

White Paper

Outcomes of 100 & Beyond School Program

Submitted by

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History of 100 & Beyond School Program

The 100 & Beyond School Program offers a Leadership, Creativity, and Network curriculum. This guide represents ten years of developing programs for instructing small and large groups in resiliency, leadership, professional development, and social networking. I have spoken to small and large groups on the benefits of character education and civic engagement in violence, drugs, alcohol, social interactions, and environmental awareness in past years. I was determined to gain access to follow-up performance for after-school programs to assess different mentorship training performance outputs properly.

In 2014, I decided to volunteer with different school-based and religious-based organizations weekly, teaching leadership and civic engagement. The students were eager to learn and spread the information that they learned to family and friends. This experience helped me gain more insight into the tools necessary for positive youth development among inner-city adolescents in the United States.

I have personally mentored and trained hundreds of males and females, and they have gone off to be great citizens instilled with integrity and moral courage. My team and I pride ourselves on serving our community in consistency and integrity.

Sincerely,
Isaiah Drone III
Director/Founder

White Paper Prospectuses

Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood spanning from age 10-19 (World Health Organization, 2021). This development period has been described as a phase of life beginning in biology, with the advent of pubertal changes, and ending in society, with the historically-, culturally-, and socially-constructed transition to young adulthood and the enactment of role choices forged during adolescence (Petersen, 1988). During this transition, positive influences can help young people succeed and keep them from having behavioral problems if they have various opportunities to learn and participate at home, at school, in community-based programs, and in their neighborhoods. Some of the elements that can protect young people and put them on the path to success include family support, caring adults, positive peer groups, a strong sense of self and self-esteem, and involvement at school and in the community (Murray et al., 2021).

This approach is understood as positive youth development (PYD) and favors leadership and skill-building opportunities under the guidance of caring adults. In this framework, youth are viewed as assets to be developed, and they are given the means to build successful futures (Murray et al., 2021). Unlike many prevention programs that focus solely on risk behaviors, PYD programs aim to develop and enhance the positive characteristics of individuals and their surrounding context. By increasing protective factors rather than focusing on risk behaviors related to a single adverse outcome, PYD programs have benefits across a range of health and academic outcomes (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

Inspiring adolescents to discover their purpose and sense of personal meaning with practices that support developmental needs is the aim of the 100 & Beyond School Program. The goal of the program is to support at-risk youth and teach resilience strategies that build upon but

are not limited to family support and monitoring, caring adult role models, positive peer groups, developing a solid sense of self, enhancing self-esteem, supporting future aspirations, and meaningful engagement in school and community activities. This program aims to engage with at-risk youth and encourage leadership principles, actively engage and listen to students, support their creativity, and encourage networking and mentorship opportunities to ensure these students are positively supported.

Background of the problem

Economically disadvantaged youth have been found to be negatively influenced by family factors, education institutions, community, family conditions, and religious involvement (Jones, 2017). Educational councils have also determined that economically disadvantaged youth have less access to academic and college preparatory courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Factors associated with flourishing trajectories include positive school environments and access to quality, nutritious foods. Additionally, supportive parenting has also been linked to developing adolescent resilience in the face of risk factors (Holsen et al., 2017). Interestingly, an at-risk trajectory has also been avoided if the individual has supportive relationships and positive role models, lowering the risk for depressive symptoms in teenagers (Murray et al., 2021).

Annual National Center for Educational Statistics studies have consistently found African Americans, Native American, and Latino has less access to academic and college preparatory courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Researchers have also concluded that purpose and a sense of meaning are overlooked when raising the expectations for students in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas (Jones, 2017). These findings suggested that adolescents' environments and training are factors to positive youth development and a significant

relationship exists between personality and background factors when predicting developmental processes.

The time period of adolescence is critical due to the heightened brain plasticity of the developing individual, making this a sensitive period during which life-course trajectories can be changed for better or for worse. Due to the interactions between the brain, the body, the environment, and the brain's plasticity, interventions to change developmental trajectories may be particularly effective during this time. Environmental factors such as where one lives, what one eats, the quality of the air one breathes, one's social interactions and relationships, and one's lifestyle choices, among other things, can have a profound impact on the development of an adolescent (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). These social determinants can include student education, parental employment, health systems and services, housing, income and wealth of family, the physical environment, public safety, the social environment, and transportation (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

An intervention to ensure that all adolescents receive positive interpersonal and social skills is through mentorships and PYD interventions. Positive youth development programs have been found to be effective in reducing sexual risk behaviors, HIV, other STDs, and unintended pregnancy. These programs also have the potential to prevent substance use and violent behaviors that contribute to HIV and other STD risks and are associated with improvements in academic performance (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Additionally, youth perception of identity and other factors contributed to cultural, economic aspects of the community, social system, and behavioral choices can be improved with PYD programs and mentorship (Jones, 2017).

Understanding Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development can be understood as an approach or philosophy that guides communities in the way they organize services, supports, and opportunities so that all young people can develop to their full potential. Jenson and Fraser (2016) explained that PYD is centered in a relational and developmental systems perspective as a result of interactive processes between an individual and her or his broader environment (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). Effective youth engagement is not just about "fixing" behavior problems; and it is about building and nurturing "all the beliefs, behaviors, knowledge, attributes, and skills that result in healthy and productive adolescence and adulthood (Harvard University, 2021).

The 5 C's is a framework for understanding positive youth development outcomes. This approach is used widely by youth programs and policymakers in the United States and approximately 60 nations around the world (Harvard University, 2021). The five C's are comprised of connection, confidence, character, competence, and contribution. Connection is understood as a feeling of safety, structure, and belonging. Confidence describes a sense of self-worth and mastery, having a belief in one's capability to proceed. Character is understood as one's ability to take responsibility and have a sense of independence. Competence is a person's ability to act effectively at home, in social situations, and at school. Contribution is one's ability to actively participate through leadership in a variety of settings in order to make a difference (Harvard University, 2021). When high levels of the Five C's develop, this results in a Sixth C, also known as caring. Caring is described as developing sympathy and compassion for others along with a commitment to social justice. Ultimately, the PYD model focuses on the positive characteristics that enable adolescents to lead productive and healthy lives and contribute to the

world in ways that benefit themselves, their families and communities, and civil society (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

Theoretical Foundations

In order to understand the development of an individual, we must understand all the systems at work in their life. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory describes the development as a reflection of the influence of several environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Based on this theory, five systems are present: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Microsystem describes the individual's setting, including immediate relationships or organizations a person interacts with, such as their school or family. Mesosystem is the relationship between microsystems or connections between contexts, such as interactions between a student's family and the teacher. Exosystem describes the links between the social setting where an individual does not have an active role and the individual's immediate context; it is important to note that this system does not have a direct but an indirect impact. Macrosystem describes the culture in which individuals live (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Santrock, 2013). This theory is relevant to PYD as it describes how individuals are affected by their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Review of the Literature

Influence of Socioeconomic Factors on Youth

Thomas (2013) researched the influence of family factors, education, community, family conditions on socioeconomically disadvantaged youth. This research also sought to identify the impact of poverty on education, understand the causes of social-economic disadvantages throughout adulthood, and investigate the challenges to social-economic attainment (Thomas, 2013). Through this research, it was concluded that social-economic disadvantages lead to the

irreversibility of lifelong disruptive behavior that strongly affects low test scores, threatening the welfare of the United States.

Development of Youth Purpose, Community Service and Social Action

Damon, Menon, & Bronk (2003) investigated the development of purpose as an intriguing and overlooked aspect of adolescent development. The researchers based their study on the work of Colby & Damon (1992), which stated that the construction and internalization of prosocial norms require facing dilemmas and overcoming adversity (Colby, & Damon, 1992). The model examined the individual's perception and experience from a by-directional interaction structure between different layers of the Ecological System Theory. A second factor in the model suggested that participants of this study can be directly or indirectly affected by how individuals interact with family, school, church, peers, and community. The third perspective in this model was based on Spencer, Dupree, and Hartmann's (1997) Phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory, which explains that adolescents' understanding of experiences with multiple contexts shows how participants interpret and understand settings and practices; when interacting with mentors.' This model suggested that interpretations and perceptions of adolescents are based on experiences through the lens of social class, culture, ethnicity, race, and other factors (Spencer, Dupree & Hartmann, 1997).

Jones (2017) also investigated youth development in schools and after-school programs that examine the impact of influence on an individual's personality and systems of belief. This analysis sought to examine the purpose, academic engagement, and community orientation of an adolescent to analyze the response and find a correlation to distribution (Jones, 2017). Jones concluded that purpose requires both the interest and agency of an adolescent to be effective.

This research suggested that the two critical factors to youth development are identified as seeking purpose and finding purpose.

The need for adolescent community-serviced programs that promote a sense of moral engagement and civic involvement is essential to the success of PYD (Jones, 2017). From a socio-political context perspective, participants in various settings using these practices may better facilitate civic opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents (Jones, 2017; Forrest-Bank et al., 2015; Lewin, 1951). The purpose is directly related to moral character and identity (Jones, 2017). Positive youth development empowers adolescents to view themselves with a greater sense of personal meaning (Burrow et al., 2014).

Importance of Mentoring and Tutoring

In research conducted by Tolbert and Maxson (2015), the study addressed a combination of environmental and social factors and was based on understanding the impact of exposure to the positive influence of role models (Tolbert & Maxson, 2015). The study focused on the role of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System Theory, which included layer 1, within-person; layer two, between family; layer three, school; level four, community and peers; level five, organizational culture (Tolbert & Maxson, 2015). The findings suggested that quality learning environments played in the association between neighborhood advantage and child achievement. These findings have contributed significantly to mentoring and tutoring intervention factors that significantly break the cycle of the low-SES effects (Tolbert & Maxson, 2015). The research contends that mentoring has been shown to be effective in improving students' educational status in low-SES communities (Tolbert & Maxson, 2015).

Positive Youth Development in Practice

Geldhof, Bowers, Boyd, Mueller, Napolitano, Schmid, and Lerner (2014) examined the effect of the four domains (human, physical or institutional, collective activity, and accessibility) of the ecological assets supported by Theoka and Lerner (2006). The study indicated that school engagement is higher in youth with more individual and ecological assets, and these high school engagement levels predicted greater PYD. The study utilized interchanges between individuals and their contexts (e.g., family, school, peer group, and community) to lead to thriving and well-being (Geldhof et al., 2014). Results also indicated that the positive development of adolescents would enhance the associations between psychological empowerment and life satisfaction.

Jenson and Fraser (2016) presented a factor analysis of interviews from adolescents and young adults all living in public housing communities and were involved in a risk- and PYD-based after-school program. The documentation was examined for constructs, revealing dimensions in the data that mirrored five themes: challenges, coping, aspirations, health, and connection (Jenson & Fraser, 2016). Conclusions from the analysis of the codes and linked data segments indicated the significant factors for reducing poverty and improving outcomes for adolescents (Jenson & Fraser, 2016).

Influence of the 100 & Beyond School Program

Inspiring adolescents to discover his/her purpose and sense of personal meaning with practices that support developmental needs is the aim of the 100 & Beyond School Program (Drone, 2019). Literature has revealed how developmental researchers struggled to define positive and successful development (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004; Lerner et al., 2002). Research also indicates that individuals (e.g., parents, teachers, mentors, coaches, faith leaders); institutions (e.g., out of school time programs, parks, libraries); youth-adult collaboration in

family, school, community activities; and access (e.g., transportation, safety) all contribute to promoting PYD. The work of the 100 and beyond school program will impart practical leadership, creativity, and networking skills to socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents by identifying the characteristics of practices that support the needs of adolescents (Forrest-Bank et al., 2015).

The 100 and beyond school program is a mentorship curriculum that helps students improve their self-esteem and positive experience to influence courage, kindness, selflessness, love, sacrifice, wisdom, and happiness. This program is taught to show adolescents that they can be tremendous and supports them in building positive skills and thought processes. This program is designed to be taught in partnership with the adolescent's school so that they receive immersive support and are able to build skills to thrive in the school setting and beyond. If practices that support positive youth development are addressed, it could successfully impact education and the war on poverty in the United States (Husband & Hunt, 2015; Jones, 2017; Peterson, 1988; Sharma et al., 2014).

Supporting the positive development of youth purpose through mentorship and participation in the 100 and beyond school program is guided by the following framing questions:

1. Are participants satisfied with their experience in the 100 and beyond school program?
2. Does participation in the 100 and beyond school program affect changes in adolescent participants' sense of personal meaning and purpose?
3. Do participants connect personal socio-emotional change with academic and community engagement?

It is not known how the identification of characteristics of practices that support the developmental needs emerge from socioeconomically disadvantaged participants who have completed the 100 & Beyond School Program schools in the southern United States. Once this program is widely offered, it can be evaluated to extend the research conducted by Jones (2017), which focused on approaches to positive development and intervention programs. Although there is increasing research on the outcomes of participation, less attention has been paid to the meaning-making process of youth participants. Analysis of this program will thus add to the broad area of knowledge in PYD by looking at participants' behavior and ideas after completion. Analysis can also be conducted from research that follows a participant for several years to understand their trajectory after completing the program.

This research will help support the small amount of literature that currently exists regarding the characteristics found in practices that support the developmental needs of adolescents in the United States. This program and the results of this study can then be used to address PYD in moral engagement and civic involvement to impact education and the war on poverty successfully. Additionally, this information could equip educators and youth practitioners who are striving to leverage their organizational and relational assets toward positive youth and community development with tangible practices.

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