigration, labor, community opportunity and identity.

While some U.S. Latin@s were never immigrants (particularly those in the Southwestern portion of the United States in what was once Mexico) and the majority of Latin@ children have been born in the United States (Krogstad and Lopez 2014), immigration patterns remain an important factor in poverty among many Latin@s. Nearly a quarter of all children in the United States are immigrants or children of immigrants (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2009). Among Latin@ youth, 33.8 percent are immigrants, 36.9 percent are U.S.-born children of immigrants, and 29.3 percent are at least third generation.⁹ In the contemporary moment, many drivers of immigration are tied to the global market. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2009) observe that the most recent influx of newcomers came as a result of rapid economic expansion under President Clinton. Immigration was relatively uninterrupted under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Others have come to escape violence in their home countries with roots in a U.S. and globally-fueled market for drugs. Many Latin@ immigrants to the United States come from low-SES backgrounds with little to no formal education.

The vast majority of jobs that Latin@s access are low-paying, low-skilled positions in agriculture, service industries and building trades. The low-paying, unstable nature of this labor market can significantly affect families, as members are often separated for weeks and months at a time, young people are left with extended families or family friends, or youth are periodically uprooted as their parents seek new work opportunities. Additionally, analyses show that 51 percent of Latin@ youth are growing up in single-parent households.¹⁰ These conditions often result in youth having little supervision. Some youth contribute substantially to their households by working to support the family and/or taking on responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children and elders.

⁷ Analysis from Putting Youth on the Map Equity Analyses, based on based on American Community Survey 2006-2010 Estimate (mapserver2.vestra.com/demo/ucdmappingregionalchange/youth/equity-analyses.html, downloaded 8/8/14)

⁸ We use the term economic poverty to emphasize the role of structural conditions over cultural explanations of poverty among youth, families, and communities.

⁹ From Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March 1995 to 2009. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/12/11/ii-demography/>

¹⁰ From Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, “A Profile of Latino Youth in Poverty” <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/09/28/iii-a-profile-of-latino-children-in-poverty/>

Though Latin@ families are found in virtually every type of community—rural, urban, and suburban— and increasingly Latin@s are residing in areas which have not historically had large Latin@ populations, many Latin@ children and youth grow up in low-income areas with greater exposure to violence and limited access to adequate public services and rich youth development program opportunities. Lack of discretionary funds due to low wages and/or commitments to financially support extended family, transportation difficulties, intensive and unpredictable parent/caretaker work schedules, responsibilities to help out at home and ways in which economic poverty is stigmatized can all constrain Latin@ youth participation in youth development programs that do exist. Programs that attract and sustain participation of Latin@ youth experiencing economic poverty carefully overcome or work around these constraints in ways that do not further exacerbate the economic and social challenge of growing up poor in the United States.

6. Tailor efforts to the specific experience, resources, needs and interests of local and regional Latin@ youth and families

As noted earlier, Latin@ youth are a highly diverse population. Who exactly comprises the “Latin@ population” varies across places; in a specific locale this may include families and groups of substantially different backgrounds. In addition, the places Latin@ youth live are diverse. They are rural, suburban and urban, with varying economies and infrastructures. The size of Latin@ populations vary as do the extent to which Latin@ comprise the full population, one of a few or one of many local racial/ethnic groups. Latin@s are also situated in their localities in varying ways—for example, as long-term residents incorporated into community fabric in multiple roles, at the periphery of dominant social, civic and economic networks, and/or in motion moving in to seek opportunity or moving out having been displaced by gentrification. In one locality, different Latin@ sub-populations might occupy varying social, spatial, economic and political niches.

How Latin@ youth understand who they are, the challenges they face and the resources they have must therefore be understood in relation to specific local and regional contexts. LYD scholars emphasize employing locally and regionally specific knowledge of Latin@ youth, families and communities to create responsive youth development programs (Erbstein, 2013; Hobbs & Sawyer, 2009).

Findings Summary

Serving Latin@ youth well through youth development programs requires some sense of who constitutes the Latin@ population and what being “Latin@” means in everyday life at a particular place and time. The combination of shifting dynamics of race, intra-ethnic diversity in terms of race, national origins, culture and experience within the Latin@ population, and local and regional variation of Latin@ experience challenge easy translation of research into meaningful engagement strategies in specific local contexts. Here we have identified broad recommendations that reflect widespread experiences within the U.S. Latin@ population: incorporate extended/emerging understandings of positive youth development that reflect Latin@ and immigrant youth experience into existing models of positive youth development and effective youth development programs, contend with discrimination and its physiological and social effects, support positive ethnic identity development, respond to economic poverty, and tailor efforts to the specific experience, resources, needs and interests of local and regional

Latin@ youth and families. These five over-arching recommendations and their associated analyses have important ramifications for all aspects of PYD programs.

Implications for Youth Development Programs

Even with more and better scholarship, funders, policy-makers, institutional leaders and youth workers focused on engaging Latin@ youth must recognize the tension between wanting to generate best practices that can be scaled up, and recognizing variation in Latin@ youth experiences across sub-populations and places. In light of this tension, here we distill some key emergent *guiding principles* for program development focused on the four aspects of PYD program noted earlier: (1) conceptual frameworks, (2) organization/program and community relations, (3) program elements, and (4) organizational infrastructure. We present these principles mindful that they will not apply in the same way to all Latin@ youth, families, communities, or programmatic contexts.

1. Conceptual Frameworks

Conceptual frameworks embody the theories of youth development, youth experience and change that drive decisions about program policies and practices. Frameworks that reflect important dimensions of Latin@ youth development and developmental contexts undergird strategies that cultivate high and sustained participation. Some key points to consider are as follows.

Reflect on youth development norms.

Program staff and leadership need to understand that mainstream youth development frameworks tend to reflect White, middle class norms (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012; Dornier, Orellana, Jimenez, 2008). Rodriguez and Morrobel's (2004) comprehensive review of six youth development journals and two Latin@-focused journals reveals that researchers often ignore culture and ethnicity, even when employing theoretical frameworks that include these developmental dimensions. As a result, Latin@ youth are often viewed through a generic lens that does not differentiate, for instance, between the unique developmental experiences of low-socioeconomic status Latin@s and middle class White youth. Swanson et al (2003) corroborate this pattern. They argue that as the US youth population has become more diverse, research on youth has become more conceptually and methodologically challenging. They observe that research on racial and ethnic minority groups fails to take a developmental perspective, instead favoring more static, decontextualized research approaches that risk perpetuating stereotypes and assumptions. They argue that Spencer's (1997) phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory model (PVEST) mitigates typical shortcomings in research design and theoretical framings of diverse youth. PVEST utilizes an identity-focused cultural-ecological perspective, which integrates issues of social, political, and cultural contexts with normative developmental processes. However, PVEST is the exception and not the rule, as very few youth development frameworks account for the significance of racial and ethnic identity formation or capture important cultural nuances among diverse populations (Raffaelli, Carlo, Carranza, and Gonzalez-Kruger, 2005).

Building theory and practice with greater cultural nuance requires understanding the cultural characteristics of Latin@ youth within structural contexts. Immigrant youth and or low-

income youth, for example, are often situated differently in institutions and systems than middle class young people. Many attend schools with fewer resources, grow up in politically vulnerable communities, and experience fewer economic and social opportunities than their wealthier and U.S.-born counterparts (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009). These youth are more likely to be focused on figuring out what it means to be bi-cultural and less likely to be concerned with differentiating themselves from their family (Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008).

This intersection between structural conditions, cultural characteristics and youth development speaks to the critical need for program leaders and staff to investigate their own views about youth development and youth and family engagement. This likely entails exploring personal assumptions about youth development and youth and family engagement processes, identifying the personal experiences and cultural contexts that shape these views, and reflecting on how these ideas influence practice in ways that might or might not serve Latin@ youth and families well. These steps can serve to broaden prevailing models of development, humanize Latin@ youth and limit deficit-based practices.

Encourage positive racial and ethnic identity development as an aspect of healthy development.

Recent scholarship on racial and ethnic identity development in adolescence argues that these processes should be viewed as a central aspect of healthy youth development rather than a “special topic (Williams et al 2012, 304).” While an extensive analysis of scholarship in this area is beyond the scope of this review, in brief, mounting evidence suggests that positive racial and ethnic identity is a protective factor (Rivas-Drake, 2014). It is associated with behaviors such as substance use avoidance (Unger, 2014) and school persistence (Davalos et al, 1999), physical and mental health (Ai et al 2014), resilience in the face of race-related stress (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2012) and other stressors (Williams et al, 2013) and the presence of other developmental assets (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, 2014a; Williams et al, 2014). Racial and ethnic identity are distinct and multi-faceted constructs, but both appear to be important aspects of Latin@ (and other) young people’s development, both are socially constructed and context-sensitive, and both can be actively supported (Williams et al, 2012, Umaña-Taylor, 2011.). These findings are consistent with a long trajectory of research in Chicano Studies, Youth Studies, Sociology and Anthropology, which highlight the complex and powerful roles of racial and ethnic identity in young people’s lives (in combination with other intersecting aspects of identity) (e.g. Suarez-Orozco and Paez, 2002; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001; Urrieta, 2003; Yosso, 2005).

Research suggests that adolescence is an important period in which young people make meaning of their ethnic and racial group membership (Rew et al, 2014; Rivas-Drake et al, 2014). PYD programs present an important opportunity to support this aspect of their development.

Cultivate bilingualism, biculturalism, and acculturation.

Numerous LYD works call attention to the need for youth development frameworks to address the unique linguistic and cultural challenges many Latin@ youth face (Easter & Refki, 2004). Latin@ youth benefit from settings that understand and support their unique cultural and linguistic heritage, particularly the challenges and richness of navigating more than one language and culture. LYD scholars encourage youth workers to move away from approaches to culture and language that emphasize assimilation. Instead, they urge practices that support acculturation: awareness of an ongoing negotiation between cultures and languages. Programs

for youth from multiple cultures can promote cultural sharing, build relationships around common challenges, and offer advocacy for resisting anti-immigrant attitudes (Easter & Refki, 2004).

These approaches are necessary for engaging many Latin@ youth because they more closely reflect the complex processes that shape their developmental realities. Many young Latin@s, particularly immigrants and children of immigrants, face challenges of bridging their home culture and language and the dominant culture and language. This is often a source of tension between children who are navigating cultural terrains that are unfamiliar to their parents. Bicultural and bilingual youth development staff can play key roles in helping bridge generational gaps between youth and their parents, particularly among immigrant families. In instances when staff members with these qualities are unavailable, program leaders are urged to ensure staff members value bilingualism and biculturalism and have experience working with youth in ways that reflect these dimensions of who they are.

Recognize and address the effects of discrimination and economic poverty on development.

Recognizing that young people might be contending with stress and trauma related to poverty and discrimination is critical to understanding development in social context. The fiscal realities of many Latin@ families limit access to supports that are often assumed available to all youth, such as food, clothing, transportation, internet access, discretionary funds and enrichment opportunities.

The low status stigma associated with poverty and the disproportional distribution of poverty across racial and ethnic groups, mean that poverty, social status, and race and ethnicity are closely intertwined. Social stratification based on race, ethnicity and class are reinforced through various levels of discrimination (i.e. overt, covert, individual, organizational, and institutional). Concern about potential and actual unfair treatment causes stress. LYD scholars therefore investigate the relationship between discrimination, stress, and healthy development. It is important to recognize that Latin@ youth may contend with inter- and intra-ethnic discrimination (for example, based on immigration status, race, and/or national or indigenous origins).

Continuous exposure to stressful demands about one's ethnicity, race, language and physical appearance are counter to establishing a strong and healthy sense of self, culture, and community" (Cordova and Cervantes, 2010). Effective youth development programs must, at minimum, avoid causing and exacerbating stress based on young people's racial/ethnic and economic backgrounds. At best, they are oriented towards building Latin@ youth capacity to navigate and relieve these forms of stress.

Recognize and build from cultural capacities and capacities cultivated in adverse contexts.

Developmental frameworks that do not account for ethnic diversity and ethnic experience can engender practices which ignore qualities that facilitate youth resilience. Culture, and its ability to evolve and adapt, offers a powerful source of strength and knowledge. In addition, youth who grow up in challenging environments, as do far too many Latin@ youth, have skills and knowledge of their environments that are often overlooked and undervalued by youth workers. Tara Yosso (2005) argues that racial and ethnic minority communities have a history of resistance to oppressive conditions that can also be seen as an important source of energy, inspiration and insight. Programs that recognize, validate, accommodate, and build from

these capacities are well-positioned to attract, tap and serve Latin@ youth and their communities.

2. Organization/Program and Community Relationship

The unique assets of Latin@ youth, as well as their ability to participate in programs, are often tied to family and community (Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008). This observation suggests the importance of grounding programs and organizations in the context of young people's daily lives and building on existing social capital found in young people's families and communities (Hobbs & Sawyer, 2010). To forge these relationships, research reviewed suggests that youth development organizations and programs build on knowledge of the local Latin@ community and its relationship to the broader community, monitor and strengthen the program's reputation within the Latin@ community(s), and pursue other outreach practices that lead to positive community engagement.

Build on local Latin@ community knowledge

Cultivating partnerships and networks within the Latin@ community is critical to tapping the unique assets of Latin@ youth (Hampton, 2010; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco; Gonzales, 2010). Developing trusting relationships with families and key community leaders is a primary strategy for developing these connections. One foundation of trust-building is demonstrating that key program staff and leaders have an interest in and understanding of the local landscape of Latin@ diversity, particularly the histories of different subgroups and the circumstances that shape their arrival, settlement, and patterns of social interaction. Taking stock of the local community includes gathering facts about the countries of origin, educational levels of residents, languages spoken, immigration status of the people, ways people earn a living, key formal and informal institutions and networks, etc. (Román, 1997; Hobbs & Sawyer, 2010; Raffaelli, Carlo, Carranza, & Gonzalez-Kruger, 2005, Gonzalez 2010). This information provides context for understanding how ethnicity shapes youth development locally and provides insight into ways to tailor programs to address regional, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and gender differences and promote engagement among stakeholders (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004).

Monitor and strengthen program reputation

Given the close-knit nature of many Latin@ communities, attracting and sustaining Latin@ youth participation in programs depends in part on programs and host organizations having a positive reputation. New programs should investigate existing programs that also serve the Latin@ community to establish a sense of what qualities resonate well with community members. Existing programs and organizations should honestly assess whether people know about the program and how they view it.

Assessing reputation is an excellent opportunity to engage community leaders, youth, and family in developing programs. However, engaging youth and adults to strengthen programs can be challenging. Youth are often overpowered or ignored in settings where adults are in leadership roles. Zeldin et al (2005) emphasize strategies that ensure youth rights of participation, facilitate positive youth development, and build community and civility. These scholars argue that adults need to strengthen skills in relationship building, especially in terms of balancing youth needs for autonomy and voice, while concurrently providing instrumental and emotional support.

Reach Out

Gaining parents' and caretakers' trust is noted as an especially important task. Some Latin@ families might mistrust programs due to past negative experiences with formal organizations, concern for their children's safety and/or dependence on their children's help at home; immigrant families might share these concerns and in addition be unfamiliar with youth development programming and fearful due to experiences of discrimination, unresolved immigration status, and/or other factors (Valladares & Ramos, 2011; Cabrera & Rodriguez, 2011). Latin@ youth are more likely to participate in programs when their families approve of them, understanding how they can support their children and accommodate family needs (Hobbs and Sawyer, 2010). Assuring caregivers that programs are safe and free of discrimination is key (Córdova & Cervantes, 2010). Immigrant youth themselves can be an asset in making and maintaining connections with these parents, serving as cultural and linguistic brokers to develop relationships (Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008).

Community leaders and organizations that have positive relationships with the Latin@ community can also serve as key partners in outreach (Hobbs & Sawyer, 2010). Most research focuses on partnering with schools, though some emphasize the need for networks that also engage other types of institutions (Williams, 2013). Finding ways to reach Latin@ youth with less than positive academic experiences and limited parental and community support for participation can be more challenging (Cabrera & Rodriguez, 2011). However, numerous examples of community partnerships that engage these under-served youth are found in the LYD literature. These include a variety of community-youth spaces, including faith-based settings (Bellanova, 2008), university and school collaborations (Coller & Kuo, 2013), community organizing groups, (Watkins, 2002; Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Moya, 2012), and a migrant community and technology center (Wallace, 2008). A common characteristic among these endeavors is the strong commitment to reach especially under-served Latin@ youth populations.

Erbstein (2013) and others observe that programs that aim to serve "all youth" rarely engage those most vulnerable to having inadequate support. She captures how programs in a regional youth development and community change initiative tapped into community social capital to cultivate sustained and purposeful participation among marginalized youth populations. Two initiative grantees—one in a rural community and one in a mixed urban-suburban community—were especially effective in working with underrepresented youth. Pivotal engagement practices included making an intentional commitment to vulnerable youth populations, building on local knowledge of and connections to these young people, engaging adult allies, organizing activity around meaningful focus, and investing in intensive outreach, youth support, and ally continuity.

3. Program Elements

PYD program literature tends to focus on the importance of positive relationships, safe environments, engagement, social norms, skill-building, routine/structure, youth leadership, and topical emphases (e.g. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002). Based on literature reviewed, we extend these analyses to highlight the importance of strengthening the quality of relationships among program stakeholders in ways that build trust, tap assets, and foster equitable outcomes across participant populations. Three specific focus areas include:

addressing hidden safety concerns, building on assets unique to Latin@ youth, and engaging youth, family, and community in program matters.

Address safety concerns

PYD program literature emphasizes the importance of creating physically and emotionally safe settings for youth. LYD literature expands upon these analyses to address issues that often affect Latin@ youth yet tend to be overlooked by individuals less affected by them.

For instance, safe spaces for youth guard against stigmatizing low-income youth for not being able to afford aspects of participation. Youth and families with limited English proficiency or undocumented immigration status may require assurance that activities occur in language appropriate and supportive environments. Effective programs in settings contending with violence and competition for turf actively take steps to understand these dynamics and ensure that youth participants can navigate them. In light of the research on discrimination, stress, and development, safe program environments might take up inter- and intra-racial/ethnic relationships explicitly so staff, Latin@ youth and participants of other racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds can be allies in creating safe spaces (Córdova & Cervantes, 2010; Erbstein, 2013).

Creating a safe environment that recognizes and engages these issues requires diligent effort by program leaders and staff. By way of one example, Watkins and Sullivan (2007) provide a case study of a youth organizing program in which participants developed relationships with individuals who did not share their ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and sexual orientations. This experience altered attitudes and behavior. The primarily Latin@ and African American members described developing understanding and appreciation for peers of different backgrounds across three stages. The first stage involved interacting and building relationships with groups outside of their own by working together on community organizing projects. The second stage was learning and discovery. This stage reflects learning from both informal interactions from peers (i.e. overcoming media stereotypes) and structured activities facilitated by program staff about injustices experienced by other groups. In stage three, members began to incorporate the insights of the first two stages into their behavior by showing increased sensitivity about diversity and a commitment to social justice and social action.

Tap assets unique to local Latin@ youth

Studies reviewed suggest that program leaders and staff need to recognize the broad range of personal and community assets that Latin@ youth bring to youth settings. For instance, programs that aim to support positive youth development and community health are urged by Vyas et al (2012) to tap Latin@ youth language skills, knowledge of text messaging and social media to bring important messages to community members. At once, youth are positioned as advocates because of their connection to, concern for, and cultural knowledge of under-served communities, bilingual status, and skills with technology. Batey Urbano, a youth-led cultural space in a predominantly low-income Puerto Rican area of Chicago, builds on youth's identities, concern for social equality, and interest in and knowledge of hip-hop (Flores-González et al, 2006). Hip-hop art forms engage youth in critical dialogue about their personal experiences living in a challenged community and the global economic and political forces that shape their and other groups' struggles. Building from work by Cammarota and Ginwright

(2006), the scholars posit that healthy transformation stems in part from recognizing the role of power and privilege in societies.

Immigrant youth have assets that are unique to their experience. Easter and Refki (2004) observe that immigrant cultures often offer support and guidance through extended families. Value systems tend to stress community needs over individual needs and familiarity with collective decision-making. In addition, challenges related to migration, such as traversing two cultures, inherently demand resiliency, flexibility, and skills for assessing human interactions. Similarly, youth experiencing economic poverty are likely to have adapted to constraints and cultivated significant life skills in doing so (e.g. an ability to take on high levels of responsibility, care for younger children, etc.). Informal and tightly knit social networks (i.e. those associations through churches, work places, and native countries and regions) are also often common sources of untapped assets as well as sites of cultural transmission. Effective programs build on these assets.

LYD scholars and practitioners highlight four primary approaches to cultivating positive ethnic identity that build on youth and community resources. One approach aims to foster pride in cultural heritage through helping youth learn about their ethnic groups' histories and providing opportunities to participate in cultural forms such as music, theater, dance, and other artistic expression. Program settings that link these types of activities to the life experiences of youth participants and their families can support young people to understand who they are in ways that are empowering (National Latino Fatherhood and Families Institute, 2012).

A second approach focuses on developing positive identity through civic participation and social justice activism. Ginwright and Cammarota's model of Social Justice Youth Development (2006) suggests that healthy development of typically underserved youth populations entails progressing through three levels of awareness: (1) Self-awareness with regards to the social forces that shape their racial, ethnic, gender, class, and sexual identities; (2) social awareness, including forces that shape inequality and how this affects their communities; and (3) global awareness, or the interconnectedness among oppressive forces that shape their community and other people's struggles around the world. This awareness enables young people to develop a sense of individual and collective agency vis-à-vis their own lives, their communities and the conditions that shape them, as well as a positive racial/ethnic identity. Engaging youth in community change projects that build from their everyday environment and their local knowledge provides powerful contexts for acquiring and/or refining skills and analytical concepts, connecting with adult mentors, and increasing a sense of community belonging and ownership (Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor, 2005). This work is described by literature on youth-centered engagement strategies such as community change work, youth organizing, and participatory action research (e.g. London, Zimmerman and Erbsstein, 2003; Nygreen, Sánchez, & Kwon, 2006).

A third set of approaches emphasizes program opportunities that support bicultural and bilingual identity. Given the large number of Latin@ immigrants and children of immigrants in the United States, numerous LYD scholars focus on two particular dimensions of development that set these youth apart from mainstream populations: language and culture. Scholars discuss language and culture from a process perspective. They note that demonstrating respect for Latin@ youth culture(s) and language(s), acknowledging and supporting the manner in which Latin@ young people are likely moving between cultural and linguistic contexts, and recognizing that these are important aspects of their ethnic heritage can be important

characteristics of programs that connect with Latin@ youth (Easter & Refkin, 2004; Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008; Diversi & Mecham, 2005).

A fourth set of approaches aim to support healthy inter- and intra-racial and ethnic relationships. Building on the observation of the high degree of diversity within the Latin@ community, scholars recognize the need for young people to understand themselves in relation to groups both within (e.g. Urrieta 2003) and beyond the Latin@ community. An example of this approach is a participatory action research project facilitated by the U.C. Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California (2013) involving indigenous Oaxacan youth in the California Central Valley migrant labor community. The primary focus of the project was to gain an understanding of how young adults from Oaxacan immigrant families become involved in civic life. Participants explored this topic in a supportive youth-adult partnership setting. Central to this investigation were questions about the unique cultural and linguistic situation of Oaxacan youth, who navigate Oaxacan, Mexican, Mexican-American and other American cultures. Many of these young people are bilingual or trilingual, speaking an indigenous language at home, Spanish with friends, and English in schools. Programs like this provide important opportunity for youth to safely develop an understanding of their identity and bring to light challenges— including intra- and inter-ethnic dynamics— that impede civic participation and social mobility.

Scholarship on intra- and inter-racial and ethnic relationships and healthy youth development is relatively limited. However, the fields of education, civil rights and peace studies have generated a body of research and curricula, although thorough review of this work is beyond the scope of this literature review. By way of example, the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance program provides educators with materials to counter bigotry and extremism, nurture acceptance of difference, and engage youth in social justice ideas and activity (“Teaching Tolerance,” 2014). Similarly, the Zinn Education Project, named for celebrated historian Howard Zinn, emphasizes understanding history from diverse perspectives and provides a variety of resources on groups, issues, and movements that foster appreciation for diversity in the United States (“Zinn Education Project,” 2014). The Museum of Tolerance, which is dedicated to challenging visitors to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts, provides educational resources and activities to confront all forms of prejudice and discrimination. Overarching themes in the curriculum include: power of words and images, dynamics of discrimination, pursuit of democracy and diversity, and personal responsibility (“Museum of Tolerance,” 2014).

An important caveat to these discussions is that scholars typically do not argue for separate or segregated youth programs. Instead, they make the case that a strong local infrastructure for healthy Latin@ youth development provides options to participate in a variety of activities, including activities related to their racial and ethnic group and activities designed to engage youth from multiple racial/ethnic backgrounds. Regardless of their topical focus, organizations that recognize, celebrate, and reinforce Latin@ youths’ cultural and linguistic heritage are more likely to make Latin@ youth feel welcome.

Engage youth, family, and community in program matters

Latin@ communities’ and families’ resources can contribute significantly to Latin@ youth development programs. However, Latin@ families—especially those that are new to the country, have limited program access or have a history of negative program experience-- might

be unfamiliar with the potential positive role of youth development programs. Therefore, encouraging youth participation and tapping assets can require overcoming limited knowledge, fear, and mistrust.

Building trusting, collaborative, mutually beneficial relationships with community networks and key formal/informal leaders can help overcome these barriers. According to Easter and Refkin (2004), offering programming with and for parents/families is also one promising approach to building trust with Latin@ families. For example, parent support groups can help immigrant parents understand that they are not alone, learn about pressures their children face, share information about resources. Youth-parent dialogue programs can help teens appreciate the value of some culturally traditional approaches and help parents understand how their children grapple with pressures from both worlds (Easter & Refki, 2004). Case studies also highlight the potential in parents and other family members facilitating activities.

In sum, leaders and staff of programs that engage Latin@ youth and tap Latin@ community resources offer multiple ways for Latin@ community members to connect with them. These range from limited commitments to program participation to involvement in program design, evaluation, and leadership.

4. Organizational Infrastructure

Latin@ participation rates in youth development programs are positively influenced by organizational infrastructures (e.g. leadership, staff hiring and development, location/accessibility, resource allocation, evaluation) that are carefully aligned to reach and serve Latin@ youth and communities, work closely with Latin@ families and community leaders, build trust among stakeholders, and assure activities are accessible, affordable, and relevant. This section focuses on some key strategies: intentional and inclusive leadership, staff development to facilitate Latin@ engagement, and needed resource allocation.

Lead Intentionally and Inclusively

Effectively engaging and serving Latin@ youth requires organizational and program leaders to focus on doing so. Leaders need to foster an organizational culture that normalizes cultural responsiveness and responds to fear and trauma of discrimination (Córdova & Cervantes, 2010). They need to access informal and formal networks to recruit, hire and train staff members who value biculturalism and bilingualism and emphasize practices focused on acculturation over assimilation. They need to have the ability to work in partnership with youth, parents, formal and informal Latin@ community networks and key institutional agents, such as schools and other city or county agencies that serve Latin@ youth (Williams, 2013; Ekrut & Tracy, 2002). And finally, effective leaders ensure they offer programs that respond to Latin@ youth, family and community interests.

Organizations and programs that tap into the individual and shared assets of area Latin@ youth, families, and community leaders integrate youth, families, and community leaders into various facets of programming, including design, implementation, and evaluation phases. Borden et al (2006) illustrate how program policy and practice can develop from youth-centered evaluation research. Youth in that study participated in three phases of data collection—brainstorming, sorting, and ranking—to provide an in-depth understanding of reasons for and barriers to program participation among youth. Bellanova's (2008) ethnography of RISEN, a faith-based community youth development program, describes the role of community members

and youth in helping to design and implement TeenSpace, a youth center. In these and other examples, LYD scholars note that Latin@ community stakeholders can play critical roles in tapping resources, including local and national funding streams,

Ensuring that Latin@ youth, families and community leaders can play leadership roles requires creating conditions that reflect local needs and logistical realities (Hobbs & Sawer, 2010). In some settings actions such as making home and/or community visits to build trust, offering multiple meeting times and locations to accommodate work schedules and transportation barriers, supporting car pools, providing child care and/or meals and offering translation might be needed to overcome participation barriers.

Develop staff to facilitate Latin@ engagement

Staff hiring, orientation, professional development and review should reflect emphases on inclusivity, positive ethnic identity development and support for bilingualism, biculturalism and acculturation (Hobbs & Sawer, 2010; De Alba-Johnson, 2003; Easter & Refki, 2010; Diversi, & Mecham, 2005). The goal of recruiting bilingual and bicultural staff is central in numerous LYD works, as these individuals often bring unique skill and insight to recruiting and mentoring youth, translating program goals, activities, policies and procedures to parents and other stakeholders, designing and implementing effective programs, and funneling community resources to the organization or program (Araque, 2009; Erbstein, 2013; Hobbs & Sawer, 2009). Scholars and practitioners note that these figures often play key roles in building trust because they have first hand experience factors shaping today's Latin@ youth experience. Bilingual/bicultural staff members with local knowledge and a positive reputation in the local Latin@ community can often serve as powerful intermediaries among program leaders, staff, youth and families (Araque 2009; Hobbs & Sawyer, 2009, Erbstein 2013).

However, Hobbs and Sawer (2010) warn that while hiring bilingual and bicultural individuals makes sense, recruitment can be challenging. In their detailed analysis of a statewide Latin@ youth development outreach program, they observe that enhanced bilingual/bicultural staff recruitment required program staff and policy review and revision. Changes included tapping new networks reach potential Latin@ applicants, and crafting position descriptions to resonate with potential candidates. They found that making reference to "helping the community" or "supporting the education of Latino youth" were goals that connected best with applicants (Hobbs & Sawer, 2010, p. 9).

Staff of all racial/ethnic backgrounds hold capacity to serve as allies to Latin@ youth. Capacities to cultivate (and consider in hiring and review processes) include: cultural humility (Tervalon and Garcia 1998)¹¹, bilingualism, respect for local Latin@ youth and families, high expectations and ability to assess supports required for local Latin@ youth to meet them, creativity and resourcefulness to link youth with needed supports, a focus on youth potential, close relationships with local Latin@ youth (including those experiencing common local challenges) and skills to engage youth in decision-making and other leadership processes.

Another important focus of organizational and staff capacity-building is learning about the specific histories, challenges and resources of local Latin@ population(s), in order to tailor

¹¹ Cultural humility entails committing to self-evaluation and self-critique; recognizing the role of our cultural contexts in shaping our understanding; redressing power imbalances in the relationship between programs/organizations and the diversity of Latin@ youth, families and communities served; and developing mutually beneficial partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations (adapted from Tervalon and Garcia 1998, p.117)

program development and implementation. The meanings we make of racial/ethnic categories are often influenced by representations outside of local contexts, such as popular culture, scholarly research, policy briefs, media reports and family lore. Sometimes what is less likely to occur are conversations with local Latin@ youth, their families, and relevant community constituents about their experiences. Some key questions to promote learning include:

- What is the history of local Latin@ populations? How long have established residents been in area? If the origins of local Latin@s are from outside the US, what pushed them/their families from their native country? What pulled them to the United States and the region?
- What resources exist in the Latin@ community(s)? Who are leaders? What informal and formal networks exist? What forms or practices of civic engagement are prevalent? Are there important Latin@ gathering places? Are there organizations that serve Latin@ youth very well that might be important partners or resources?
- What is the regional economic landscape, and how are Latin@s positioned? What are the primary industries of the labor market? What kind of labor is in demand (skilled, unskilled, specialized, etc.)? How do workplace realities affect adult resources, availability and stability?
- What is the racial and ethnic composition and climate of the region, community, and neighborhoods? What is the degree of inter- and intra-ethnic diversity? Are immigrant populations from the same or different areas of home countries? How well do people get along? Are there tensions? How do they play into the way resources are distributed and places are navigated?
- What other aspects of Latin@ youth experience loom large and might shape interests, needs and resources?
- How does our organization and/or program staff fit into (or not fit into) this landscape?

Allocate Resources to Support Latin@ Youth Engagement

Resource allocation should reflect Latin@ engagement goals and locally appropriate strategies. Potential areas of investment might include:

- strategic planning of initiatives and engagement strategies to increase Latin@ youth participation (Gonzalez, 2010),
- funding for developing/hiring staff that know about local Latin@ community needs and networks and can engage youth and community in further informing the organization/program,
- program strategies for supporting development in socially and culturally responsive ways (Nelson, 2009),
- reducing participation barriers such as family obligations, family mistrust, costs and other responsibilities (Borden 2006), through strategies such as making home visits to get to know parents/caretakers, offering multiple options for meetings to accommodate work schedules and responsibilities at home, arranging car pools or paying for public transportation, and limiting the cost of participation or offering scholarships to offset costs for those with limited financial resources (Hobbs and Sawyer, 2010; Valladares & Ramos, 2011).

Researchers and practitioners remind organization and program leaders to expand the notion of resources to include both financial and other forms of capital. Development efforts should recognize that Latin@ community members are willing to invest in youth-serving

organizations that provide meaningful support. Contributions can be solicited through informal networks such as sports and clubs, workplaces, labor organizations, hometown associations, places of worship, etc. and made via small donations or volunteer hours. Latin@ community leaders and philanthropists are also important resources for youth development programs (Gonzales, 2010). In addition organizations should look to philanthropies, businesses and national funding sources that target Latin@ populations (Gonzales, 2010).

Implications Summary

Many Latin@ youth come of age amidst life circumstances that differ significantly from those in the U.S. cultural and linguistic mainstream. Sustained youth development program engagement is likely to require adoption of frameworks, program designs, and strategies that acknowledge, affirm, and build from the ways local Latin@ youth population(s) make sense of who they are in their families, communities, and among their peers. Programs that support biculturalism, bilingualism, acculturation and positive ethnic identity development appear more likely to provide this type of tailored support for many Latin@ youth. Resources must be put in place to match these values such as bilingual and bicultural staff who understand the intricacies of coming of age in the local context. Leveraging these resources often requires building trust with Latin@ community members, including parents, leaders, and other youth workers.

Conclusion

This literature review began as an inquiry into positive youth development program qualities that lead to high and sustained participation rates and positive outcomes for Latin@ youth. In tapping a multi-disciplinary body of work, we quickly learned that the emergent state of the research and the complexity of the U.S. Latin@ populations present challenges to assembling a cohesive, fully assessed set of practices in relationship to outcomes. Nonetheless, looking across peer-reviewed and practitioner-oriented research in the areas of positive youth development, Latin@ youth development, Chicano Studies, Youth Studies, Sociology, Anthropology and Ethnic Studies enabled a rich synthesis that suggests effective programs:

- Incorporate extended/emerging understandings of positive youth development that reflect Latin@ and immigrant youth experience;
- Contend with physiological and social effects of discrimination;
- Support positive ethnic identity development;
- Respond to economic poverty; and
- Tailor efforts to the specific experience, resources, needs and interests of local and regional Latin@ youth and families.

Implementation of these strategies has ramifications for all aspects of PYD programs: their underlying conceptual frameworks, organization/program relationships with their communities, program elements and organizational infrastructure. While local and regional diversity of communities, Latin@ populations and programs cut against setting hard guidelines for effective practice, we have presented an emerging set of guiding principles. Further developing these principles by tapping diverse disciplinary approaches to learning about Latin@ youth development is an important step toward ensuring that Latin@ youth fully reap the potential benefits of positive youth development programs.

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Appendix 1: Literature Review Template

The literature review process involved documenting each publication's methods and how it contributed to research in the following ways.

I. Reading for Effective Practices

- Suggestions about key effective practices/strategies for engaging underserved populations (youth and adults) in youth development programs?
- Suggestions about key capabilities (e.g. staffing, staff capacities, resources, etc.) for effectively implementing effective engagement practices?
- Distinguishing factors that made this program specific to Latin@ youth?

II. Reading from a Youth and Ethnic Studies Perspective

- How does the study recognize racialization, power and privilege as dimensions of youth development practice and/or research on these practices?
- Does the piece differentiate among Latin@ groups? If so, how?
- How does the piece cite, build from, corroborate and differ from models of adolescent development that are dominant in PYD?
- Does the piece provide context to the Latin@ youth experiences in their study in terms of social, economic, political and spatial location?
- How are cultural, linguistic, structural, and/or programmatic barriers to participation discussed?
- What special resources or interests that the Latin@ population brings to youth development programs are discussed?
- How does this piece frame what constitutes a “youth development program?”