Cultural Contextualization Recommendations for Latino Youth Programs

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4/2/2016

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Disclaimer: Parts of this paper were taken from classes: GLST 5503: Culture Studies in a Global Context, GLST 6573: Children, Poverty, and Development, GLST 6423: Social and Environmental Justice, GLST 6343: Social Entrepreneurship

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to dedicate this thesis to my uncle, Dr. Scott D. Churchill, who is my inspiration for pursuing my Master's degree, and my motivation to keep pushing through when times were difficult. Thank you!

Next, I want to thank my parents, David and Larraine, and my family for their support. Without their love and encouragement, my struggles would have been tenfold. I love you!

To my cohort, without you I would be so lost. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, for always being able to see the positive and the possibilities, for seeing the best in me, even when I couldn't see it, and for accepting me for who I am, flaws and all.

Special thanks to my love, Cody Booky, who always believed in me. I love you, Cookie!

I must acknowledge Dr. L. Forrest Inslee, who was my "high" when I was in my motivational "lows". Thank you for your guidance and wisdom.

To Angela Ferrara, my fieldwork site director and friend, thank you for introducing me to the most wonderful group of kids. Without my experience with you at Turning Point, I wouldn't have discovered my passion for working with youth.

Finally, a big thank you to Chris Ihrig and Justin Monuteaux. With your knowledge and instruction, I have learned more about myself these past two years than I have in the previous twenty three. Personally, this has been the highlight of the program, and something that I am excited to continue building upon in the years to come.

Introduction

Like all populations, youth show individuality in their personalities, cultures, and ways of learning. While they are young and have yet to realize their full potential, they are resilient and capable individuals with feelings and rights. Therefore, youth must be treated as equals to adults. It is of utmost importance that youth programs understand and affirm the individuality and cultural context of youth. Without this awareness, youth programs will not be properly serving youth, and will negatively affect their development and growth.

Between April and August 2015, I conducted my thesis fieldwork at Turning Point, a non-profit organization based in Shoreline. By working with at-risk youth and low-income families through their programs, Turning Point helps build and strengthen communities. They offer two main programs: Homework Factory, an after-school tutoring program, and Summer Explorers, a day-camp centered on learning and hands-on exploration. Through this experience, I discovered my love and passion for working with youth. Youth's vulnerability, blissfulness, and imagination have taught me much about myself. Furthermore, my experience showed me first-hand how contextualizing youth programs and developmental methods from different cultures positively impacts youth's experiences and development.

Latinos make up 16 percent of the United States' population, and are the fastest-growing underrepresented population (Guiterrez; Maldonado-Molina et al. 403). Youth in general are extremely vulnerable for reasons I will illustrate later. Both youth's individuality and vulnerability increase once they are identified as a minority – such as being Latino. According to Peguero, "Latino students are the least likely racial or ethnic group to participate in extracurricular activities" (20). This is because Latinos are not being properly served in the youth

programs that are available today. Because of the collectivist nature of Latino cultures, Latino youth find relational activities most valuable. The collectivism of Latinos looks like building relationships with others, and contributing to the greater good of the community group they were born into. Latinos hesitate to participate outside of their community circle. Latino youth must feel that they belong to a group or community that makes them feel welcome, like that of a second family. Because most youth programs lack this feeling of belonging, Latino youth do not want to participate. They, like many immigrants, face discrimination, negative treatment, and harassment from other students and even teachers and administrators (Peguero 21). The lack of belonging, which leads to lack of participation, completely breaks down the collectivist environment that is critical to Latino youth's culture, and affects them in unimaginable ways. Latino youth may feel compelled to fill the void of the missing community by joining gangs, or turning to prostitution. For this reason, "Latino [youth] have relatively lower achievement scores, educational attainment, and aspirations" (Peguero 26). Their collectivist nature demands certain developmental assets. These assets are 40 facets provided by youth's families, communities, and organizations. Latino's collectivist nature requires them to be exposed to the developmental assets of high expectations, achievement motivation, caring school climate, parent involvement in schooling, school boundaries, school engagement, and sense of purpose and positive view of personal future to achieve healthy, positive development. I will go into further detail about the 40 Developmental Assets and their importance later in this paper.

The lack of support Latino youth have in programs requires an increased focus in their development. What's more, "children from disadvantaged families are less likely to receive consistent support and guidance from responsive caregivers" (The World Bank 98). Also, Latino youth do not have as many opportunities to develop the assets restraint skills, attentive skills, and

cultural appreciation, which are important for cultivating appropriate behaviors and proper interactions with other youth and educators (The World Bank 98). The importance of these assets makes it all the more important for Latino youth to develop the assets restraint, resistance skills, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, planning and decision making, and school engagement.

Latinos are clearly not properly represented in government nor society. While Latinos make up 16 percent of the United States' population, they only hold 3.3 percent of elected government seats (Cardenas and Kerby). Groups who do not receive much recognition are more susceptible to exploitation (Miles and Wright 86). A horrifying example of exploitation among Latinos can be seen in the startling statistics of Latino youth involved in sex trafficking. Latino youth are more susceptible to trafficking due to factors like "poverty, language barriers, and most important, citizenship status" (Reichard). Latino youth are often tricked into trafficking, which is especially easy if English skills aren't strong. At times, trafficked youth are illegal aliens, and therefore face the threat of deportation if they go to the police or attempt to escape. Therefore, it is important to work on empowering Latino youth to prevent discrimination and exploitation. Increasing the number of developmental assets that youth have access to will significantly lower their risk. Empowered youth have a stronger sense of self-worth, and a more positive view of their future. Low socioeconomic status also contributes to increased cases of domestic violence and broken families. Latinos often are part of the lower socioeconomic group, and therefore "family separation, high levels of domestic violence and general lack of compliance with the law all contribute to the dislocation of children from their communities," as these are all common themes of those who are part of a low socioeconomic status (Miles and Wright 86). Research shows significant gaps between rich families and poor families in regards to the youth's

development (The World Bank 99). Youth from wealthier households have more developmental assets than youth from poorer households, which attributes to positive and healthy development.

There is a call to action for program developers to walk with these youth as they navigate the complexities of life by showing no judgment or fear of their culture. Latino youth are currently underserved in youth programs today. Youth programs must contextualize their approach in order to better serve this population. Youth-focused organizations must provide for these youth to the best of their abilities by implementing the four principles I illustrate as requirements for all youth programs. I evaluate two agriculture-based youth programs serving Latino youth. Evaluative criteria includes principles I have identified as top priority. Based on my findings, I have created recommendations for Latino youth programs.

The Importance of Culture

"Learning a foreign language, and the culture that goes with it, is one of the most useful things we can do to broaden the empathy and imaginative sympathy and cultural outlook of children" (Michael Gove)

What is culture? Culture comes from a mixture of our stories, traditions, religious beliefs, and ways of thinking and becomes an extricable part of each of us. We are not born with culture; rather we learn and develop our culture as we progress through life. Generations of families and communities pass on culture, each with their own tweaks and additions, which makes culture ever-changing. Culture forms part of peoples' identities. Through innovation or diffusion, culture changes continuously.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines culture as "the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time." Hofstede et al. further assert that culture is a person's "mental program, or software of the mind" (5). They state that there are different levels of

culture comprised of different groups of people, so everybody can belong to a number of different cultural groups depending on their level of culture, which are 1) national, 2) regional/ethnic/religious/linguistic, 3) gender, 4) generation, 5) social class, 6) organizational/departmental/corporate (Hofstede et al. 18). While there are different groups of people based on these cultural levels, it is the "collective [culture] that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede et al. 6). People cannot escape from culture, which is ever-present, and makes people innately unique. "Identity," on the other hand, defines which group we belong to, usually based on language and/or religion (Hofstede et al. 22). Combining the two, "cultural identity" is what Hofstede et al. calls "group identity" (23). What is important to note is that even though two groups with different identities will meet, it does not necessarily mean that each group will understand each other's culture. Instead, it "confirms each group in its own identity" (Hofstede et al. 387). Group members are then stereotyped and not seen as individuals, which cripples development (Hofstede et al. 387). Hofstede et al. mention that "the basic skill for surviving in a multicultural world is understanding first one's own cultural values and next the cultural values of the others with whom one has to operate" (424). Hofstede et al. go on to identify three phases of intercultural communication: 1) awareness, or recognizing that one has their own culture and other people have theirs which may be different, 2) knowledge, which means learning about other cultures, and 3) skills, which is a formula of awareness + knowledge + practice by recognition, practice, and experience of their culture (419). Ethnocentrism, while negative, is an important facet of culture that must be understood. Ethnocentrism is defined as "considering one's own little world to be the center of the universe" (Hofstede et al. 387). This looks like superiority of an individual's culture over someone whose culture differs from theirs. Fear of the unknown and fear of other cultures causes ethnocentrism.

The more a person becomes exposed to people from other cultures, the less likely they are to be ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism, a viewpoint that is rapidly increasing, has come up on the current political debates and specifically towards those of the Islamic faith. Ethnocentrism, similarly to biases or racism, can be overt and covert. Covert ethnocentrism, usually hidden and subliminal, may be because a person simply was not exposed to people from other cultures. Overt ethnocentrism is obvious, and is a choice. This can best be recently seen in the current 2016 presidential election, where some candidates are basing their platform around immigrant issues. Some are even going so far as to want to publicly identify those from other cultures with badges, similar to how Nazi Party leader Adolf Hilter required identification for Jews (Obeidallah). Ethnocentrism is an issue that everyone must fight against, and the best way to address this worldview is by promoting the knowledge and sharing of other cultures.

Combatting ethnocentrism can be done with contextualization. Contextualization is "a means of preserving the integrity of [someone's] culture" (Taylor and Waldrip 250). It is taking into account others' cultures when working with them by tailoring the approach to development in order to meet personal cultural needs and the cultural needs of the other person or group. When working with youth in particular, looking at the background that has shaped them reveals their actions, behaviors, and thoughts. Furthermore, we use culture as a way to explain why we behave the way we do (Hofstede et al. 327).

In this paper, I define cultural contextualization as taking into account individuals' cultures when interacting with them. Cultural contextualization must be be used with all people, regardless of country, age, gender, or socioeconomic status. All types of organizations should culturally contextualize their work environment, as well as involve all team members in learning about cultural contextualization to engage relationships at the highest level and maximize

productivity and development. Culture is where and how people develop their identity, and that must be honored and respected, especially in youth programs. I will use cultural contextualization to illustrate the steps necessary for youth program developers to implement. These steps promote maximized, positive development among Latino youth and youth in general.

Contextualization for Latino youth

Hofstede Analysis of Latino Culture

Working with Latinos in general differs from what many Americans may be accustomed to. Hofstede et al. look at dimensions of culture, or "aspects of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (31). Looking at Hofstede et al.'s dimensions of culture, or cultural indices, can show how American and Latino cultures differ and how this information can be utilized in tailoring programs to best help Latino youth. While Hofstede et al. look at individual countries, I gathered my data on Mexico's statistics, due to the fact that there are more Mexicans than any other Latino group in the United States (2011 Hispanic Origin Profile). However, while each country is uniquely its own, as a whole, most of the Latino countries rank similarly on Hofstede et al.'s indices. The following figure illustrates Mexico's scorings on the cultural indices, compared to United States' scores:

Mexico
in comparison with United States
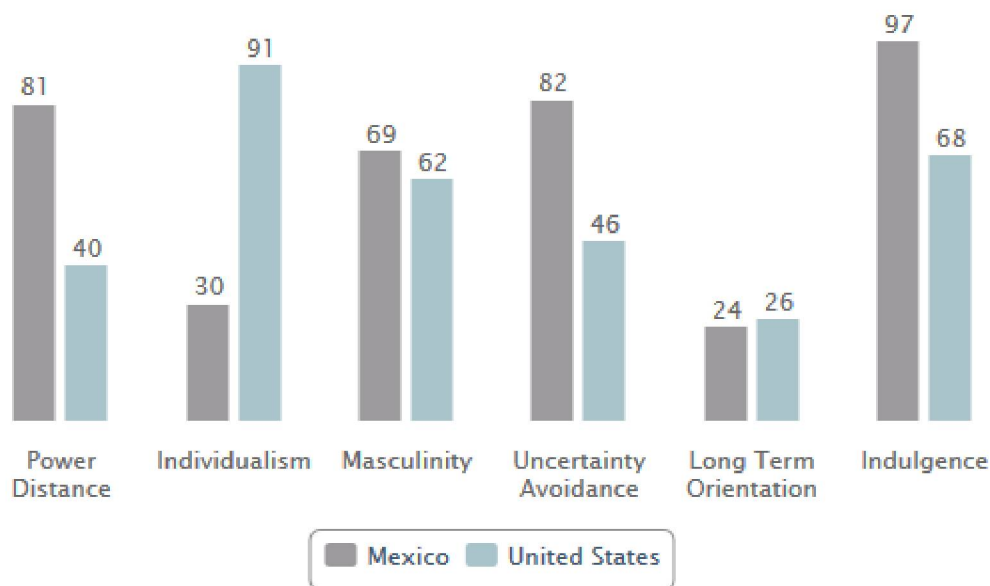
The indices I examine are Power Distance, Individualism, and Uncertainty Avoidance, since they have the greatest variation between Latino countries and the United States.

The Power Distance Index measures how power is distributed among relationships. Latinos score high, meaning that there is a rank system, where parents, elders, or teachers are "ranked" above others (Hofstede et al. 65). There is a great respect shown for those who have a higher rank or who have authority, like teachers, mentors, or program staff. In a youth program, this can be seen by Latino youth participants respecting the staff's instructions and following through with expectations placed on them by staff and their mentors.

On the Individualism Index, Latinos score low. This low score indicates that they are a very collectivist culture, where they put the focus on the group rather than the individual. This differs immensely from American culture, as Americans are very individualistic, focusing on personal gain and advancement rather than community. This collectivist idea starts from birth,

when Latinos are born into more than just their family. Their opinions are those of their "in-group", defined as a community group, large or small, that have similarly formed opinions, thoughts, and actions. Having an in-group means all actions or thoughts occur in response to what the collective group does or believes. When a Latino person does something that is considered shameful, there is a loss of face and perceived embarrassment of their entire community. Collectivism plays a major role in Latino youth's experience in schools. American teachers often complain that Latino students don't speak up, even when asked an open question to the group (Hofstede et al. 177). This further illustrates how many Americans are not culturally prepared to work with students from other cultures. Furthermore, a teacher may ask a specific student a question, only to have the student hesitate to step out from their in-group mentality to answer the question. This is different from American students, who are often eager to answer questions. In the American workplace, we use relationship and work methods that are based on honesty, trust, and sharing of feelings. However, these methods will not work with collectivist cultures. Relationships focused on openness of feelings and honesty goes beyond the collectivist nature (Hofstede et al. 122). While it may seem that collectivist cultures would be more willing to be open and share feelings, this is actually not the case, and is seen as a sign of weakness. Although an overt sharing of feelings and emotions may have a negative effect, personal relationships are extremely important to Latinos, even more so than Americans.

On the Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Latinos score high, meaning they tend to avoid risk. Paradoxically, Latinos risk their lives every day when illegally crossing borders and working without a visa or citizenship. Related to Uncertainty Avoidance Index is religion and spirituality. Higher-scoring cultures have a stronger belief in their faith and rituals, which is especially true with Latinos, most of whom have strong Catholic beliefs. 57% of Latino adults

identify as Catholic, and 71% of Latino youth who are raised Catholic remain Catholic as adults (CARA). Structure within organizations, schools, and relationships is also sought-after for Latinos (Hofstede et al. 198). Therefore, ensuring that youth programs are properly structured and organized will create an environment that Latino youth feel most comfortable in.

40 Developmental Assets: Background & Importance to Latino Youth

Crucial to youth success, "The 40 Developmental Assets", defined by The Search Institute, provide structure for youths' lives. They provide a blueprint on what to provide for youth in order to have the most positive impact on their overall development. These developmental assets have no racial or socioeconomic boundaries and apply to youth from all cultures. It is possible for community members to bring these positive experiences and qualities into the lives of youth (Search Institute 1). There are two asset categories: external assets and internal assets, with eight asset types: support, empowerment, boundaries & expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (Search Institute 2). The more assets youth have, the more it benefits their lives. Studies have shown that when children have between 31-40 assets, they exhibit more leadership, maintain good health, value diversity, and succeed in school while being protected from problem alcohol use, violence, illicit drug use, and sexual activity (Search Institute 3). There is no specific number of assets that youth should have, however 31 assets is a worthy base line for youth to experience optimum positive effects (Search Institute 4). What is troubling, however, is that only 8 percent of youth have 31 or more assets (Search Institute 4). As a collectivist culture group, Latinos gravitate towards family, friends, and their in-group. They focus on the whole of the community rather than themselves. As a result, I have defined the most important developmental assets to Latinos as:

- Support: Family Support, Other Adult Relationships, Caring Neighborhood

- Empowerment: Community Values Youth, Service to Others

- Boundaries & Expectations: Family Boundaries, Neighborhood Boundaries, Adult Role Models, Positive Peer Influence

- Constructive Use of Time: Religious Community

- Positive Values: Restraint

- Social Competencies: Resistance Skills

- Positive Values: Responsibility

Applying Hofstede et al.'s indices to these assets, the Individualism Index accounts for the assets family support, caring neighborhood, community values youth, service to others, neighborhood boundaries, and positive peer influence. The Power Distance Index covers other adult relationships, adult role models, and family boundaries, while Uncertainty Avoidance relates to the assets restraint, resistance skills, religious community, and responsibility.

Hofstede et al.'s Dimensions of Culture are used as a tool to analyze culture. The user gains knowledge on how to approach a cultural group and work with them most effectively. On the other hand, the 40 Developmental Assets is a tool that is universal to all children and shows how children develop into healthy adults. Using Hofstede et al.'s tool, the 40 Developmental Assets can be understood and interpreted specifically to Latino youth. Using these two tools together optimizes cultural contextualization. Otherwise, the focus is on either simply the cultural aspect – Hofstede – or the age aspect – 40 Developmental Assets – not both combined.

Literature Review

In *The Role of Afterschool and Community Science Programs in the Lives of Urban Youth*, Rahm et al. claim that programs centered on youth and not the curriculum increases the

youth's ability to seek their identity (Rahm et al. 283). Many after-school programs may have

hands-on activities centered on science, but most have youth development and community

building in youth as a main goal, rather than focusing on the subject itself. Community programs

that focus strictly on one topic have shown an increased knowledge and confidence in these

subjects among youth. What's more, these programs spark an interest among students in the

subject that may not have been present before, or reinforce an existing interest in the subject.

What matters in these youth programs is not the academic achievement in school or grades, but

rather that youth have the opportunity to learn in a hands-on, relevant way. It is important to

create a program curriculum that youth can relate to and one that is appropriate for their culture.

Riggs et al. in *Examining the Potential of Community-based After-school programs for Latino*

Youth examine how after-school programs affected Latino youth. They conducted two studies

which examined attendance of after-school programs and how that affected self-worth and ethnic

identity development, the relationship between participation in after-school programs, emotional

intelligence and concentration development. The study found that regular attendance in after-

school programs increases concentration, emotional intelligence, and emotional regulation. Most

importantly, youth who participated more frequently also felt that they increased their self-worth.

In *Intentional Youth Programs: Taking Theory to Practice*, J. Walker describes that youth

participate in programs that are designed for them, but it is essential for the programs to be

designed with youth engagement in mind. When youth are engaged and take part in program

activities, there are greater chances for positive development. For example, youth have more

exposure to positive adult and peer relationships. Another way to ensure youth are engaged and

actively participate is to focus on the importance of healthy relationships and promote a safe

environment. Program curriculum should be altered, if needed, to better benefit youth.

Curriculum can be altered by looking at six principles that are fundamental to youth development. According to the author, the six principles in any given program curriculum and activities are: 1) youth are having their needs fulfilled, 2) there is choice and flexibility in the activities provided, 3) creation between youth and adults is present, 4) learning in everyday life is promoted, 5) there is a focus on and build-up of the strengths youth bring to the table and, 6) there is a focus on cohesive approaches to learning (J. Walker 79). Brown et al. mention in *How Adolescents Come to See Themselves as More Responsible through Participation in Youth Programs* that programs that have task demands, demands of program roles and time demands increased youth's sense of responsibility. Through these expectations, youth felt that they needed to carry out their commitments. Furthermore, they anticipated the consequences that would come upon themselves and they anticipated the consequences that would come upon others if they were not responsible. They often felt "respect and warmth toward the leaders and said these feelings led them to make greater efforts to accomplish the tasks the leaders handed them" (Brown et al. 302). This study went on to give characteristics of youth programs that have higher rates of responsibility development, including youth ownership for their work, a high degree of structure, and high expectations and accountability. Having strong leadership provided by program leaders to enforce these characteristics is also of high importance. Participation drops once youth reach the middle school years because many are too old for after-school programs, yet too young to find jobs, claims Saito in *Beyond Access and Supply: Youth-led Strategies to Captivate Young People's Interest in and Demand for Youth Programs and Opportunities.* School-based programs tend to be more structured, have more external support, and are easier to coordinate transportation. However, they cost more. Community-based programs are less structured, require more of an internal motivation within the youth, and lack transportation funds.

What is also notable is ensuring that programs for youth are age appropriate and the programs are assigned per age group. Some of the reasons that youth do not participate in programs are: 1) restricted access, 2) feeling unwelcomed by staff or other participants, 3) a lack of knowledge of what is available, and 4) poor structure and organization (Saito 66). In *Assessing Youth Programs: An International Perspective*, Alvarez discusses how some of the oldest and largest youth programs are focusing more on general youth development, while other smaller organizations look at social problems related to youth and try to solve them at the core. Although youth programs may have different focuses (educational, hands-on, arts-based, etc.), many of them have school and the education system as the foundation. This is helpful, since many children and youth that participate in education-based youth programs find that their academic performance in school increases.

A problem with youth programs is that while many of them are successful, there are not much documentation nor statistics to back up that success. Formal evaluations should be completed to better show their success and aid towards future research on youth development. The article *A Person-Centered and Ecological Investigation of Acculturation Strategies in Hispanic Immigrant Youth* by Coatsworth et al. aims to determine if a person-centered approach to studying acculturation would create biculturalism, assimilation, separation/withdrawal, or alienation/marginalization. The study also compared groups of youth to measure individual and sociocultural adaptation among the different acculturation groups. The study concludes that many youth are entering a self-explorative stage and may be in transition to other acculturative groups. They also suggest that the youth, being in a multicultural society, are giving up some of their family's culture, and do not want everything to be "Hispanic all the time" (186). Peguero looks at immigrant youth involvement patterns in school-based extracurricular activities by

analyzing immigrant generational status in *Immigrant Youth Involvement in School-Based Extracurricular Activities.* He states, "Latino students are more involved with activities that focus on peers and friendships," which is important to take into account when analyzing farming and agriculture youth programs that are tailored toward Latino immigrant youth (Peguero 20). The article goes into more depth about first, second, and third generational Latino immigrants and how likely they are to be involved in extracurricular activities compared to their white student counterparts.

Youth Programs

Youth programs are beneficial as long as youth are engaged and actively participate in the program. Having this engagement and participation will aid in the maximum development for youth, as "young people such as those in the middle years are more likely to achieve desired developmental outcomes when they are actively engaged in their own learning and development" (K. Walker 76). Putting youth at the center of youth programs ensures that the curriculum is intentional, builds relationships, and is especially relevant to young people's lives since youth "bring all the values, experiences, customs, culture, assets and deficits" (K. Walker 81). Youth have basic, psychological, and self-fulfillment needs that must be met. Basic needs include physiological needs like food, water, and rest, and safety needs like security and protection. Psychological needs include a sense of belonging, self-esteem and love, while self-fulfillment needs focus on self-actualization, or personal achievement and a creative output (Poston 348).

The needs mentioned above must be met with youth programs to ensure active participation and attendance in order to positively affect youth's own personal development and positively impact their community. All of these factors are important, but another factor that might not have been thought of is the effect of year-round versus short-term programs. Year-

round programs allow youth to have constant contact with their adult relationships and mentors, which is crucial to the success of youth. This is especially true since it is accounted for in many different sections of the 40 Developmental Assets and because "healthy, caring, respectful relationships between adults and youth are critical [and include] firmly established boundaries or negotiated ones" (K. Walker 82). Short-term programs, while beneficial to youth, do not provide adult relationships that are as strong as in year-round youth programs. When I participated in volunteer trainings during my fieldwork, it was important for volunteers to learn how to tell youth that their volunteer commitment had come to an end. It's crucial for adult volunteers to assure the children that they are leaving on their own terms, and that the children did nothing to cause them to leave. Youth can get attached to adult staff easily, and in many cases vice versa. In year-round programs, youth have enough time to form strong bonds with adult mentors and staff. In short-term programs, youth can still bond with adult mentors and staff. However the relationship strength suffers and therefore less positively impacts youth development. To achieve youth engagement and participation, programs must create curriculum that is intentional in action, is focused on building relationships, and is relevant to young people's lives.

Afterschool programs benefit youth since they help "promote the academic, social, and behavioral adjustment of Latino youth, as well as feelings of hope, desire, and success in school" (Riggs et al. 418). Involvement in after-school programs can enhance youth's sense of belonging which impacts their self-worth, and the effects are greater for youth who are at risk of dropping out of school (Riggs et al. 418). By providing youth with a stable, dependable community, where youth actively participate and staff and volunteers are there consistently, youth have a sense of belonging. Afterschool programs provide a place for youth to build relationships with peers and have the opportunity to have adult mentors or positive adult role models, and provide a safe

environment. I identify that afterschool programs have the opportunity to provide these developmental assets:

- Support: other adult relationships, caring neighborhood (community), caring school climate

- Empowerment: community values youth, youth as resources (given useful roles), service to others, safety

- Boundaries & expectations: school boundaries, neighborhood (community) boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, high expectations

- Constructive use of time: creative activities, youth programs, religious community

- Commitment to learning: achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, bonding to school, reading for pleasure

- Positive values: caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint

- Social competencies: planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution

- Positive identity: personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future

Afterschool programs have the opportunity to provide up to 35 of the 40 developmental assets, which is above the 31-asset desired benchmark. The ideal after-school program provides all 35 of these assets.

Youth programs provide a great opportunity for participants to develop their own personal sense of responsibility. This is accomplished by providing youth with the opportunities for leadership and other roles held in the program, time demands and obligations, and having

good relationships with adult mentors. In addition, when youth anticipate consequences for themselves and for others, they are more likely to complete and fulfill their demands and responsibilities, and in turn they have an increased sense of responsibility among themselves (Wood et al. 302). Having a set of demands and structure assist youth in feeling responsible (Wood et al. 304). I saw this during my fieldwork, when staff would hand youth the responsibility of distributing and collecting arts and crafts materials or filling water cups. The youth who were given these responsibilities were excited to help their adult friends, and would often ask for more responsibilities. This especially benefits Latino youth, as they are a high uncertainty avoiding culture, and they prefer more structure in their lives. Youth generally are excited and volunteer themselves for tasks that give them a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, having encouraging adult leaders helps youth take ownership over their tasks and requirements. These positive role models and caring adult relationships also show a sense of youth dependability, which increases youth's sense of responsibility.

Principles & Approaches to Development

People-Centered Approach

One of the developmental approaches of working with youth is the people-centered approach, created by David Korten. Korten describes development as "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (qtd. in Myers 154). The process of people-centered development focuses on three principles: sustainability, justice, and inclusiveness. The "sustainable" principle stresses that any good development must sustain the environment (Myers 154). Justice and inclusiveness relate to social disintegration and the bias of governments and

social systems towards the powerful (Myers 154). Most importantly is "consistent with their own aspirations", meaning the people should be the voice and deciding factor in the programs, and they should decide what factors and improvements are most important to them and their culture; the creation and development of the program shouldn't come from those outside of the participants (Myers 154). It is said that "youth are at the center of youth development work" (Walker 78). Youth being the center builds up and empowers the Latino community. Latino youth can be seen as a "beacon of hope" to other members of the Latino community, which is necessary during difficult or trying times. Latinos need more hope than ever with the recent "immigrant-phobia" that seems to be centered on the upcoming Presidential elections. They also provide an example of "pureness" and innocence to the community. The practice of respecting the Latino community's story relates to this. The Latino community is grounded in its rich history, starting from before World War II, where "unparalleled immigration has taken place from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America … especially escalating since the 1960's" (Gonzalez xv). It is absolutely critical to understand and know the story to which the development belongs (Myers 205). Being able to tell their story allows the community to feel empowered and show that developers care about them and value what they have to say. In addition, hearing their story "is crucial to understanding its present and its identity as well as getting a glimpse of a possible future" (Myers 206). By listening to their story and having them be at the center of development, we see the world as they see it, through their eyes. This provides youth with a feeling of hope; they see their personal potential and their potential impact on their community, as well as an increased sense of awareness and cultural appreciation. Putting Latino youth at the center of development helps us understand more about their culture, their community, and their identity. This can reveal their capabilities, resources, skills, and knowledge

as well as their vulnerabilities (Myers 209). In the end, revealing these will show and reinforce to Latino youth that they have skills, knowledge, and "ways of working that are good and worth building on" (Myers 209).

Isaac Prilleltensky and Geoffrey Nelson created the idea of development as "enhancing personal, collective, and relational power" (Myers 164). These three areas of well-being provide personal powers that are considered part of the 40 developmental assets for youth, as seen in the following chart:

	Prilleltensky & Nelson's Principle	40 Developmental Assets
Personal well-being	- Self-determination - Caring/Compassion - Health - Mastery/Control - Personal Growth - Meaning and Spirituality	- Personal Power - Sense of Purpose - Self-esteem - Positive View of Personal Future - Interpersonal Competence - Restraint - Caring - Integrity - Achievement Motivation - Safety
Collective well-being	- Social Justice & Accountability - Sense of Community - Liberating Institutions - Access to Vital Services - Protect Environment	- Equality and Social Justice - Cultural Competence - Caring Neighborhood - Caring School Climate - Community Values Youth - Youth Programs - Religious Community
Relational well-being	- Self-respect - Secure Identity - Participation - Mutual Responsibility - Respect for Diversity	- Caring - Integrity - Honesty - Responsibility - Equality and Social Justice

		- Cultural Competence
		- Interpersonal Competence
		- Peaceful Conflict Resolution
		- Planning and Decision Making
		- Creative Activities
		- Service to Others

This development principle has both an individualistic and collectivist side in the personal well-being and collective well-being respectively. However, the sense of individualism within personal well-being is overthrown due to "the inclusion of caring, compassion, and concern for the well-being of others" (Myers 163).

Transformational Relationships

One of the most important developmental principles to consider, regardless of culture or community group, is relationships. By having a focus on people, we create a community of diverse individuals and have the potential to empower those we wish to help. In order for strong relationships to be in place, there must be commitment and infrastructure (Joyaux 225). What's important to note is that not all relationships count as strong, transformational relationships. Myers defines transformational development as "seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually" (3). Therefore, transformational relationships are defined as "seeking positive change in the whole of human life" through relationships (Myers 3). Transformation is a journey that doesn't end and continues on throughout a lifetime (Myers 3). Furthermore, there needs to be intentionality in these relationships. Intentionality can be something as almost simple as listening carefully and not distractedly when someone is speaking, or listening for a deeper meaning in what they may be trying to say. Intentionality is doing something with an entire effort, not just half-effort. It means

elevating people and bringing out the best in them, which requires sustainability in the relationship. In the case of Latino youth, intentionality means taking into account their culture when speaking with them, and recognizing that they may not feel comfortable speaking out of a group, for example. Treating these relationships as a transaction, as if you were just "checking the box" and doing what ought to be done, does not create transformation. Myers agrees that "without transforming relationships there is unlikely to be much transformation"; with a stress on transforming relationships, rather than simply transactional (183). The collectivist nature of Latino youth is what makes relationships so important to them. These relationships, however, must be elevated to a transformational level to receive full benefit. Relationships are an asset, and there are so many ways to tailor relationships to specific cultural groups (Joyaux 234).

Youth Participation

Youth participation is crucial in development. Youth advocate for things that are important to them through participation (Reddy and Ratna 20). Youth participation helps shape their identity and form relationships to become contributing members in their community, and through participation, youth find meaning for their lives (Reddy and Ratna 24). It is easy to feel sorry for children, and to try to care for them and to love them. However, what's necessary is respecting them and seeing them as equal humans, rather than downplaying their abilities and potential. Respecting youth means so much more, too. It means "respecting the child's situation, perceptions, attitudes, ambitions, reasoning and needs. It means listening to the child and really hearing what the child is saying" (Reddy and Ratna 36). Putting children at the center of youth programs and youth development puts their concerns and their needs first, which in turn will spark participation. Especially as adults, it is difficult to know what youth really need, as we often think we know what they need. We may think that youth who have poor grades need after-

school tutoring, but what they yearn for are healthy adult relationships. How do we figure out what youth really need? It goes back to the importance of relationships. While it may seem simple, "getting to know a child, as an individual in her/his own right is not easy to achieve" (Reddy and Ratna 21). What's more, when we first meet a child, there are many outside influences – like biases, stereotyping, or ethnocentrism - that shape how and what we think of that child. This is why cultural contextualization is so important when working with youth – having a background and knowledge concerning youth culture can prevent the negative influences of bias, stereotyping and ethnocentrism. In the beginning, it is important to start relationships with youth that are based on "mutual trust, affection, and most of all respect" (Reddy and Ratna 22). By having these kinds of relationships with youth, we are better able to question and challenge the popular stereotypes, biases, and prejudices that are attached to youth, especially a diverse population of youth (Reddy and Ratna 22). What's important to remember about Latino youth specifically is that they value hierarchy in relationships. Therefore, while adults should respect children for who they are, there should still be a strong sense of authority in order for Latino youth to feel completely comfortable. Building up children helps them realize their strengths and weaknesses and "identify the opportunities and constraints that are present in their external environment" (Reddy and Ratna 22). This awareness empowers youth. Empowerment is a process of "enabling, motivating, and promoting and increasing capability" (Myers 218). Having youth experience empowerment from adult transformational relationships and from within themselves is life-changing and positively impacts their lives. The adult relationships and mentors in youth's life should work on bringing their strengths to light, building them up, and attempt to help them strengthen their shortcomings. What's more, it's important to acknowledge that while we, as adults, play important roles in the lives of youth and

their development, we should be aware that "children are not passive recipients of experience but actively involved in their own learning and growth" (Boyden et. al. 26). We oftentimes think children are not capable of doing things on their own, or being able to teach us anything. However, children can often teach us more about life than adults if we give them that platform.

Participation is necessary for any program to be effective, especially for youth. Quality of participation means ensuring that all members of the community participate, not just elders, leaders, or men. This points to how youth need to be taken seriously and are able to hold their own when it comes to development and developing themselves. While youth are able to hold their own, it is necessary to acknowledge that Latino youth are very group-oriented. They will prefer to participate as a group, rather than individually. Sam Voorhies states specific guidelines that are set out in order to have effective participation, which are as follows:

1) Participation begins at the beginning, with the community's story and analysis

2) Start small, so the community can manage on its own

3) Use a process or learning approach to help the community learn how to learn

4) Encourage the community to mobilize its own resources

5) Encourage community members to run the program and experience the joy of their successes and learn from their mistakes

6) Build capacity, help community members succeed

7) Invest in organizing and help them find new ways of working together

8) Have a bias toward peace

9) Communicate

(qtd. in Myers 216)

While these guidelines are just that, a guide, it is imperative to look at the importance of participation and creating it through a youth perspective. Engagement, which is a combination of relationship building, participation, and intentional action, is key in order to have maximum positive development in youth. It is absolutely essential when working to build relationships (Joyaux 236). In order to create engagement, programs need to be age appropriate, selected by youth, hands-on and active, out-of-the-box, an opportunity to connect youth to the real world and community, and an opportunity for youth to hone in on and master their skills (J. Walker 88)

Asset-based Approach

The asset-based approach is another principle that must be in place in order to positively impact youth and encourage their development. Looking at youth as having assets that are beneficial to themselves and their community elevates their esteem, empowerment, and essentially their perceived ability to have a voice and to help their community. Rather than focusing on what Latino youth lack, developers should look at all of the assets that are present in their lives and seek to figure out how these assets can be used to the maximum. By putting a focus on their assets rather than simply on their flaws and deficits, Latino youth will not fall into the trap of "seeing themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders" (Kretzman 2). With that kind of mentality, and with developers providing resources that they believe Latino youth need, there is a perception that "only outside experts can provide real help" (Kretzman 4). Latino youth should utilize their assets through contextualized youth programs to create real change and development within themselves.

Case Study – GRuB

Looking at the successful agriculture-based youth program, GRuB, based in Olympia, I will determine how the program fits the needs of Latino youth and provide suggestions on

improvements to be made to better tailor to the specific needs of Latino youth. GRuB's youth program focuses on alternative education, employment, and drop-out prevention. They engage teens from local high schools in land- and community-based projects. This organization has a successful youth program model that has been implemented in six other regional schools and organizations. Their program model focuses on three core themes and four tenets that are found in the most successful youth programs across the country (GRuB).

The core themes are: "Farming Self", or personal development, "Farming Land" or sustainable agriculture, and "Farming Community" or civic engagement and community service (GRuB). Under the personal development theme, GRuB provides constructive feedback on youth's behavior and work, trust-building activities, workshops on public speaking, non-violent communication, and healthy relationships, support for applying for college, how to prepare healthy and nutritious food, and one-on-one mentorship (GRuB). These are especially important for Latino youth, as they are more vulnerable to experience violence, unhealthy relationships, and poor nutritional diets and are less likely to continue on to college. For sustainable agriculture, the program allows youth to take up leadership roles in the production of produce and organization of volunteers. Youth also build gardens for low-income families and help host workshops to teach newcomers gardening skills, which supports their civic engagement and community service theme (GRuB). The four tenets are: responsibility, ensuring that the program creates opportunities for youth to tackle real-world problems and day-to-day responsibilities; relevance, making sure that the program fits the needs of youth and their community; relationships, ensuring that the strength of these relationships between youth and adult mentors is fostered and; rigor, to challenge youth and encourage them to work hard for success. GRuB has had a lasting impact on many of the youth that have participated in their program. For instance,

one participant stated that their time at GRuB was "life-changing" and had "[made them] a stronger person" (GRuB). They went on to say that "GRuB creates a very comfortable, safe, and supportive environment that has helped me come out of my comfort zone, which makes it easier to try new things outside of GRuB" (GRuB). Another program participant was so positively impacted that they are "now capable of handling society's challenges, and [are] now fighting against societal oppression" (GRuB).

This youth program covers thirty of the developmental assets that are crucial to youth development. The assets that this program covers are:

- Support: Other Adult Relationships, Caring Neighborhood, Caring School Climate

- Empowerment: Community Values Youth, Youth as Resources, Service to Others, Safety

- Boundaries & Expectations: School Boundaries, Neighborhood Boundaries, Adult Role Models, Positive Peer Influence, High Expectations

- Constructive Use of Time: Creative Activities, Youth Programs

- Commitment to Learning: Achievement Motivation, School Engagement, Bonding to School

- Positive Values: Caring, Equality and Social Justice, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility

- Social Competencies: Planning and Decision Making, Interpersonal Competence, Cultural Competence, Peaceful Conflict Resolution

- Positive Identity: Personal Power, Self-Esteem, Sense of Purpose, Positive View of Personal Future

Many of the assets share origins within the programs that GRuB offers. The assets "other adult relationships" and "adult role models" stem from the adult mentors that the program provides. Furthermore, the instructors and staff at GRuB serve as role models for the youth, so

opportunities for adult relationships with youth can occur. "Caring neighborhood", "community values youth", and "neighborhood boundaries" relate to the close ties that the organization has with the community and how they strive to make sure that the work they complete in their programs is relevant to the community. These are some of the most important assets for the collectivist Latino youth. "Caring school climate", "school boundaries", "school engagement", "bonding to school", and "achievement motivation" are all centered around the partnership that the organization has with local high schools in the area. Working in tandem with local schools fosters these assets, as well as the success that the youth program model has in boosting graduation rates and preventing drop-outs. GRuB also focuses on the asset types of empowerment, social competencies, and positive identity assets. They do this by allotting youth leadership and management positions throughout the duration of the project, overseeing the production and harvest of produce that is given to them and donating to local food banks. They also ensure safety by providing workshops on public safety, non-violent communication, conflict de-escalation, and healthy relationships (GRuB). The program model is designed to address many internal asset types of positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

GRuB, and specifically their youth program, provides most of the assets that are important to Latino youth. However, there are some recommendations that I suggest to GRuB to take into account in order to benefit Latino youth on a greater level. There are three assets that are crucial to Latino youth that this program lacks: "restraint", "resistance skills", and "religious community", which all relate to Latino's high Uncertainty Avoidance culture. Going further than Latino's high Uncertainty Avoidance, Latino youth need more assistance with restraint in terms of restraining from drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and gang violence. Their vulnerable

nature and low socioeconomic status attributes to Latino youth participating in these negative activities. Within the organization's personal development core value in their curriculum, having more workshops on resistance to peer pressure when it comes to drugs, alcohol, or sexual activity would fulfill these assets that are important to Latinos. Without this asset, Latino youth can find themselves joining gangs, and can throw away all that they and their parents have worked so hard for. It is crucial to provide this support for Latino youth in order to encourage them to live healthy, positive lives. For the asset "religious community," partnering with local churches, specifically Catholic churches, could benefit Latino youth. Donating harvested produce to churches or inviting pastors or priests to speak in workshops would create a bridge to a religious community that is important to Latino youth. Another suggestion would be to simply create relationships with leaders in the local religious community. This ensures that there is always the opportunity for Latino youth to easily have access to a religious leader if needed. Finally, including an optional prayer time during group meetings or even break-out prayer times would help not only include the religious asset, but will also foster Latino youth's need for a group and community. This can be seen as praying before meals or allowing a break between programs to talk about faith or pray. It is important to note that all religions must be honored, not simply the Catholicism that is prevalent among Latino youth. During my fieldwork, Turning Point held Community Meals, where once a month, parents and children would come together for a meal at the end of the day. Since many of the youth and their families were Muslim, we happily provided various dishes to be inclusive of people from all cultures.

Application of Principles

GRuB boasts impressive action of transformational relationships. By having adults serve as mentors for youth participants, and as well as having staff that serve as healthy adult role

models, Latino youth are exposed to the type of relationships that can only be considered as transformational in this program. GRuB also focuses on participation and empowerment. The leadership and management positions ensure that youth are actively participating and being empowered to do more. One of their core themes is focusing on personal development, which can only be achieved through participation. Finally, GRuB's youth program does a good job of taking into account the assets that each youth participant brings, although this is not directly stated. GRuB is very community-focused. Being community-focused includes taking into account the assets and capabilities that the community members bring to the table. As Kretzman et. al. states, "each community boasts a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future" (5). GRuB's success has been attributed to the fact that youth's assets are a main focus of the program. Because of this, youth are not only simply people receiving aid, but they are a part of their own growth and development, which ties into the participation principle.

I suggest that GRuB to look into implementing a more people-centered approach to their youth program. By doing this, they can have more of a positive impact on the developmental assets of youth. By implementing this principle, youth are empowered to build upon their strengths and work on implementing the assets that they are lacking through new programs or methods. What's more, Latino youth can be seen as a source of inspiration to their peers, family, and community. It also helps promote leadership and ownership among youth, which builds up their ability to be empowered, and helps them shine. While GRuB has youth teach the community about gardening skills, GRuB can implement a more youth-centered approach. It is recommended that GRuB create leadership positions for youth in their program, where youth are elected democratically. This will foster Latino youth's sense of leadership and will give an increased feeling of responsibility. Youth will not want to let their peers nor their adult mentors

and relationships down. GRuB can create these leadership positions to look over various aspects of the youth program. Perhaps there is a leader that focuses on the CSA market stand production, the production and organization of community plots, or the training and development of new gardeners. To go further and implement the need of a religious community for Latino youth, I would recommend a leader to organize optional prayer times or faith meetings.

Overall, GRuB does a great job of providing for youth. They also have many principles in place that cater towards Latino youth as well. However, with a few tweaks to the program, GRuB can more positively impact Latino youth, as well as youth from other cultures.

Case Study – FFA

The National FFA Organization is an "intercultural student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership" (FFA). The FFA in the organization's name stands for "Future Farmers of America". FFA is part of school-based agricultural education, or SBAE, which is "an essential educational program delivered through career and technical education in every state of the United States" (FFA). There are three core components of SBAE: 1) "Contextual, inquiry-based instruction and learning through an interactive classroom and laboratory; 2) Premier leadership, personal growth and career success through engagement in FFA; and 3) Experiential, service and/or work-based learning through the implementation of a supervised agricultural experience program" (FFA). FFA provides more than agricultural education. It provides career advice, hands-on training, opportunities for leadership development and to hold leadership positions, ability to participate in competitions, and the opportunity for scholarships. Latino youth, coming from a low socioeconomic background and whose families may not make enough money to support their college efforts, find that scholarships are extremely helpful. What's more, FFA helps youth to "develop their own unique talents and explore their

interests in a broad range of career pathways" (FFA). What many people think of when they hear of FFA is livestock production and showing at local fairs. While this is a major component of FFA, and perhaps one of the most time-consuming, there is much more. From wildlife judging, woodshop and metal shop dual-credit courses, metal art fabrication, greenhouse development, first aid, and learning about reusable resources, FFA caters to a wide variety of interests, skills, and abilities. This is wonderful because it gives youth to explore many potential interests, and ensures that there is "something for everyone", regardless of skillset.

FFA is an organization that provides an exemplary youth program model. The FFA program provides all of the 40 developmental assets that are crucial to youth. What's most impressive is that FFA is contextual-based, and therefore takes into account different styles of learning, which is reflected by the diversity of the FFA members. Out of all of the FFA members, 22 percent are Latino (FFA).

Application of Principles

FFA includes the people-centered approach and participation to empowerment by each chapter having an officer's board. These officers run for their position and are elected by fellow members. This shows how youth are participating within FFA at a deeper level. What's more, all programs are chosen upon from within, meaning that the officer's board and chapter members decide how they want to participate. I interviewed a Latino FFA alumnus, Cody Booky, who participated from seventh to twelfth grade. Cody held an officer's position all throughout high school and was President his final year. He says that "the members and officers came up with the majority of project ideas. We also got ideas from the community and their needs" (Booky). In his FFA chapter, which had roughly 50 members on average throughout the years he participated, members would "create and sell metal art, sawmill our own lumber and make furniture to sell,

and make whatever the community needed us to make. We'd have fundraisers, like dances and auctions to sell our products" (Booky). Having the members come up with the majority of the projects within the organization helped give them a sense of ownership and empowerment that they would have struggled to find elsewhere. This enables them to participate on their own terms, which brings about the greatest positive development among youth.

One of the most important principles of a great youth program for Latino youth is having transformational relationships, specifically among adult role models. These adult role models can oftentimes take place of a missing parent at home. Many times, immigrant parents will come to the United States one at a time, leaving the other parent at home. Or sometimes, one parent will permanently leave the family. FFA has chapter advisors who are usually teachers at the school the chapter is associated with. Not only are these students learning in the classroom from these advisors but they are also able to learn from them in a hands-on context. Wood et al. state that "often youth reported feeling respect and warmth toward the leaders and said these feelings led them to make greater effort to accomplish the tasks leaders handed to them" (302). They went on to give an example from Sarah, who is a member of a local FFA chapter:

> "[My advisors] are great. They tell you something they think you can achieve and then it's up to you to do that. And I guess it's not like a pressure, but you do, they're such nice people you just kind of wanna [sic] live up to their expectations. You never wanna [sic] let them down." (qtd. in Wood et al. 302)

This illustrates that relationships between adult mentors and advisors can benefit youth not only from the relationship itself, but also have an increased sense of responsibility and not wanting to let others down. I experienced this first-hand during my fieldwork. I formed great relationships with youth, specifically with a boy who is diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. This boy, once our relationship was formed and strengthened, tried his best to listen to

my instruction, even though this was an immense struggle for him. This further translates to relationships among peers, as well: "Some youth reported adhering to the demands out of consideration, not just for the leaders, but also their peers" (Wood et. al. 302).

Each FFA chapter focuses on the assets that its members provides. The individual chapters can then tailor their programs to fit the needs and enhance the abilities of the members. For example, a Tennessee FFA chapter created a program called PLOW (Passing Literacy OnWard), which is "an organized effort to promote the excitement and improvement of literacy" (FFA Tennessee). This chapter – by the leadership, empowerment and participation of its members – has created a program that caters to the heart and needs of its own and its community. Additionally, FFA's programs are designed to build upon assets. For example, Cody stated that throughout his participation in various programs and projects, the skills he learned were "leadership, public speaking, responsibility, hard work, a good work ethic, the value of money, the value of resources and how to reuse them, and the value of the program and it's cost" (Booky, Personal Interview). These skills can be translated into many of the internal assets, like responsibility, achievement motivation, interpersonal competence, planning and decision making, to name a few.

Latino Youth Program Recommendations

While GRuB and FFA are two specific examples, organizations can take action to contextualize their approaches to working with not just Latino youth, but youth from all cultures. Looking at successes from GRuB and FFA, I propose steps of action that youth program developers must implement in order to better support Latino youth and youth from other cultures.

Leadership opportunities provide a space for youth to be at the center of their own development. Taking from FFA's success, by implementing a leadership cabinet, youth choose what activities and programs the group will participate in. Having programs centered on youth shows that developers care about youth's interests and strengths. It's important not to force youth participation in something they aren't interested in. By providing many different ways for youth to participate, youth can pick and choose based off of their interests and strengths. Having a wide variety of activities, like arts and crafts, reading, or playing outside provides different ways for youth to be involved. With Turning Point, once kids completed their homework, they had an option for what they could do: read a book, work on academic enrichment worksheets, color or draw, or play outside. This gave youth the choice – and put them at the center of their own development – as well as allowed them to play to their strengths. Some youth really enjoyed playing outside, while others preferred to sit inside and read a book. Open mic performances are another way that programs encourage youth to participate and tell their story. Through open mic performances or talent shows, youth share their passions, interests, and are given an open platform to express their thoughts.

Organizations should have a community focus. To strengthen this focus organizations can create relationship-building activities. Taking the example of Turning Point, having monthly or bi-monthly community meals is a good way to build relationships with families and youth. Furthermore, volunteer opportunities for youth provides more ways to build relationships and communities. A great way for organizations to create volunteer opportunities is connecting with local community gardens or P-Patches to offer help weeding, watering, or harvesting. Organizations do not need many resources or funds to build community and relationships. By having adult program staff and volunteers serve as a good role model for intentionality and

positive relationships, youth see firsthand how this creates good in each other's lives. Adults and youth engaging in mutual respect is another step that requires no additional resources, so a program of any size or budget can implement this right away. Furthermore, GRuB provides workshops that focus on non-violent communication, which are a good way to build relationships and teach what intentionality is within this context.

Conclusion

Each and every person has a "culture" that describes the reason why they do things and why they may think certain ways. With our world becoming even more global than it is now, it would be rare not to interact with others from cultures that differ from yours. What's important to realize, however, is that no one culture is the "right" culture. Each persons' culture has their own uniqueness which brings positivity and insight. We need to do everything in our power to avoid ethnocentrism. Latino youth are an incredibly vulnerable population in the United States today. It is the duty of those who operate youth programs to look at the special facets of Latino youth's culture and take them into consideration when planning or executing these programs.

There are four principles that youth programs must implement in order to ensure maximum positive development among Latino youth. The people-centered approach is especially important because, when youth are put at the center of their own development, there is an increase in youth participation, and in turn, empowerment. Empowerment can also be promoted through transformational relationships with both peers and adults. Youth so desperately need positive and healthy adult relationships, and Latino youth in particular require a collectivist group setting. Both of these can be attained through intentional relationships that transform, rather than check the boxes. Finally, focusing on the assets of Latino youth is a simple

way to make sure all 40 developmental assets – and in particular, the ones that matter the most to Latino youth – are in place in programs or can be implemented.

Looking at the local organization, GRuB, and the national-level FFA, both of which have excellent youth programs, it is clear to see how cultural contextualization can fit into these programs to maximize positive development for Latino youth. FFA includes the four principles seamlessly into their programs, and provides all of the 40 developmental assets that are important to youth. What's more, they pride themselves in their ability to work contextually with their diverse youth population. GRuB, being a local organization, has fewer resources to work with than FFA. However, they do a wonderful job of already having three principles in place and providing the majority of the assets needed for Latino youth. The suggestion of putting youth at the center of their programs can increase youth participation and empowerment. Furthermore, there is the possibility of implementing tweaks and/or additions to existing programs in order to provide the remaining developmental assets that are missing now. These two organizations show how they have exemplary programs that provide maximum positive development for Latino youth. They are able to provide the principles that are crucial to positive youth development as well as the 40 developmental assets that *all* youth should have. While they are both agriculture-based organizations, it is pure coincidence that they both are successful in providing for youth. There may be other organizations that provide the four necessary principles that aren't strictly agricultural in nature. While the focus on activities provided is agricultural, it is not to say that without this agricultural focus they would be unsuccessful in their approach to positively develop and provide for youth.

My work is in no way complete: there are many different areas that should be researched more to ensure that agricultural programs are the best fit for Latino youth development. Hofstede

et al.'s research is up-to-date, with the most recent edition completed in 2010. However, while there is a background on the indices that span all sectors of life (i.e. school, work, home, etc.), a main portion of the text is dedicated to these indices in organizations. More research should be done on these indices in these other areas of life. Another recommendation for research is looking at Latino youth in the American school system today. A colleague of mine mentioned that her Latino students were the worst behaving students in the entire class! This goes against everything that is assumed from Hofstede et al.'s indices. Perhaps the assumptions are out-of-date. A question I have is if immigrant generational status plays a role in how Latino youth develop in relation to the dimensions of culture and 40 Developmental Assets. Are first generation Latino immigrant youth more likely to fit Hofstede's indices and the required assets than second or third generation Latino immigrant youth? Although it is coincidence that the two programs I examined are agricultural programs, another question that should be explored is if the stereotype of Latinos working in the agricultural sector have an impact on Latino youth participating in agricultural youth programs. Latinos are already immensely stigmatized in the United States. This would be a relevant and eye-opening area to look into, and can help shape agricultural youth programs to encourage Latino youth. What's important to take into consideration is that Hofstede et al.'s dimensions of culture and the 40 Developmental Assets can be identified for youth from *all* culture groups, not just Latino youth. Organizations must focus their efforts on contextualizing their efforts for youth programs using the four principles. Without this, Latino youth – and all youth – will continue to be underserved in their communities around the United States.

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