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POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA:

A CASE STUDY OF 4-H GHANA AND LIBERIA

A Thesis in

Education, Development, and Community Engagement

by

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ABSTRACT

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a Western concept of youth engagement that highlights young people's strengths and emphasizes the positive contributions they can make towards their developments and communities when they experience positive developments. Emerging in the 1990s, the novel concept shifts the negative and preventive narrative often associated with adolescents and young people and challenges youth development scholars and practitioners to view them as individuals with potential and the leaders of the future. To assist young people in experiencing positive development, the PYD concept states that caring adults (i.e., family members, educators, mentors) must provide enabling environments where they develop their assets and agencies (i.e., competence, confidence, connection, character, and compassion. Young people's assets are the strengths or the innate or acquired skills they develop throughout their developmental stages. Their agencies are their perceptions of themselves and their abilities to use their assets to make decisions and achieve their desired life goals. Many youth organizations in the U.S. and globally have adopted the PYD concept to inform their programs and activities. An example of a PYD-informed youth organization is 4-H. Established in 1902, 4-H is America's largest PYD organization. Its mission is to equip all young people with the expertise and abilities to become impactful members who usher in change within their communities. Over the years, 4-H has expanded its programming efforts to many countries across the globe, including in Africa. Through preliminary fact-checking, I discovered that 4-H programming in Ghana and Liberia is still active.

Over the years, scholars have promoted PYD as a one-size-fits-all concept that educators and youth program leaders can leverage to assist young people from all ethnic and racial backgrounds to experience positive development. However, a shortage of literature exists that

highlights how youth development professionals and educators have leveraged to assist ethnic and racial youth in the U.S. and the Global South. Current empirical research and programming surrounding PYD have primarily been conducted with youth residing in rural and suburban areas. They often take advantage of youth development resources and opportunities that are usually easily accessible. However, ethnic and racially diverse youth in the U.S. who reside in historically marginalized communities often don't have access to quality PYD-informed opportunities or resources. Youth development scholars and practitioners overlook them and are not usually included in mainstream PYD-informed research studies. Additionally, young people in the global south, especially African youth, are also excluded from Western studies, and Western scholars aren't aware of the existence of PYD programming in Africa. These factors mentioned above contribute to the absence of PYD literature surrounding ethnic and diverse youth in the U.S. and African countries.

Using a qualitative case research design, this study sheds light on how 4-H Ghana and Liberia have implemented the PYD concept to help their youth participants experience positive development. As such, this study explores the specific programming efforts 4-H Ghana and Liberia have developed to support their youth participants with their PYD assets and agencies, highlights the benefits of PYD programming for African youth and the challenges both 4-H country programs encounter while implementing PYD within their cultural context. By interviewing 4-H Ghana, Liberia, and selected partner leaders and reviewing existing literature on both organizations, results indicate that the PYD development assets inform a School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE). The 5C framework stood out as the foundation on which 4-H Ghana and Liberia's activities and projects are planned and organized. Through their activities, 4-H Ghana has impacted the lives of over 60,000 Ghanaian youth, 20,000 club advisors, and up to

800 4-H clubs located in 6 regions in Ghana today. In Liberia, there are currently more than 100 plus clubs located in seven counties throughout the country, servicing more than 4000 youth participants, club advisors,

Despite their successes, 4-H Ghana and Liberia face many challenges today, including lack of funding, consistent support from their respective national governments and the U.S. National 4-H Council, and empirical data that demonstrate the impact their programming efforts have on their youth participants. Moving forward, a thorough summative evaluation of 4-Ghana and Liberia efforts will generate helpful information that can be leveraged to highlight its success stories to national and international stakeholders and attract funding sources.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Young people are leaders in training who will carry and fulfill the legacies of their predecessors in the future. According to the United Nations (U.N.), there are currently 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years, making up 16% of the world population. The U.N. also projects that the global youth population will experience a continued increase in the future (United Nations, n.d.). As future leaders, young people's experiences during their development stages play vital roles in becoming impactful leaders who will help transform their communities and nations. The journey from childhood into adulthood is a natural process through which a young person develops their physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social development aptitudes and values to assist them in becoming healthy adults (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pitman, 2004). Western youth development theories provide guiding principles and practices to help young people throughout their developmental years. However, these principles and practices often focus on risk prevention based on the harmful lifestyles in which adolescents and young adults engage (Hawkins et al., 1992; Farrington, 2006; Weisburd et al., 2008; Case & Haines, 2013). These harmful lifestyles include substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency (Youth Strategy, n.d.).

Over the past decades, youth development scholars have developed a new concept and approach to youth development that focuses on assisting young people to grow into healthy adults during their journey to adulthood. This new concept is called Positive Youth Development (PYD) (Larson, 2000). PYD highlights the positive contributions youth can make toward their communities' development. To experience positive development, caring adults and youth programs must provide an enabling environment where young people can develop their assets and agencies (Edwards et al., 2007; Curran & Wexler, 2016). These assets are the skills and

competencies young people must develop to achieve their desired goals. According to one of the best-known 5 Cs frameworks, young people who experience positive development develop five competencies to serve as hallmarks for their healthy growth into adulthood Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2011; Lerner et al., 2021. These competencies are competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. Young people's competence is their positive view of their academic, cognitive, vocational, and social actions. In addition to the strengths of competence, their confidence is their internal sense of positive self-worth and self-efficacy. Next, their connections refer to the positive bonds they form with their families, peers, members of their communities, and various institutions. Moreover, a young person's character is their standards, moral values, sense of responsibility and integrity towards themselves, and respect for societal and cultural rules. Lastly, their characteristic of caring is their sense of sympathy and ability to empathize with others.

In addition to assets, they develop agencies when young people participate in PYD-informed programs and activities. Agencies in young people's positive and healthy perceptions of themselves and their abilities to use their assets to make decisions and achieve their desired life goals. In turn, young people will use their assets and agencies to contribute to the development of their communities. As PYD became more popularized, many American youth organizations such as 4-H, Boys and Girls Scouts, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America began adopting and implementing its practices within their programs and activities. This research will focus solely on the 4-H organization and its programming efforts.

Established in 1902, 4-H is America's largest PYD organization, aiming to equip all young people with the expertise and abilities to become impactful members that usher in change within their communities (National 4-H Council, n.d.). A fundamental tenet of 4-H is its

principles, which embody the tenets of education, reliability, service, and better living. 4-H stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health and accomplishes its mission by engaging its youth participants in various hands-on activities under the careful guidance of caring mentors (Neff & Michigan State University Extension, 2013).

To accomplish its mission, 4-H employs the PYD concept to create and implement programs that help create positive learning experiences for its youth participants. Under the guidance of caring adults who guide them in participating in educational programs that offer them the opportunities to engage in hands-on projects based on their interests. These projects focus on areas essential to society's functioning, such as agriculture, science and technology, and healthy living (National 4-H Council, n.d.-b). In the United States, 4-H empowers more than six million young people through land-grant universities and employs more than three thousand youth development professionals and half a million volunteers (4-H, 2021). Through preliminary fact-findings, the researcher discovered that 4-H programs are also available in many countries outside the U.S. today, including African countries. Armed with this new finding, the researcher conducted a brief case study on 4-H programming in Ghana to research how the organization has implemented its PYD model within the Ghanaian cultural context. For this case study, I interviewed the executive director of 4-H Ghana and a former cub member who volunteered at the office. This interview revealed the projects and activities 4-H Ghana implements to engage its youth participants and their transformational impact on Ghanaian youths. The findings of 4-H Ghana's brief case study motivated me to investigate whether PYD-informed programs exist in other West African countries. The primary investigation discovered additional 4-H programming in different countries in West Africa, such as Liberia (Nancy Victorson, Michigan State University Extension, 2012). Motivated by the findings and helpful advice from academic

advisors, the researcher decided to investigate further the implementation of PYD in West Africa through the lens of 4-H programming in Ghana and Liberia.

Consequently, this research study showcases how 4-H has implemented its PYD model and programming within each country's cultural context. Next, this study explores the specific activities 4-H Ghana and Liberia have developed to help their young people with their PYD assets and agencies. This study investigates the benefits of PYD programming for African youth and highlights the challenges faced by both countries' programs while implementing PYD within their cultural contexts. Ultimately, this study seeks to help build the capacity for more PYD research in Africa and highlight the framework's impact in helping empower African youths.

I. Statement Of the Issue

Africa is the most youthful continent in the world today. According to a recent study, 250 million Africans are between 18 and 24 (Mustsaka & Meldrum, 2021). As a continent blessed with natural resources, Africa is often an ideal location where young people establish successful businesses in areas such as technology. In contrast, others encounter challenges that disrupt their development and prevent them from reaching their potential. The primary adversities often include poor access to quality education and unemployment.

Additionally, out of the millions of African youths who enter the job market in search of a job each year, only 25% become employed (*Youth Strategy*, n.d.). Other challenges African youth encounter include teen pregnancies and substance abuse. The presence of PYD-informed organizations such as 4-H conducting programming in African countries indicates that the framework has been implemented and adopted beyond non-American or non-Western cultural contexts. The existence of 4-H Ghana and Liberia and their impactful work on African youth is also clear evidence that PYD principles and practices can be implemented in African countries

and leveraged to help African youth overcome the challenges they face during their developmental years. Youth development organizations such as 4-H work to prepare African youth to be self-sufficient and become impactful leaders who will transform their communities.

Through preliminary fact findings, the School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE) and the 5C's frameworks stood out as the theoretical foundations for implementing 4-H Ghana and Liberia's programs. Thus, the focus and emphasis on agriculture led to a natural integration of 4H programming for these youth. Agriculture is one of the crucial driving forces behind most African countries' economies, as the continent imports 35 million dollars' worth of food annually, and its food market is estimated to grow to 1 trillion dollars by 2030 (Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, n.d.). Additionally, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest percentage of arable uncultivated land globally and great agricultural growth potential (Kanu et al., 2014; Shimeles et al., 2018). However, most African youths are not interested in the agricultural sector today. The leading cause is that African youth do not view agriculture as lucrative and are more attracted to other industries such as business, entertainment, and sport. As a result, 4-H programming in Ghana and Liberia uses agriculture as the basis of their activities to help their youth experience positive development.

Western scholars who research the implementation of PYD principles among young people possess knowledge or understanding of youth development theories and practices beyond the U.S. Moreover, within these Western contexts, PYD-informed research and programming often overlook racial and ethnically diverse youth in the U.S. and the Global South (Malorni et al., 2023). Furthermore, there is a need for more literature highlighting PYD programming within non-western countries. There is also a need for more PYD literature highlighting examples of youth development organizations implementing PYD-informed programming in African

countries. Additionally, African 4H programs in countries such as Ghana and Liberia need more exposure to their transformational and positive contributions to the lives of African youth. Because of this lack of exposure, Western youth development scholars and professionals are not often aware of PYD-informed programs, such as 4-H in Africa. For these reasons, this research on implementing PYD in West Africa, through the lens of 4-H in Ghana and Liberia, is warranted.

II. Statement of the overall purpose

This research study aims to explore how 4-H has implemented and adopted PYD content and programming within each country's cultural context. This study will a) explore the specific activities 4-H Ghana and Liberia have developed to help their youth participants with their PYD assets and agencies, b) explore the benefits of PYD programming for African youth, and c) address the challenges that 4-H Ghana and Liberia encounter while implementing PYD within their cultural contexts. This research will be a descriptive case study of the programming of all two 4-H chapters mentioned above. The guiding frameworks highlighted in this study are the 4-H "Formula for Success" and the School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE). The conceptual framework section below will provide details on each of these frameworks and their importance in this study's context.

The format of this research was done through a qualitative research design using interviews of high-level executives and officers of 4-H Ghana, Liberia, in addition to reviewing secondary data (i.e., program manuals, projects and activities guides, and reports). The rationale for using these methodologies was that they enable the researcher to explore an issue or a phenomenon within a specific context through diverse lenses using various sources (Baxter & Jack, 2010).

1. Research Objectives:

To guide this research study, the researcher outlined the following objectives:

1. Explore the specific activities 4-H Ghana and Liberia have developed to help their youth participants with their PYD assets and agencies.
2. Explore the impact of PYD programming on Ghanaian and Liberian Youth.
3. Address the challenges 4-H Ghana and Liberia encounter while implementing PYD within their cultural contexts

2. Table 1. Definition of Terms

Terms	Definitions
4-H	The largest PYD organization in the U.S., dedicated to equipping young people with the expertise and abilities to become impactful members that usher change within their communities
4-H Ghana	4-H's country program and non-profit organizations in Ghana, West Africa, aim to use PYD to empower Ghanaian youth and transform communities through agriculture, leadership, and life skills development.
4-H Liberia	A 4-H country program and non-profit organization in Liberia that aims to empower young people to become self-sufficient citizens by developing their potential in premiere leadership, agricultural sustainability, and essential life skills.
4-H Club	A group of 4-H members signed up to participate in select PYD-informed activities supervised by caring adult(s) to develop their strengths and experience positive development.
4-H Club Member	Young people between grades 5 and 12 or ages 8 to 18 who sign up to join a 4-H club and participate in 4-H activities.

4-H Club Advisor	A professional who volunteers encourages, guides, and supervises 4-H members on their clubs' activities and projects.
5Cs	A PYD model that highlights five assets and competencies youth acquire when they experience positive development. These five assets and competencies are competence, caring, character, connection, and confidence.
Caring Adult	A competent and compassionate adult who is committed to assisting young people in experiencing positive development.
Home Entrepreneurship Project (HEP)	A project implemented by 4-H Ghana and Liberia where youth members start individual enterprises at their homes based on their interests to perfect their life skills
School Agriculture Enterprise	An entrepreneurial-oriented project through which 4-H Ghana and Liberia club youth members establish a club garden and learn ways to develop a profitable agriculture business.
School-Based Agriculture Education	An educational system that seeks to contribute to young people's academic, vocational, and life skills development through experiential learning and improve rural livelihoods by transferring skills and agricultural innovations into the home and community through young people.

3. Conceptual frameworks:

a. 4-H Thriving Model of PYD

As a PYD-informed organization, 4-H has a specific PYD framework that influences its programming efforts. 4-H has adopted the Thriving Model as its theory of change. Figure 1 below showcases the various components of this framework (National 4-H Council, n.d.-c). At its foundation are high-quality¹ 4-H programs created to be the ideal developmental contexts

¹ In this context, high quality programs are ones that provide youth participants safe and enabling environments where they feel belonged, develop healthy meaningful relationships, and explore their sparks or interests.

within which youth experience positive development. 4-H programs are designed to provide young people with the appropriate setting to feel welcomed and belong, which is critical to their success (Extension Foundation et al., n.d.). Within these settings, young people can freely explore their interests and passions, develop meaningful relationships with adults and their peers, and engage in activities that contribute to their growth. During this process, 4-H programs allow its youth participants to develop four essential skills: social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Through this process of developing skills, youth participants experience positive development and have the opportunities to work alongside mentors and leaders to use these skills to contribute to the development of their communities (Extension Foundation et al., n.d.).

Furthermore, several factors indicate when youth are thriving within their various development contexts (Anderson & Nebraska Extension, 2023). These factors include a growth mindset, openness to challenge and discovery, hopeful purpose, prosocial orientation, transcendent awareness, positive emotions, goal setting, and management. Additionally, when youth thrive, they, in turn, achieve many development outcomes, namely, positive academic attitude, social competence, personal standards, connection with others, individual responsibility, and contribution. Through achieving these outcomes, youth experience positive development (Extension Foundation et al., n.d.). Lastly, when young people thrive and experience positive development, they achieve long-term outcomes, namely academic or vocational success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability, happiness, and well-being (Geldhof et al., 2012; Arnold, 2018).

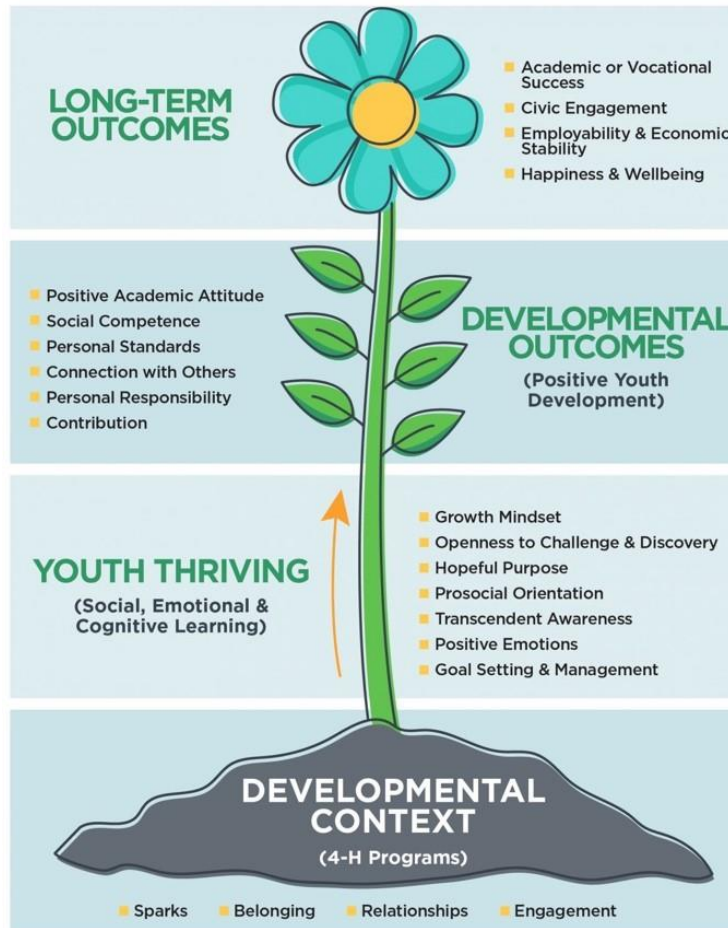


Figure 1 4-H Thriving Model of PYD, 4-H

b. 4-H “Formula for Success”

Before the Thriving model, 4-H implemented the “Formula for Success” framework, a PYD model created from the Tufts University 4-H study of Positive Youth Development, to guide its programs and activities (Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development & Tufts University, n.d.) The 4-H “Formula for Success” framework (Figure 2) portrays how 4-H youth participants experience positive development. This framework has three sections: the PYD inputs, the PYD outcomes, and the impact. According to this framework, 4-H provides three key inputs that form the development contexts that 4-H provides its youth through its programming and activities. These three key inputs provide 4-H members the opportunities to a) develop long-

term relationships with caring adults, b) build life skills, and c) become meaningful leaders in their communities. These three key inputs influence the 4-H members' activities and foster positive development.

As they participate in club activities, 4-H members develop five core outputs or competencies, known as the 5 Cs over time, which Lerner (2013) and other youth development scholars define as pivotal to the success of young people. Equipped with their competencies, youth who experience positive development also develop a sixth “C” called Contribution (Scott, 2021). This term refers to the overall experience of youth when they engage in positive development experiences that impact their lives and those of their families, communities, and society. Finally, young people who experience positive development, develop their assets and competencies, and contribute to the development of society are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and activities (Theokas et al., 2006; Li et al., 2008; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010; Lerner, Lerner. 2013; Geldhof et al., 2014).



Figure 2 4-H "Formula for Success", 4-H

c. School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE)

School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE) is an agricultural educational system that seeks to deliver agricultural innovations to communities through experiential learning in post-primary schools (School-Based Agriculture Education, n.d.). The focus of the SBAE system is to empower young people through two objectives: a) support the academic, vocational, and life skills development of young people through experiential and hands-on learning methods, and b) transform rural communities by transferring skills and agricultural innovations into these communities through schools. The SBAE system has four elements grounded in the agricultural education model: classroom instruction, school demonstration farms, home entrepreneurship projects, and leadership development. Furthermore, the SBAE system includes knowledge borrowed from theoretical frameworks: the diffusion of innovation, experiential learning, PYD, and behavioral economics (Damon, 2004; Tomer, 2007; Robinson, 2009; Gross & Rutland, 2017). Figure 3, shown below, portrays the various inputs, outputs, and outcomes that are the processes by which agricultural innovations are transferred to communities through the SBAE system (School-Based Agriculture Education, n.d.).

For input, various educational and government institutions and organizations collaborate to train and transfer agricultural education and innovations to agriculture teachers. These teachers then deliver the novel agricultural knowledge gained to their students through classroom instruction, hands-on demonstration, home entrepreneurship projects, and leadership development opportunities. Through practice and experience, the youth learn about planting crops, animal production, and entrepreneurship and leverage these skills to become self-sufficient. Through consistent interactions and engagement, they also develop confidence, competence, and connection with their teachers and peers. In the SBAE system, knowledge

transfer to young people is considered a short-term objective. A long-term benefit of youth participation is their ability to share their knowledge and expertise within their community, thereby improving agricultural production and food security and contributing to socioeconomic growth and development (School-Based Agriculture Education, n.d.).

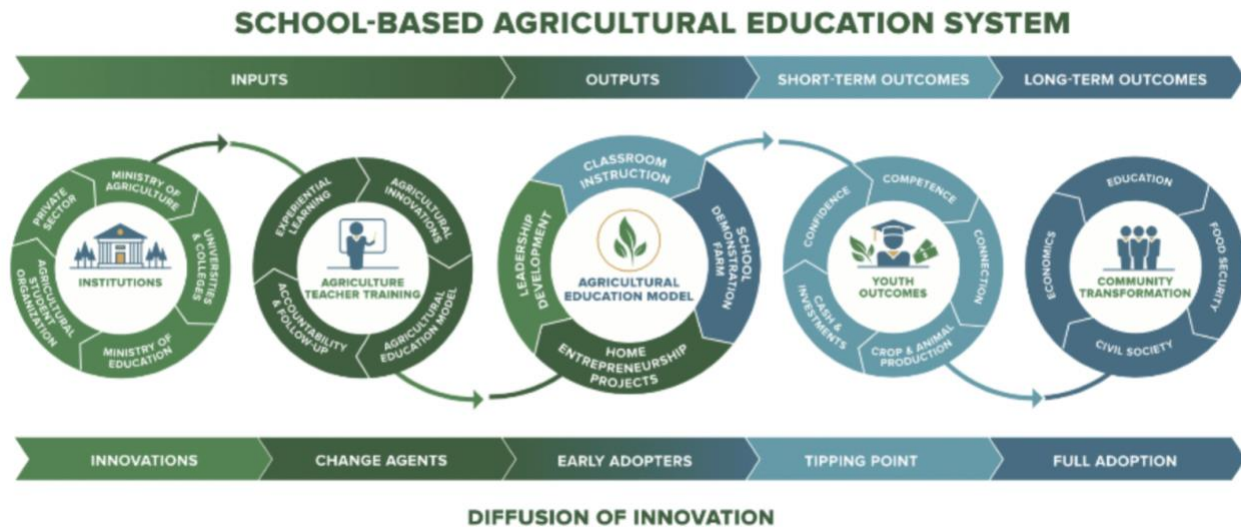


Figure 3 School-Based Agriculture Education, SBAE

III. Statement of significance

Although many 4-H country programs exist across the African continent, Western youth development scholars and practitioners are unaware of their existence. Evidence-based research highlighting the implementation of the PYD frameworks within non-Western cultural contexts, particularly within African cultural settings, are few and far between, as previously stated. This lack of awareness is concerning given that 4-H country programs in Africa, such as 4-Ghana and Liberia, have great potential to support their youth participants to experience positive development and transform their countries' education sectors. To this end, this research study's significance is showcasing how 4-H in Ghana and Liberia have implemented the PYD concept

within their cultural settings and the activities they organize to help their youth participants experience positive development. Second, the study highlights 4-H Ghana and Liberia's transformational impact on their youth participants and host communities. Thirdly, this research will bring 4-H in Ghana and Liberia country programs to the global youth development sphere and, subsequently, the presence of 4-H programs across Africa.

Further, 4-H Ghana and Liberia struggle with securing constituent-finding sources to support their programming efforts both on national and international levels. Thus, with the exposure this research will bring them, 4-H Ghana and Liberia will hopefully garner the attention of international stakeholders (i.e., multinational organizations) that could partner with them. With the exposure to more partners, they could also secure future funding sources and opportunities. Access to more partners and funding will enable 4-H Ghana and Liberia to scale their programming efforts and reach more young people in their respective countries. Finally, this research contributes to building the capacity for additional research and literature centered on PYD-informed programming in Africa. Through study, the researcher hopes that youth development scholars and professionals in the African diaspora can join forces to research the implications of implementing PYD in countries in the Global South and create opportunities to support the positive development of historically marginalized youth in the U.S. and the Global South.

IV. Basic Assumptions

Several assumptions have been identified for this study that may impact the research. These assumptions include the following:

- The PYD concept is applicable to Ghanaian and Liberian cultural contexts.

- The National 4-H Council's "Formula for Success" may have applicability in Ghana and Ghana and Liberia's cultural settings.
- The participants selected for this study understand the term PYD, 4-H "Formula for Success, and the SBAE models and their implementation process within the Ghanaian and Liberian Cultural contexts.
- The participants will deliver honest, truthful, and complete data from their personal and professional experiences.
- The primary investigator will be objective, have expertise in the subject discussed in this study, and employ and administer the appropriate research methods to collect relevant data.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

V. Youth Development & PYD within the West

1. Youth Development in Western Nations

The term "youth" has a different meaning depending on the geographical and cultural contexts. According to the United Nations (U.N.), "Youth" is the transition period between childhood and adulthood in a person's life. Within the Western context, the U.N. considers persons between 15 and 24 to be youth (United Nations, 2013). During that transition period, youth go through a process of various changes and transformations that shape them. This process is referred to as youth development. Youth development is a complex term with many definitions used in many ways in different cultures. In a broader sense, youth development is "the different stages children go through to acquire the attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills they need to become successful adults" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools [Mentoring Resource Center], 2007). According to Hamilton & Pittman (2004), youth learn to develop the skills necessary to lead healthy, satisfying, productive lives as adults through this process. As a natural process, youth development refers to "the growing capacity of a young person to understand and act on the environment." Through this process, youth learn to develop the skills necessary to lead healthy, satisfying, productive adult lives (Hamilton et al., 2004b).

According to childhood development scholar Eric Erickson, there are eight essential stages of development that every child goes through to become an adult. These developmental stages are gaining trust with others, a keen sense of self-sufficiency, the ability to exercise initiative, confidence in one's ability to master skills and navigate one's environment, developing a well-formed sense of personal identity, being productive and contributing to others, experience

true intimacy, and have a keen sense of personal integrity (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools [Mentoring Resource Center], 2007). While advancing through their various stages of development, youth acquire different assets that help them navigate life's opportunities and challenges and become resilient in the face of adversity. Furthermore, youth development as a set of principles was created and used as a philosophy or an approach employed by individuals, organizations, and institutions to promote and support the growth of youth. Youth development as a philosophy was later developed into approaches or theories that individuals, organizations, and institutions apply to help youth thrive and become productive adults and members of society (Hamilton et al., 2004b). Positive youth development is the most prominent developmental approach that emerged in the 1990s and has dominated the youth development field. Finally, the third use of youth development is through practices employed by various stakeholders such as family members, community members, youth organizations, schools, and institutions. These various shareholders create resources that are often vital to the development process of youth. Also, practices are the applications of youth development principles, theories, and approaches to help youth grow into healthy adults. The principles and practices that adults and programs use to help youth depend on the contexts or environments in which youth reside (Hamilton et al., 2004b).

2. Positive Youth Development Defined

The PYD movement emerged in the 1990s and has evolved into a multidimensional one. Before introducing PYD, youth development theories, principles, and practices had a negative and preventive approach. Preventive youth development approaches often focus on assisting youth to navigate the risky and life-altering challenges they may encounter during their development journey. Examples of damaging and life-altering challenges include the highs and

lows of puberty, substance abuse, low motivation and achievement, potential neglect and abuse, and trauma. This negative view of youth development has influenced many fields that primarily engage young people, including education, psychology, medicine, and many more. This deficit approach to youth development views young people as problems to be fixed and led to the coining of negative terms often associated with youth dealing with adversities, including "at-risk," "juvenile," "delinquent," and "aggressive" (Damon, 2004; Travis & Leech, 2014). PYD, on the other hand, introduced a positive perspective that views youth as not broken and needing to be kept on the straight path but rather individuals who can play vital parts in their development (Lerner et al. 2005). However, PYD does not overlook young people's adversities during their developmental years; instead, it resists defining the developmental process by the end to overcome deficits and risks. Instead, PYD highlights the potentialities rather than the deficits of young people—including young people from marginalized backgrounds and those with the most troubled histories. (Damon, 2004).

As PYD gained momentum, it has been used as a field of research, philosophy, youth programming framework, policy development approach, and profession. While there exist multiple definitions of PYD, the one that encompasses all that PYD I found is the one that states that youth experience positive development when they are provided with adequate support and opportunities that help them to develop the key competencies, skills, values, and healthy self-perceptions that use to navigate through various stages of their lives (Hamilton et al. 2007). Two other definitions that succinctly summarize what PYD stands for are the following statement: "If young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self,

family, community, and civil society young people will thrive" (Lerner et al., 2007) and "every child has talents, strengths, and interests that offer the child potential for a bright future" (Damon, 2004). To further articulate the critical tenets of PYD, Hamilton et al. (2007) reviewed existing literature on PYD and narrowed down six core principles within it. These six principles are summarized in the following: 1) all youth possess the natural capacity for growth and development; 2) youth experience positive development when they are part of relationships, contexts, and environments that nurture their development; 3) youth experience and benefit from positive development when they engage in healthy relationships, contexts, and environments; 4) the benefits youth gain from healthy relationships, contexts, and environments are vital development assets for all youth irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, and social class; 5) community is the critical and defining field within which positive development occurs; and 6) youth are significant actors in their positive development and essential resources to foster healthy relationships, contexts, environments, and communities that help them experience positive youth development.

VI. PYD Approaches and Limitations

1. PYD Approaches.

Over the past decades, youth development scholars have posited many theoretical frameworks and models to capture best and simplify the PYD process. Many American youth organizations and programs have adopted these frameworks and models. Through preliminary investigation, I have found the following frameworks to be prominently used within the youth development field to assist young people in experiencing positive development. The Development Assets framework (Benson, Scales, Syvertsen, 2011), the 5Cs framework (Lerner

et al. 2011), the Targeting Life Skills framework (Hendricks, 1998), and the Community Action Framework are all prominent theories tied to PYD. Many youth organizations across the U.S. have adopted these frameworks and models within their programming to assist their youth participants in experiencing positive development. Below are brief overviews of these frameworks and their contributions to the PYD field.

a. The Development Assets framework

Designed in the 1990s by scholars at the Search Institute, the development assets framework (Benson, 1990, 1997, 2003; Benson et al. 2011) identifies available resources that can be leveraged to help youth experience positive development (Lerner et al. 2011). This framework was designed to highlight these resources as "positive development nutrients that young people need for successful development" and "the role that community plays in adolescent well-being." Through careful research, these development assets, or "nutrients," have been selected and have proven to a) exist within communities' capacities; b) be easily accessible to youth; c) prevent high-risk behaviors among youth, promote thriving, and strengthen their resilience among youth; d) be evident across different communities and locations, and e) contribute to the balance of the framework and PYD (Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). The framework consists of 40 development assets grouped into internal and external groups that can help youth experience positive development. The internal assets are grouped into four categories: youth's a) commitment to learning, positive values (i.e., integrity, honesty, responsibility, discipline, etc.), social competencies (i.e., resistance and conflict resolution skills), and positive identities.

Similarly, the external assets are also grouped into four categories: support (i.e., family, community), empowerment (i.e., service to others, safe environments, etc.), healthy boundaries

and expectations (i.e., relationships boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence), and constructive use of time (i.e., self-esteem, confidence, sense of purpose, optimistic view of personal future) (Benson et al. 2006, Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). Figure 1 below displays the list of the 40 assets that comprise the developmental assets. Today, the development assets framework is one of the best-known PYD frameworks and has been referenced in multiple scholarly articles and journals. Several national (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs of America), local, and international youth organizations have implemented the framework within their programming. Since the 1990s, the development assets framework has gone through extensive empirical research to assess its validity and applicability and subsequently revised based on the resulting findings and feedback received from youth development scholars and practitioners alike (Benson, 1998; Benson et al., 2007; Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011).

Table 2. The Search Institute, 40 Development Assets of Framework

	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family file provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other adult relationships —Young person receives support from three or more from parent adults. 4. Caring neighborhood — Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate — school provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling — Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school
	Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adult in the community value youth. 8. South as resources —Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to others —Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.

External Assets	Boundaries & Expectations	<p>10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.</p> <p>11. Family Boundaries —Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.</p> <p>12. School Boundaries — School provides clear rules and consequences.</p> <p>13. Neighborhood boundaries —Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behaviors</p> <p>14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults’ model positive, responsible behavior.</p> <p>15. Positive peer influence —Young person's best friends’ model responsible behavior.</p> <p>16. High expectations —Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well</p>
	Constructive Use of Time	<p>17. Creative Activities — Young person spend three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts</p> <p>18. Youth programs — Young person spends three or more hours in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community</p> <p>19. Religious community — Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</p> <p>20. Time at home — Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week</p>
Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<p>21. Achievement Motivation — Young motivated to do well in school</p> <p>22. School Engagement — Young person is actively engaged in learning.</p> <p>23. Homework — Young person reports doing at least hour of homework every school day</p> <p>24. Bonding to school — Young person cares about her or his school</p> <p>25. Reading for Pleasure — Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week</p>
	Positive Values	<p>26. Caring — Young person places high value on helping other people</p> <p>27. Equality and social justice — Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty</p>

	Social Competence	<p>28. Integrity — Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs</p> <p>29. Honesty — Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy”</p> <p>30. Responsibility — Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility</p> <p>31. Restraint — Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</p> <p>32. Planning and decision making — Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices</p> <p>33. Interpersonal competence — Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.</p> <p>34. Cultural Competence — Young person can resist peer pressure and dangerous situation</p> <p>35. Resistance skills — Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations</p> <p>36. Peaceful conflict resolution — Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently</p>
	Positive Identity	<p>37. Personal Power — Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me”</p> <p>38. Self-esteem — Young person reports having a high self-esteem</p> <p>39. Sense of purpose — Young person reports that “my life has a purpose”</p> <p>40. Positive view of personal future — Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future</p>

b. The 5Cs Framework

Another example of a PYD framework widely used and referenced by youth development scholars and practitioners alike is the 5 C's framework (Figure 2). The 5 C's is the relational developmental model that resulted from the 4-H longitudinal study of PYD conducted by Dr. Richard Lerner and his colleagues. Lerner and his team of researchers began the study in 2002 with a group of over 7,000 4-H youth participants from diverse backgrounds in 42 states in the U.S. At the start of the study, youth participants were in 5th grade and 12th grade by its end. The study was conducted throughout eight waves and ended in 2010. The findings and results of the

study are the 5 Cs framework and the 4-H Formula for Success model (Figure 3) of PYD (Lerner et al., 2013). The 5C PYD framework highlights five core competencies youth develop as they experience positive youth development. These competencies are competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. Competence translates to youth mastery of their skills and talents in different fields of interest. It is usually correlated with youth academic, cognitive, and social performance.

Connection translates to the mutually beneficial positive bonds and relationships that youth develop with their families, friends, and close acquaintances during their development stages. Character reflects youth's moral aptitude, personal standards and attitudes, societal and cultural beliefs, and rules. It refers to youth's sense of right and wrong and their abilities to make appropriate decisions in various circumstances. Confidence corresponds to youth's positive views about themselves. It refers to their self-worth, self-efficacy, and personal values and is not dependent on external behaviors or activities. Lastly, caring and compassion are interconnected competencies and reflect youth's ability to show empathy, sympathy towards others, and motivation to help those in need (Lerner et al., 2005; Bowers et al., 2010; Travis & Leech, 2014).

For youth to experience positive development and competencies, the 5 Cs framework states that youth organizations must create programming that provides their youth participants with three principal elements. These elements are meaningful leadership opportunities, positive and sustained relationships with caring adults, and activities that build critical life skills (Arnold & Silliman, 2017). When youth experience positive development and gain competencies, they can use their skills to impact their communities positively. This contribution is named the six C recently added to the framework. Like the development assets, the Five Cs Model was tested through empirical research studies. Evidence indicates that this framework has good

psychometric properties. For example, each of the Five Cs has good internal consistency (Lerner et al. 2005), has been used in many scholarly journals, articles, and dissertations, and has influenced the programming and activities of youth organizations across the country

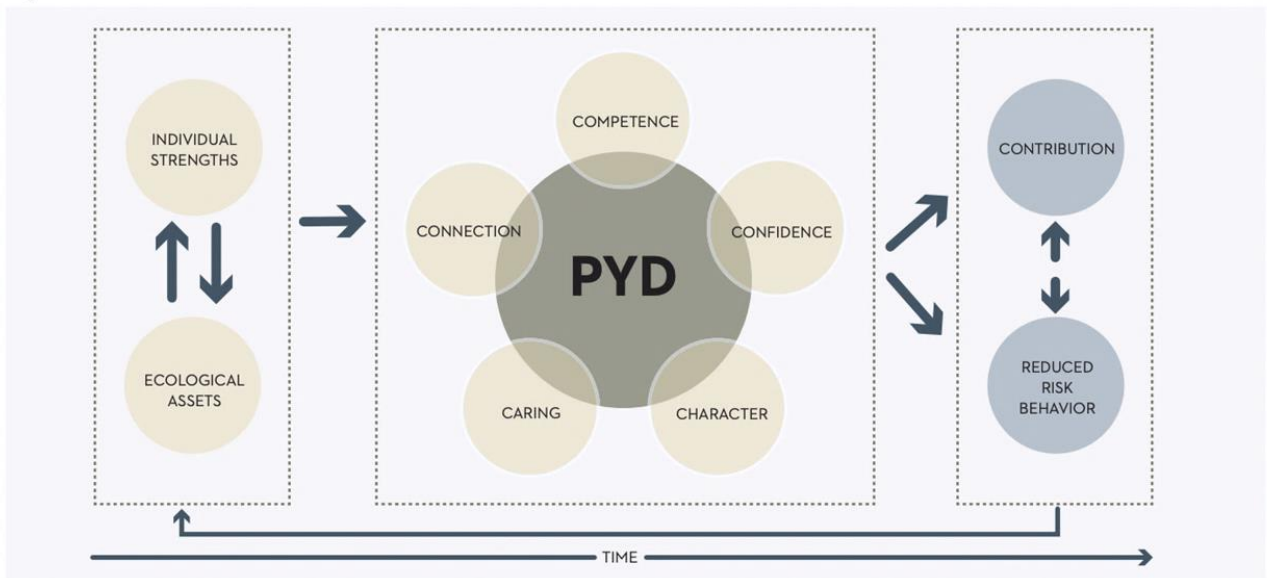


Figure 4 5Cs Framework, 4-H PYD Study (Lerner et al. 2013)

c. The Targeting Life Skills Framework

Life skills are competencies that enable people to become healthy and contributing members of society (Norman & Jordan, n.d.). Former youth development specialist at the Iowa State University Extension and Research, Dr. Patricia A Hendricks, developed the Targeting Life Skills Framework (Figure 4) in the late 1990s out of the need to define the life skills young people acquire when they participate in youth program activities at various age levels. To create the framework, Hendricks took the 4-H organization's list of competencies, grouped them into four groups corresponding to each "H" that made up the organization's name and created a list of life skills corresponding to each group of competencies. The four groups of competencies according to the 4-H programming are Head, Heart, Hand, and Health. Head refers to

knowledge, reasoning, and creative competencies. The life skills corresponding to the Head competencies are critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, service learning, and learning.

The Heart refers to youth's interpersonal and social competencies, their abilities to form meaningful connections and relationships, and care for themselves and those around them. The life skills that fall under these competencies include communication, social skills, conflict resolution, empathy, and compassion. The Hand relates to vocational and engaged citizenship competencies and examples of life skills that correspond to giving, volunteering, leadership, and contribution to one's community. Lastly, Health refers to the daily behaviors that lead to youth leading healthy lifestyles, and the life skills associated with this competency are self-discipline, character, self-esteem, and regulation (White et al., 2020). Once developed, higher education institutions, youth organizations, and extension offices leveraged the framework to evaluate youth programs' activities and their usefulness in helping young people develop life skills. Additionally, the findings and results published from various evaluation efforts were used to convince the federal government of the suitability of its funding and investment in extension programs (White et al., 2020).

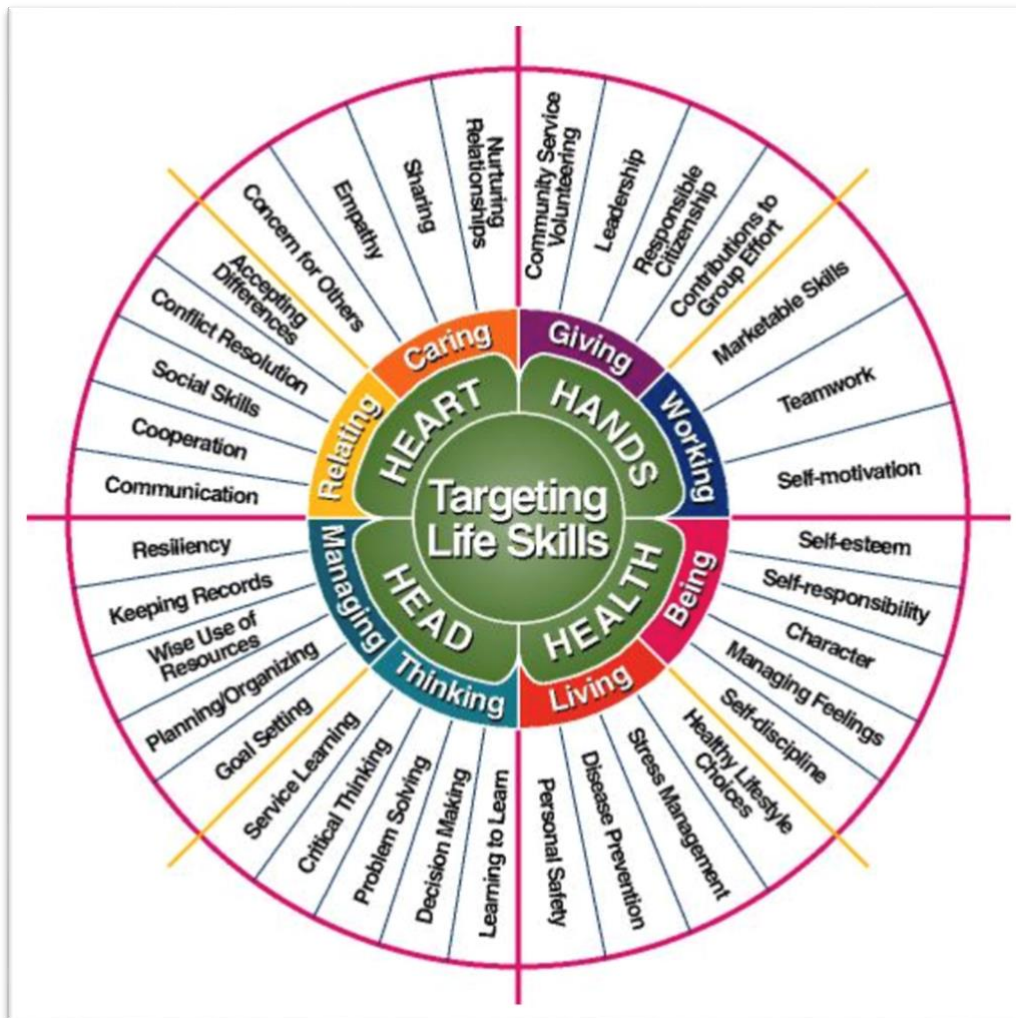


Figure 5 Targeting Life Skills Framework, P. Hendricks (1990s)

d. The Community Action Framework

The Community Action Framework (CAF) (Figure 5), created by youth development scholars Dr. James P. Connell and Dr. Michelle Alberti Gambone (2002), highlights the resources and opportunities that are needed within communities to help youth overcome the challenges they often face during their developmental years and reach their full potential.

Connell and Gambone (2002) identified it as essential to guide community and program leaders in assisting young people on their development journey. Hence, the authors developed five

questions to guide program leaders in identifying whether adequate resources and opportunities exist within their communities. These five questions, listed below, also function as the five components of the Community Action Framework and essential elements of the developmental journey of young people: 1) What are the primary Long-term goals for the youth in our communities? 2) What are the critical developmental milestones or outcomes that demonstrate that our youth are achieving these Long-term goals? 3) What resources do youth in our communities need to achieve these milestones or markers? 4) How do we strengthen key community settings and resources to provide optimal support for youth during their development process? 5) How do we reinforce the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions to create more supportive communities for youth?

According to the CAF, long-term outcomes prove that youth experience positive development. These outcomes include self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, and community contribution. The developmental indicators or outcomes that demonstrate that young people are experiencing positive development are their abilities to become productive and form connections with those around them (i.e., family and peers) to adapt and navigate through different circumstances and settings safely. The resources that communities can provide to assist young people on their developmental journey include safe environments, adequate shelter and nutrition, engaging activities and learning opportunities, meaningful relationships with adults and peers, and opportunities for community involvement. Next, for communities to provide the resources listed above to youth, they must develop strategies that consistently strengthen these resources. The strategies suggested by the CAF include strengthening the capacities of adults within the community, improving and combining schools and institutions that serve youth;

increasing the number of quality activities and resources for youth, and revising public policies and resources to reinforce these strategies within communities.

More specifically, the authors created these strategies with marginalized communities in mind, as they often do not have access to these resources to support their youth in their development journeys due to the systemic disparities that impact their development. Scholars have also used the CAF as a tool for planning, managing, evaluating, and investing in initiatives for youth development in various communities. By implementing the CAF, researchers helped build the capacities of communities to create and provide impactful initiatives and opportunities to their members (Connell & Gambone, n.d.).

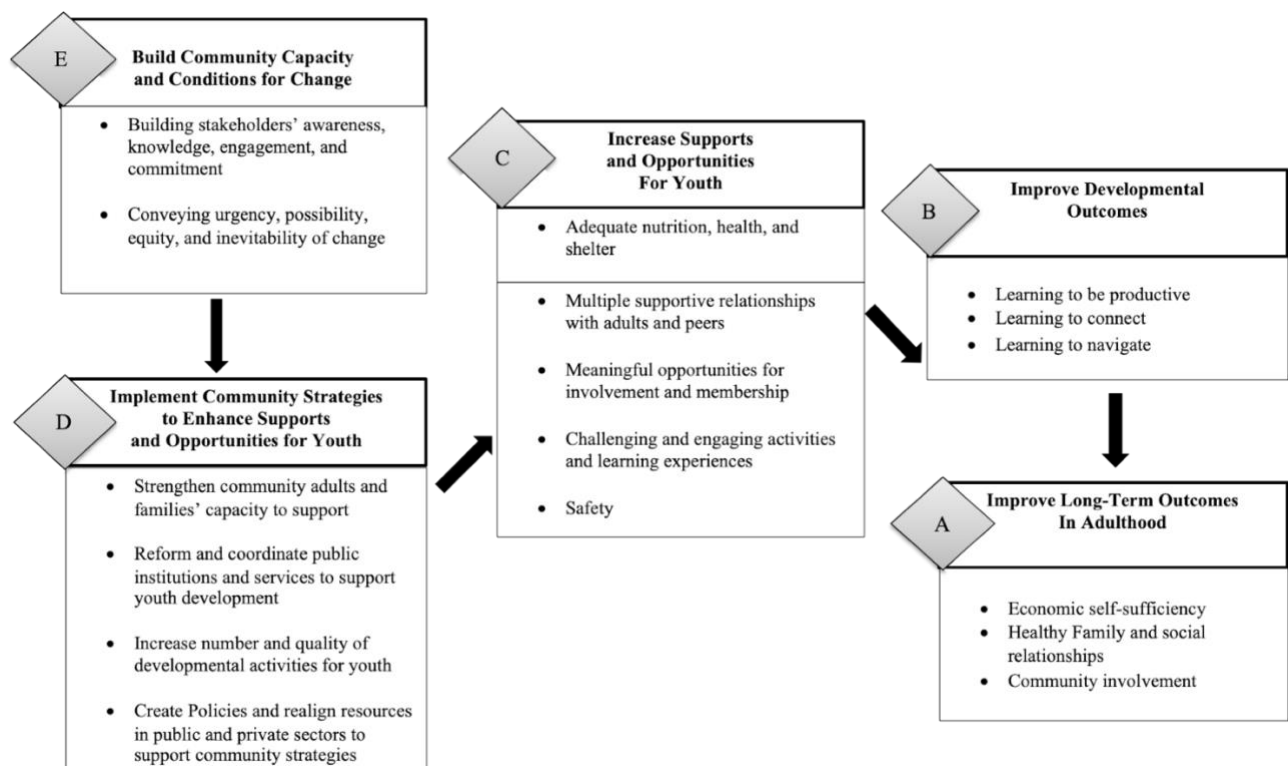


Figure 6 Community Action Framework, Connell & Gambone (2002)

2. PYD frameworks implementations

Through research, I have learned that many youth programs in the U.S. have adopted and implemented the developmental assets and 5 C's framework to build and improve their programming and activities. For example, 4-H adopted the 4-H Thriving Model (figure 1), a PYD framework developed by youth development scholar Dr. Mary Arnold (2018). This model leverages developmental contexts that integrate external assets such as youth sparks, belonging, healthy relationships, and engagement, creating a healthy environment within which youth can freely explore their interests (Arnold, 2018). Within these enabling environments, 4-H creates quality programs to help youth thrive through openness to challenge, developing a growth mindset, discovering their purpose, positive emotions, and self-discipline through goal setting and management. As 4-H youth thrive, they experience developmental outcomes such as positive academic attitudes and social competence (competence), personal standards and responsibility (character), connections with others (connection and caring), and contribution. As youth develop these internal development assets, long-term outcomes, namely academic or vocational success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability, and happiness and overall well-being (Arnold, 2018; (Extension Foundation et al., n.d.)). In short, the 4-H Thriving Model is a mixture of PYD developmental assets and 5 C's frameworks. While I introduced the 4-H Thriving model here, I will explain it in greater detail below as it is central to youth development and the 4-H program.

3. PYD Frameworks Limitations

Though a framework created from a Western cultural context perspective, PYD and its principles have been leveraged to aid young people in low- and middle-income countries in experiencing positive development. Yet, there is a dearth of literature on PYD-centered research that focuses on leveraging the principles of PYD to assist marginalized youth in the U.S. and the Global South to experience positive development. Below are brief overviews of how PYD has been implemented among marginalized youth in the U.S. and Africa.

a. PYD among historically marginalized youth in the U.S.

Over the years, scholars have promoted PYD as a youth development benchmark that can benefit all youth, including racial and ethnically diverse youth, who are often historically marginalized in the U.S. However, the PYD literature that currently exists overlooks the needs of racial and ethnic youth. In the instances where racial and ethnically diverse youth are included in PYD research studies, their percentages are relatively small compared to other European-centric youth. An example of this can be witnessed in the national 4-H longitudinal research study of PYD conducted by Dr. Richard Lerner and colleagues from 2002 to 2012. The authors sampled a large sample of over 7,000 youth across 42 states. From this sample, 65% are of European American background, 9.4% are Latino, 7.2% are African American, 1.8% are Asian American, and 1.5% are American Indian. The remaining percentage of youth participants are either multiracial or ethnic, classified as other, or did not provide their racial and ethnic groups (Lerner et al., 2013).

Moreover, PYD research and its application among minority youth often focuses on social justice and equipping them to cope with and navigate the racism or discrimination in

society, negative stereotypes and challenges they face, and for them to become resilient (Travis Jr. & Leech, 2014). Additionally, there is a lack of representation and recognition of youth development minority scholars within the field. Minority scholars have relevant published research and developed PYD-informed frameworks through cultural competence lenses that could inform youth programming efforts on ways to engage racial and ethnic diverse youth effectively and to assist them in experiencing positive development. Examples of PYD frameworks are provided below. In the study "Empowered-Based Positive Youth Development," Travis Jr and Leech (2014) shared that prominent PYD models, such as the 5C's, don't consider essential assets and factors that influence the positive development of diverse racial and ethnic youth. Such assets and factors include racial and ethnic socialization, a sense of community, active and engaged citizenship, and cultural orientation and values. Racial and ethnic socialization refers to the transfer of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and objects from adults of a specific ethnic group to their children to instill a sense of identity and pride within them. Racial socialization is taught in African American communities to teach their young people about racism, the challenges they will face in society, and strategies to navigate and overcome them successfully.

Minority youth developing a sense of community signifies that they belong to "a readily available, supportive, and dependable structure" or group to which they feel connected, understand membership and influence, and have their needs fulfilled (Evans, 2007; Travis Jr. & Leech, 2014). Active and engaged citizenship refers to minority youth participating in community engagement. Travis Jr. & Leech (2014) state that active and engaged citizenship encompasses civic duty, skills, connection, and participation. Hence, Travis and Leech (2014) developed a PYD-informed framework incorporating the factors discussed above that play vital

roles in developing historically marginalized youth, especially African American youth. This new framework, the Empowerment-Based Positive Youth Development (EMPYD) model (figure 5), builds on the 5 Cs framework and adds two new constructs to create a new 7Cs framework. These two constructs are a sense of community and engaged citizenship. Travis and Leech (2014) share that "marginalized youth who increase their sense of community and become more engaged citizens can reinforce their moral identity and mastery processes." Moral identity encompasses young people's connection, character, and caring assets, while mastery refers to their confidence, connection, and competence assets. According to the EMPYD model, when minority youths are provided opportunities through which they can experience positive development and develop the 7 Cs, they "develop the consciousness, skills, and power necessary to envision personal or collective well-being and understand their role within opportunities to transform social conditions to achieve that well-being" (Travis & Leech, 2014).

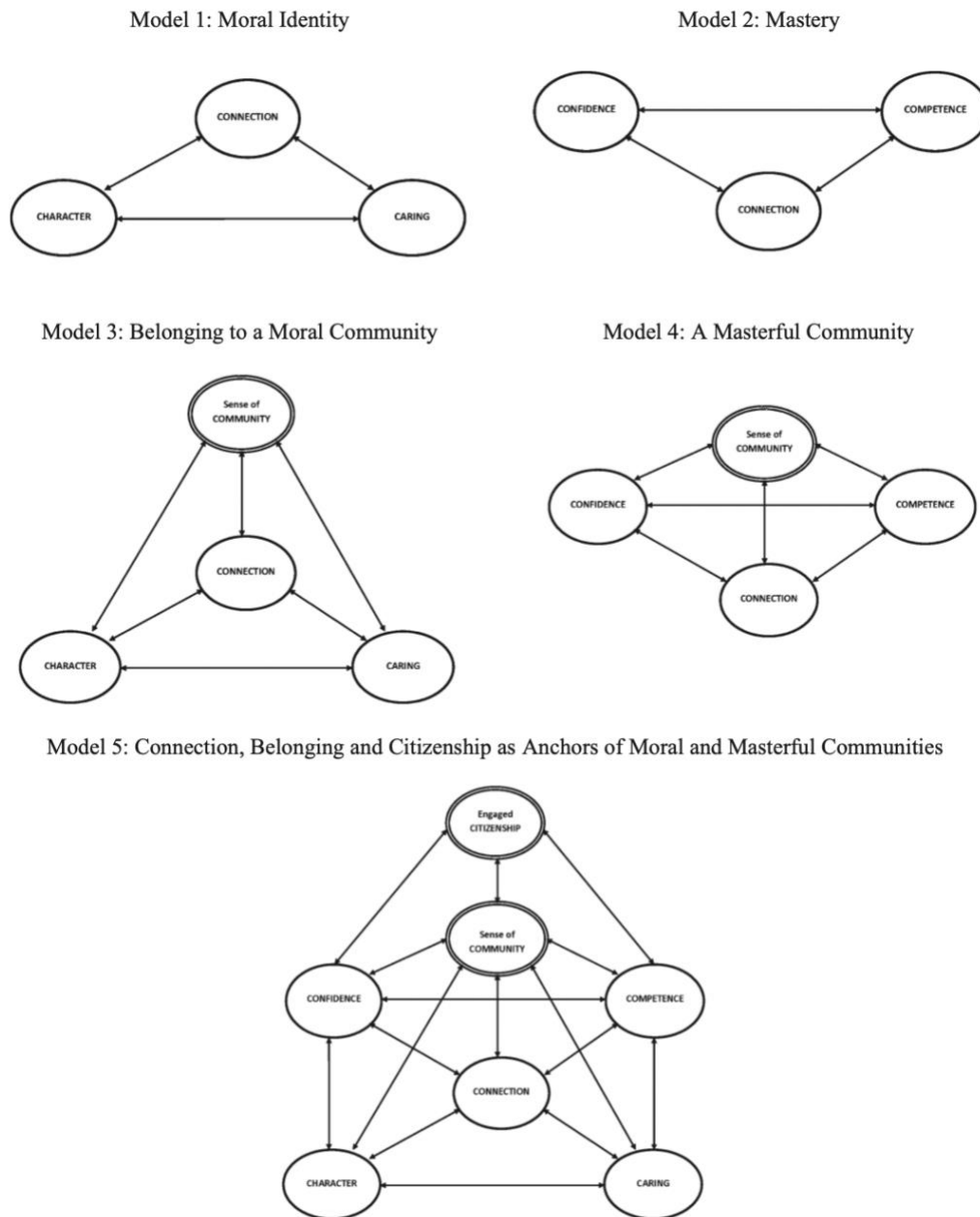


Figure 7 Empowerment-Based Positive Youth Development Model, Travis & Leech (2014)

Similarly, in their article "Culture, Racial, Socialization, and Positive African American Youth Development," Dr. Cheryl, Deanna Cooke, and colleagues (2015) investigated the degree to which cultural and group consciousness factors (i.e., cultural value and racial socialization) predict positive development among African American youth. To answer their questions, the authors surveyed African American youth participants and males and females in a selected mentor program. Grill et al. (2015) found that cultural and group consciousness factors, particularly cultural orientation, Afrocentric values, and racial socialization, significantly predicted positive development among African American youth. Through this study, Grills et al. (2015) also found that African American youth in environments with Afrocentric cultural orientation cultivate healthy behavioral assets (i.e., collectivism, community engagement) vital for living in healthy, harmonious communities and society. More importantly, they found that cultural orientation and Afrocentric values help motivate African American youth to achieve. At the same time, racial socialization equips them with the strategies and skills to navigate through racist and discriminatory experiences (Grills et al., 2015).

b. PYD's implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The PYD concept is still novel to many countries outside the U.S., predominantly in Africa. Therefore, research that sheds light on the potential positive development process of African youth are very few in numbers. One contributing factor that has been cited to contribute to this gap in the PYD is the lack of translated measures for conducting research in African countries (Drescher et al., 2018). Among the very few research that builds on the capacity of PYD research among African youth, Drescher et al. (2018) conducted a study that examined how African cultural perspectives and measures of youth development, such as Swahili's measures, can be leveraged to help Tanzanian youth develop their strengths. They leveraged and translated

the PYD Development Assets Profile (DAP) along with self-efficacy, ethnic identity, sense of community, and community participation to Swahili as scales of measurement of PYD among the selected research subjects. Results of this study demonstrate that the translated Swahili DAP and other culturally appropriate youth development scales of measurement are similar to other measures of PYD. They also found that the PYD development assets framework has promising potential to be leveraged to assist East African youth in experiencing positive development. Another study studied the vital role that PYD developmental assets can play in youths' academic performances in three sub-Saharan countries, namely Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa (Adams et al., 2018). The authors used the Development Assets framework, academic performance, and other socioeconomic factors to assess youth participants positively and examine the differences in development assets and academic performance across these three countries.

Through their analyses, the authors found a correlation between all three groups of student's academic performance and their developmental assets. Students who performed better academically developed more internal assets than their peers who didn't (Adams et al., 2018). Another study sought to characterize Ethiopian youth's positive youth development profile from a strength-based approach by examining their development assets profile and thriving outcomes (Desie, 2020). The author used the DAP measures to assess youth participants' development assets and thriving outcomes. The study results confirmed the Development Assets framework can be used to predict and evaluate the positive development and thriving among Ethiopian youths. It also highlighted a positive correlation between developmental assets and thriving outcomes among Ethiopian youths. However, the Ethiopian student participants did not develop many external and contextual assets such as social, community, and academic. This lack of external assets is caused by factors such as the adversities and challenges Ethiopian youth face

and their gender and living arrangements, which put them in the vulnerable and deficient assets range. Among the participants, female youth and youth living with their parents experienced better positive development than their peers who had alternate living arrangements (Desie, 2020). The studies above demonstrate the applicability of the PYD concept and models, such as the Development Assets framework, in a non-Western cultural context and stress the need to close the literature gap surrounding PYD and African youth. Additionally, the authors urge youth development scholars and practitioners to include African youth in their research efforts to expand the PYD approaches to be more responsive to culturally diverse contexts.

From a youth programming vantage point, preliminary research has shown that PYD is still a foreign concept in many African countries and has not been adopted by any local youth organizations. However, international organizations such as Peace Corps and 4-H are the leading international agents that introduce the concept of PYD within African countries and their cultural contexts. They also have been working to aid African youth in experiencing positive development through their programming efforts. 4-H has programming in a few African countries: Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania. However, there aren't significant empirical studies and publications highlight the mechanisms that 4-H has employed to implement its PYD model within these individual countries and the effectiveness and impact of PYD programming on its youth participants in these countries. The only research publication highlighting 4-H programming in Africa is "Positive Youth Development in Senegal: A case study of 4-H Senegal" (Archibald et al. 2020). This paper provides an evidence-based description of the establishment and progress of 4-H programming in Senegal. 4-H Senegal was established in 2015 through the Feed the Future Senegal Youth in Agriculture (Jeunesse en Agriculture), a project implemented by the Center for International Research, Education, and Development at

Virginia Tech and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development Senegal mission (USAID/Senegal) (Archibald et al. 2021). Through this project, extension agents and leaders from the leading and partner organizations trained local leaders (i.e., schoolteachers, local NGO staff, and community leaders) to teach them PYD, its various concepts, and the 4-H model. The trained leaders helped create and recruit youth into three 4-H Senegal pilot clubs in the town of Toubacouta in the region of Fatick and served as club leaders or supervisors.

With the success of these clubs, programming efforts were doubled to create more clubs in other regions of Senegal. Today, 4-H Senegal has more than 100 clubs with more than 500 leaders and has enrolled over 1000 youth ranging from 8 to 29 years old. Most club activities focus on agriculture, such as gardening, food processing, and production and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, 4-H Ghana clubs do not receive financial support from the Feed the Future Senegal project. Rather, youth leverage their creative and entrepreneurial skills to create fundraising opportunities to support their club activities. Through their participation in 4-H Senegal clubs, youth participants develop their internal and external assets, enabling them to reach their full potential and become self-sufficient. Given the dearth in the literature regarding the implementation of PYD among Africans, it is imperative that youth development scholars in the West and the Global South partner together to research and develop a culturally appropriate PYD framework that can be leveraged by international and local organizations alike to assist Africa youth experience positive development. Furthermore, this study will highlight 4-H Ghana and Liberia's mechanisms to implement PYD within the respective cultural contexts.

VII. The 4-H Youth Organization

1) 4-H History and Background

4-H history can be traced to the late 1800s and early 1900s, during times when researchers at public universities discovered that adult farmers in rural communities were not opened to adopting new agricultural innovations and practices but were more likely to learn these new methods from children who were more "open to new thinking and would experiment with new ideas and share their experiences with adults" (4.h.org, history). Not long after, universities and national agencies began to create youth programs in rural areas to introduce and disseminate new agriculture technologies within these communities and to connect them to public schools, institutions, and resources. Examples of such youth programs include the corn clubs, which were local organizations that recruited young boys to cultivate corn on an acre of land under the investigation and supervision of a local leader. These local leaders were often agriculture teachers or extension agents. The impact of the corn clubs includes increasing crop yields and their inclusion within public schools' curriculums. Additionally, the corn club movement influenced the development of other youth clubs throughout the country (Uricchio, Moore, et Coley, 2013).

A.B. Graham, an Illinois school superintendent, started the first after-school agriculture clubs and what would be known as the first 4-H in the U.S. in 1902, in Ohio. The after-school agriculture clubs were created to teach members, who were mostly boys, "more about the country life, the animals of the farm and the proper feeding standard for them" (Uricchio, Moore, et Coley, 2013). Most of these clubs engaged youth members in various projects and focused on crops such as corn, tomato, etc. Motivated by the success of the first after-school agriculture clubs, other renowned 4-H pioneers such as O.J. Kern and Erickson started similar clubs in their

respective countries and states of Illinois and Minnesota. In 1910, Jessie Field Shambaugh developed a clover pin with an H on each leaf, and in 1912, the after-school agriculture clubs were called 4-H clubs (4-H, 2022).

2) 4-H implementation of PYD in the United States.

Today, 4-H is the largest PYD organization in the U.S. 4-H's mission is to equip young people with the skills to become leaders who usher change within their communities (4-H, n.d.). As a positive development organization, 4-H seeks to empower its youth participants through its research-backed PYD programming efforts, including mentorships, hands-on projects, and leadership opportunities. Over the years, 4-H partnered with youth development scholars to develop and adopt various PYD models to create its programs. The PYD models used by the organization in the past include the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996), The Fourfold Youth Development Model (Barkman, Machtmes, Myers, Horton, & Hutchison, 1999), and the Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development (Kress, 2005) (Arnold, 2018). Additionally, PYD models implemented by 4-H programs at the local and state levels are not often uniform. Instead, local leaders select the models that best represent their understanding of the PYD framework.

The PYD-informed programming model 4-H is currently implementing is the 4-H Thriving Model. The 4-H Thriving Model was developed by Dr. Mary Arnold, professor of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) at Oregon State University. Dr. Arnold (2015) developed the newly designed 4-H Youth Development Program Model (Figure 2) to primarily introduce a youth programming umbrella model that translates current research into program theory of change and under which 4-H programs can organize their activities. While developing this model, the author had three goals: to make a theory of change for 4-H programs, a blueprint

for program development, and a parameter for program implementation and outcome measurement (Arnold, 2018).

a. The 4-H Thriving Model

The 4-H Thriving Model (Figure 6), designed by Dr. Arnold (2015), comprises three essential components that predict and highlight the impacts of 4-H programming and activities on the positive development of youth participants. The first component is the 4-H development context, which includes four program elements: promoting youth sparks, fostering meaningful relationships, adopting quality PYD program principles, and promoting youth engagement. Youth Sparks refers to their passion for their interests or skills that provide them with the motivation, encouragement, and direction to succeed in various areas of their lives (Scales et al. 2010). The meaningful relationship component of the 4-H thriving mode refers to the relationship young people develop with adults in their lives (i.e., Parents, teachers, program leaders, and older young people). Youth-Adults developmental relationships help youth develop life skills (Radhakrishna & Ewing, 2011), connect them to new opportunities and resources, provide guidance, and empower them throughout their development journey (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017). According to the PYD research, there are numerous elements that youth development organizations ought to adopt to deliver high-quality PYD-informed programming and activities to their youth participants. According to Eccles and Gootman (2002), examples of elements that make up quality youth development programs include the following: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong; support for efficacy and mattering, the opportunity for skill-building, and integration of family, school, and

community. Lastly, the final essential element of effective youth program engagement is 4-H youths' commitment to participating in the local program's activities.

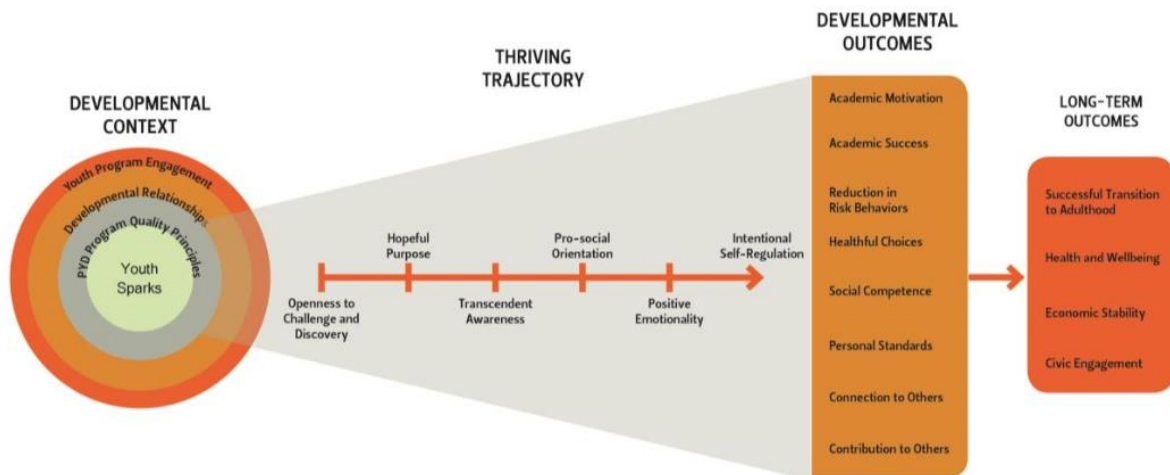


Figure 8 4-H Thriving Model, Arnold (2015)

Research has also demonstrated that adequate youth engagement in program activities does not solely rely on their attendance alone but on the intensity, referring to the amount of time they spend participating in a program, the length or duration of their participation (i.e., the number of years of participation), and the variety of activities and opportunities they take advantage of (Project, n.d.). Further, these three elements mentioned above combined allow 4-H leaders to create the developmental context that can facilitate the development process of their youth participants. When placed within the enabling developmental context, 4-H participate in program activities and engagement opportunities that allow them to thrive through their development process. During this process, they develop their life skills, positive attitudes, and behaviors as they persist and participate in program activities. Youth thriving is a theory and process that has also emerged within PYD literature over the past few years. Youth thriving can be called young people demonstrating healthy developmental growth when equipped with the

resources and opportunities that promote thriving (Lerner et al., 2011). Additionally, thriving can be simplified into young people developing specific attributes that demonstrate that point to healthy growth (Arnold, 2018). Dr. Arnold's (2018) thriving model showcases six indicators showing that youth thrive during their development process. These indicators are openness to challenge and discovery, hopeful purpose, transcendent awareness, positive emotionality, pro-social orientation, and intentional self-regulation (Arnold, 2018).

Openness to challenge and discovery in youth represents their innate desire or willingness to explore new opportunities and challenges themselves. Hopeful purpose and intentional self-regulation refer to young people discovering their passions, setting personal life goals, having the discipline to take deliberate actions towards accomplishing them, and creating successful lives for themselves in the future. Transcendent awareness for young people refers to their affiliation with a religion, spiritual practice, or faith and influences their daily thoughts and actions. Positive emotionality translates to young people's ability to manage their emotions and develop and maintain a positive outlook on life. Lastly, Pro-social orientation refers to young people developing their values and character assets such as respect, responsibility, and honesty during their development journey. Several developmental outcomes result when young people thrive, display the indicators, and gain the attributes associated with thriving. The developmental outcomes highlighted by Dr. Arnold in the 4-H Thriving Model are grouped into two groups, namely short-term and long-term outcomes. The short-term outcomes witnessed in youth during their development process include academic motivation and success, reduction in risk behaviors, healthful choices, social competence, personal standards, connection, and contribution to others. The long-term results of youth thriving are healthy young people, participating in civic

engagement, experiencing economic stability, and successful growth and transition into adulthood.

After publishing the 4-H Thriving Model in 2015, Dr. Arnold conducted two-wave research studies to test the model's effectiveness on two groups of 4-H participants in Oregon. The studies were conducted in 2017 and 2018. Based on the results and findings deduced from these two-wave studies, Dr. Arnold and her team revised and modified the original model. The revised 4-H Thriving Model shows that the first youth participating in 4-H activities catalyzes them to experience healthy and thriving development. Second, the list of indicators that point to youth thriving was expanded to include a seventh indicator, a growth mindset. The growth mindset, which reflects young people's "willingness to work hard to accomplish" their goals, was placed after the openness to challenge and discovery. When young people are open to challenging themselves and discovering new opportunities and avenues, they develop a growth mindset. Also, the indicators of healthful choices and risk reduction did not impact youth developmental outcomes during the 2017 study and were removed from the list. Instead, "personal responsibility," which refers to young people's ability to follow through on the opportunities they commit themselves to, was added to the list of short-term developmental outcomes (Arnold & Gagon, 2020). Dr. Arnold (2018) also pointed out that it is vital that these development outcomes are well-defined and understood so they can be helpful and implemented by youth development educators and leaders for their organizations and programs' missions and goals. Consequently, the 4-H Thriving model aligns with the elements of the 5Cs model and reflects 4-H's goals and overall mission. Nevertheless, the model can be implemented by youth organizations outside of 4-H.

3) 4-H programming in the U.S.

At the national level, 4-H has developed three core programming areas in STEM and Agriculture, Healthy Living, and Civic Engagement (4-H, 2021a). The STEM and agriculture programs have seven focus areas: computer science, robotics, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and veterinary science. Within each focus area, 4-H has created programs to help them gain the skills they need to succeed in their lives and careers. 4-H Healthy Living programs aim to equip youth with the skills they need to make necessary decisions to lead healthy lifestyles with focus areas on social and emotional well-being, fitness, health, nutrition, and safety, as well as mentorship and leadership. Lastly, the 4-H Civic Engagement program enables youth participants to engage in their communities actively and become leaders who can transform them. The Civic Engagement programs focus on leadership and personal development, community action, communication, and expressive art. Within the leadership and personal development focus area, 4-H youth participate in their communities, local governments, organizations, and program activities to develop decision-making and leadership skills and gain confidence in their abilities.

The community action area instills in youth participants the value of and impact of community service. By contributing their time and efforts, 4-H youth share innovative ideas to solve their prevalent issues and give back to the communities that helped raise them. Through community service, 4-H youth learn about teamwork and develop their compassion, critical thinking, confidence, and, most importantly, a sense of pride in their community. Lastly, the communication and expressive art programming area seeks to motivate 4-H youth to develop and highlight their talents through various forms of artistic expression, such as creative thinking and writing, print, and digital media (4-H, 2021). Although 4-H programming at the state and local

levels organizes activities based on their communities and youth participants' needs, they align with the national organization's three programming areas and PYD model.

4) The Global 4-H Network

Given the success of its programming in the U.S. over the years, 4-H has expanded its reach globally. Today, there exists 4-H countries programs across all six continents. With more than seventy independent country-led 4-H programs globally and seven million 4-H youth, the organization seeks to accomplish its mission to equip all young people with the expertise and abilities to become impactful members who usher change within their communities. To ensure that 4-H youth and leaders globally are connected to their peers in the United States, 4-H organized its first global summit in 2014. The Summit was held in Seoul, South Korea, and attended by representatives from 4-H programs globally. At the summit, the Global 4-H Network was launched and two country program representatives from each continent were selected to form the board of directors. The Global 4-H Network's mission is for 4-H global country program leaders to work together to nurture and awaken the potential of young people throughout the world to become leaders through practical skill-building activities, and meaningful leadership opportunities under the guidance and supervision of caring adults.

As leaders, 4-H Global youth will work together to create solutions to strengthen their communities. Furthermore, the 4-H Global Network seeks to recruit and empower twenty million young people. Members international by 2025 (4-H Canada, n.d.). The Global 4-H Network summit is held every three years in various parts of the world. The goal of the summit is to bring together 4-H youth from all over the world and “empower them to increase resources, share ideas, and develop solutions to change the world” (Global 4-H Network, 2017). Today, there is 4-H programming in several countries in Africa, namely, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria,

Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania. For the research study, I will focus on 4-H programming in Ghana and Liberia.

VIII. Youth Development in sub-Saharan Africa: Background, Challenges, Ghana, & Liberia

1) Background

Africa is the most youthful continent today, with 70% of the sub-Saharan population under 30 (United Nations, n.d.). According to the African Union (A.U.), more than 400 million Africans are between the ages of 15 and 35 and are expected to make up 42% of the world's youth population by 2030 (African Union, n.d.; Population Reference Bureau, 2019). Current research has shown that the youth population will continue to experience rapid growth. By 2025, the sub-Saharan youth population is predicted to increase to 436 million and 605 million by 2050 (United Nations, 2013). In his article titled "*African-Centered Frameworks of Youth Development: Nuanced Implications for Guiding Social Work Practice with Black Youth*," Dr. Husain Lateef (2021) shared that many factors play an essential role in the development process of African youth. These factors include ethnic association, family and community dynamics, peers, and education. Outside of established Western concepts of youth development, such as PYD, there isn't a specific Afro-centric empirical framework that conceptualizes the development process. One of the main reasons for this is the vast ethnic and cultural diversity across the continent.

Today, thousands of ethnic groups exist across all 54 countries on the continent, and each group possesses its own specific beliefs, ideologies, and approaches to youth development (Obadina, 2014; Lateef, 2021). For this study, I selected and researched three African ethnic

groups, namely the Bantu, Akan, and Yoruba groups, and their beliefs on youth development. These three groups are some of the largest ethnic groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. I specifically selected these three groups because of their availability of relevant literature and information. In the following sections, I provide information regarding each group's beliefs and ideologies on youth development.

a. The Akans.

The Akans are ethnic groups that reside primarily in Ghana and Ivory today. According to the Akan tradition ideology, a person or human comprises three elements: Okra, Sunsum, and Honam. The Okra is the innermost being or essence of a person placed within them by Onyame, the Higher God that creates and governs all living things (Ackah, 1988; Lateef, 2021). Sunsum refers to a person's behaviors, thoughts, and actions, essential characteristics that distinguish them from others. Lastly, Honam refers to the physical body of a person or vessel that hosts the previous two elements (Lateef, 2021). Within the Akan traditional view of youth development, a great emphasis is placed on cultivating a youth's agency to take responsibility for their personal and community's well-being. The Akan youth development process has four critical elements: spiritual development, emotional intelligence, physical well-being, and personal agency. Lastly, Akan girls are under the care and teaching of their mothers, while the boys are taught by their fathers (Keyeremateng, 2008; Lateef, 2021).



Figure 9 Location of the Akan Ethnic Group, (Morgan, 2020)

b. The Bantus

The Bantus are one of the largest ethnic groups on the continent of Africa, who reside in central to east and southern Africa. According to the Bantus ideology, everything comes from a power or life force called the Ntu. The Ntu gives life to all things, including human life. Thus, human life is part of Ntu (Tempels, 1959; Lateef, 2021). Furthermore, the Bantu cultural philosophy characterizes human life into four stages, namely butuka (birth), fwa (death), ku nseke (the upper world), and ku mpemba (the lower world). Throughout these stages, the person needs care and adequate attention from those around them. Before adolescence, a person is

ignorant and unaware of who they are (Ruwa'ichi, 1990; Lateef, 2021). According to the Bantu ideology, the youth development process is marked by three essential elements. First, youth must be taught and develop their self-worth and values. Second, they must discover their sense of purpose, allowing them to become responsible members of society. Third, youths should be surrounded by peers with whom they will grow and who will positively influence them during their period of development (Ngubane, 1979; Lateef, 2021). Lastly, the transition from childhood into adulthood is marked by an initiation process within their communities. During that initiation process, the veil of ignorance is removed from them, and youth gain self-awareness (Ruwa'ichi, 1990; Lateef, 2021).

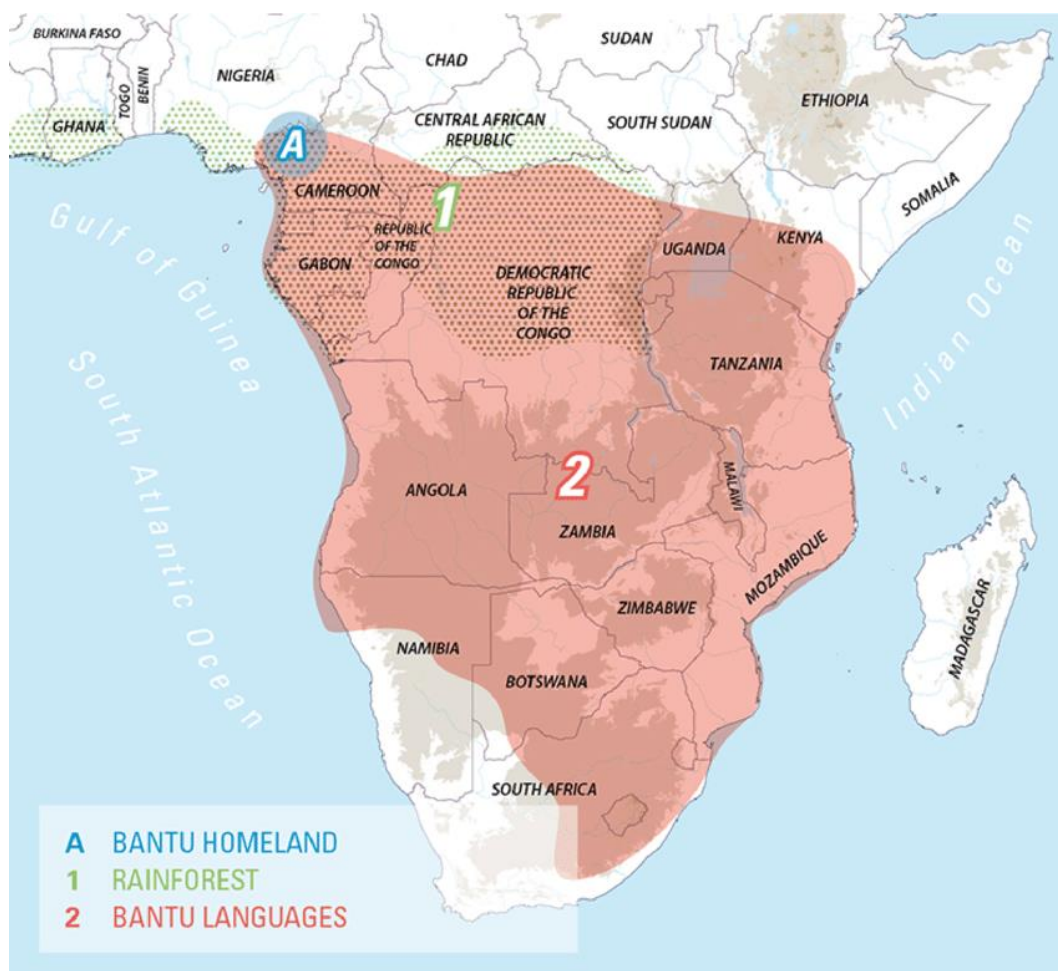


Figure 10 Location of Bantu Ethnic Group, (Bostoen, 2018)

c. The Yorubas.

The Yoruba people are another major ethnic group that can be found in present-day Nigeria and Benin. According to the Yoruba traditional ideologies, every person is given life by the Supreme God called Oludumare (Salami, 2008). Having a purpose and fulfilling it is an important part of a person's life according to Yoruba traditional beliefs and ideologies. Before every person enters this world, Yoruba tradition believes that they choose their life purpose but forget it once they are born. After they are born, the parents and community have the responsibility to care for, nurture, and protect the newborn person until they can care for themselves. Parents and community members are also charged with providing the person with the right tools to discover and fulfill their purposes in life. When it comes to the youth development process, there are four vital phases that each child must go through to become a healthy and well-rounded individual that can contribute to their lives and those of others. These phases are that each child must discover his or her life goal or purpose, be provided with the appropriate tools to protect and help them navigate life challenges, develop a good character, and obtain education (Lateef, 2021). Figure 11 below shows the location of the Yoruba people across West Africa today.



Figure 11 Location of the Yoruba Ethnic Group, Wikipedia

2) African Youths' Challenges

Despite their rapid increase in number, the African youth population faces many challenges that inhibit their development and prevent them from reaching their full potential. The challenges and issues that African youth face include but are not limited to high levels of unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, lack of access to quality education and health care, diseases, violence, and crime (Mandalu, 2022). Additionally, more than one in four young people in Africa, approximately 72 million youth, are neither employed, educated, or trained to sustain themselves. Among these groups, two-thirds are young women (Karkee & O'Higgins, 2023).

To assist African youth in overcoming these adversities, the African Union (AU) and its member state governments have developed various continental and national policies. At the continental level, the African Union created the African Youth Charter, African Youth Decade Plan of Action, and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment policies, which are currently being implemented through the AU's Agenda 2063 programs (African Union, n.d.). Additionally, youth development. For this purpose, I will focus on member states of Ghana and Liberia and give below overviews of their populations, the youth development contexts, and the policies their respective governments have created to assist their youths.

3) Ghana: country profile and youth development background

a. Country profile:

Ghana is a multiethnic and natural resource-rich country in the Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, between the Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Togo, and Burkina Faso. Ghana has 16 regions and 216 local districts (*Map & Regions in Ghana*, 2021). Before becoming a British territory during the colonial era, Ghana was inhabited by many ethnic groups who formed various kingdoms and empires and was a well-known trading hub for gold. Thus, Ghana has been referred to as the Gold Coast. Ghana gained independence from Great Britain on March 6th, 1957, under its first president, Kwame Nkrumah. It became the first democratic republic and country in Africa to do so during the colonial era. The capital city of Ghana is Accra. The current population of Ghana is estimated at 33 million people, the majority of which are concentrated in the country's southern region. The largest ethnic groups are the Akan (comprising of the Ashanti, Fante, Baule, Anyi, and Guang), Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga-Adangme, and Gurma (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ghana). Though English is the official language of Ghana, other ethnic languages such as Twi, Fante, Ewe, and Ga are also spoken among the population, the majority of whom

are concentrated in the country's southern region. Ghana is a youthful nation with an estimated 57% of its population under the age of 25 and a median age of 21. Accordingly, 37.44% of the country's population falls between the ages of 0 to 14 years, 18.64% are between the ages of 18-24, 34.27% between the ages of 25 to 54, 5.21% are between the ages of 55-and 64, and lastly, 4.44% are 65 and over. This demographic breakdown of the Ghanaian population can be attributed to the country's high fertility rate (28 births per 1000 people) and decreasing mortality rate (6 deaths per 1000 people) (*Ghana - The World Factbook*. n.d.).

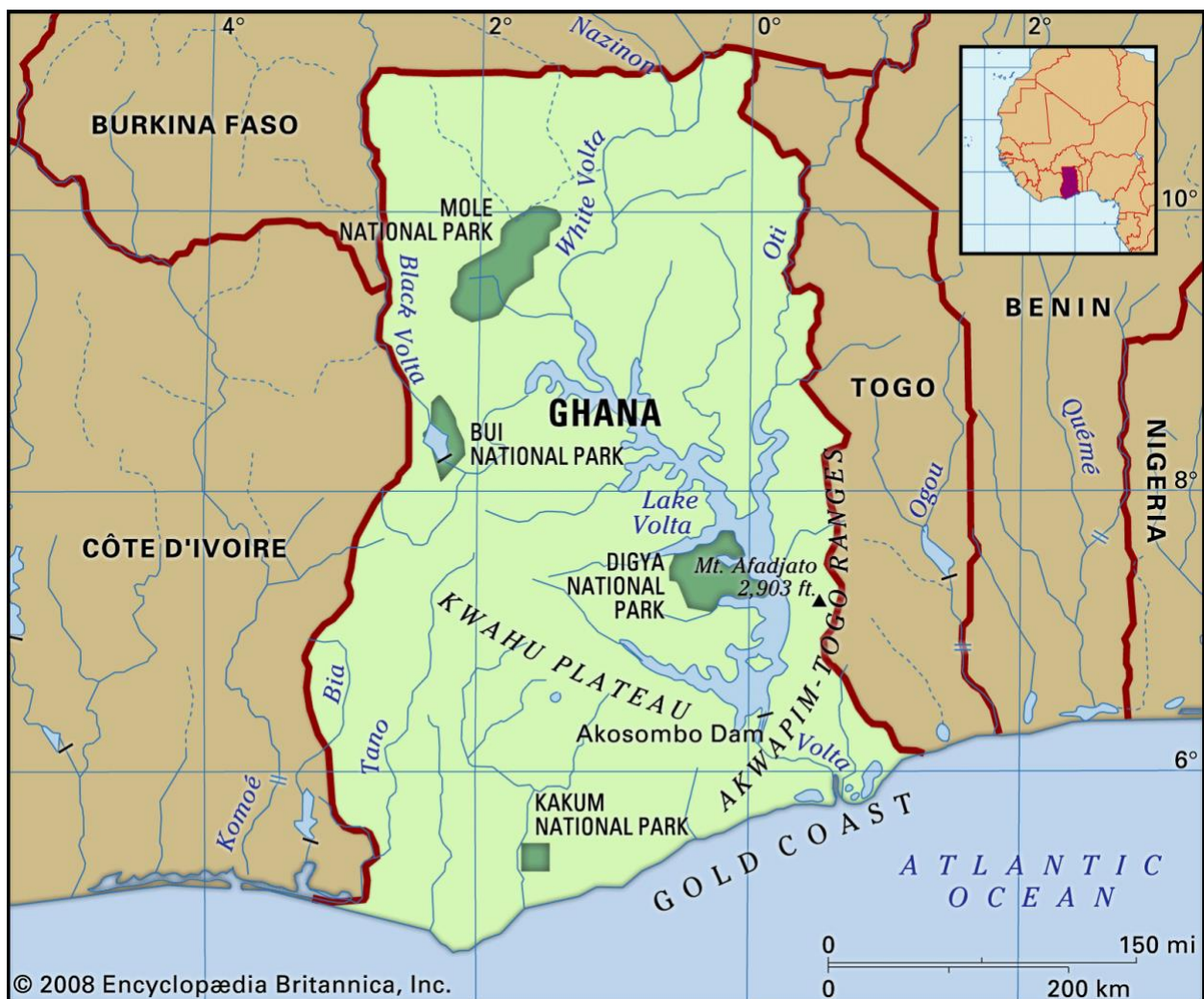


Figure 12 Map of Ghana, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc

b. Youth development efforts in Ghana

Within the Ghanaian cultural context, persons between the ages of 15 to 35 years old are youth. Like many of their African peers, Ghanaian youth face challenges that impede their developmental process and outcomes. The challenges include poor access to quality education, poverty, unemployment, crime, migration, inequality, social exclusion, and civic participation (Boampong, 2011). Poverty poses the biggest threat to Ghanaian youth and is associated with several risks, such as malnutrition, health problems, academic challenges, and exposure to dangerous environments. To assist and support young Ghanaians, the Ghanaian Ministry of Youth and Sports is one of the leading institutions creating solutions to these challenges in Ghana.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) is the institution within the Ghanaian government charged with youth affairs. The MOYS's mission is to "initiate and formulate Youth and Sports development policies and foster greater public-private sector participation for national integration and international recognition." The overall goal of the ministry is to harness Ghanaian youth's potential and the values of sports to contribute to national development (*About MOYS*. n.d.). To execute its vision and mission, the MOYS created three agencies, namely the National Youth Authority (NYA), the National Sports Authority (NSA), and the National Sports College (NSC). The NYA is the ministry's agency mandated to "coordinate and facilitate youth empowerment activities in Ghana and to ensure the development of the Ghanaian youth. By this mandate, the NYA's mission is to provide environments and resources for youth participation in the nation's cultural, socioeconomic, and political development under the guidance of motivated professionals (*NYA Overview / National Youth Authority*. (n.d.). To accomplish its mission, the NYA has created four youth development initiatives to empower Ghanaian youth. These four

initiatives focus on youth economic empowerment and entrepreneurial development, youth policy governance and leadership, infrastructural projects and logistical support, and international youth networking and leadership. These initiatives are currently being implemented in 217 districts nationwide (*Youth Development Initiatives / National Youth Authority*, n.d.).

Under the economic empowerment and entrepreneurial development initiative, the NYA implemented six training programs and projects to assist youth. These are the Online Digital Marketing & Entrepreneurship training program, the Apps Development Training Program, the Youth Innovation for Sustainable Development Challenge (YISDC), the training on Streetlights Installation and Repairs, Louth Livelihood Farms, and the Skills Toward Employment and Productivity Program (STEP). The Digital Marketing & Entrepreneurship training program introduced and trained 3000 Ghanaian youth on digital entrepreneurship and marketing. Youth participants were given tablets each as tools, which some used to start their businesses. The Apps Development Training Program sought to train Ghanaian youth on using technology to solve community problems and promote digital occupations among youth.

The Youth Innovation for Sustainable Development Challenge (YISDC), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), trained 16 youth participants to increase their business and entrepreneurial skills and donated \$80,000 to help youth participants start their businesses. The Training on Streetlights Installation and Repairs trained 100 youth in streetlight skills and services such as streetlight repairs, maintenance, and installation. It provided them with the necessary tools to implement the skills they gained within their communities. The Youth Livelihood Farms project sought to motivate and encourage Ghanaians to develop an appreciation for farming and food production and how to start agriculture businesses. Through this project, youth participants from three regions cultivated and planted various crops on 500

acres of land. Lastly, the Skill Toward Employment and Productivity Program (STEP) is a new initiative that seeks semi-skilled and skilled in the informal sector youth on artisanal trade, vocational, entrepreneurship, leadership, and cooperative skills; financial literacy, marketing & branding (*Economic Empowerment & Entrepreneurial Development / National Youth Authority, n.d.*).

Under the youth policy and governance initiative, the NYA implemented two notable projects to promote decision-making and leadership skills among Ghanaian youth. The first project is the formation of Regional and District Youth Parliaments, which allows Ghanaian youth throughout the country to participate in the decision-making process at all levels of the governance structure. Currently, this project aims to have youth parliaments in every region and district throughout the country, with one at the national level. The second project is an ongoing one called the Youth Development and Volunteer Work program, which aims to foster in Ghanaian youth the desire and appreciation of volunteerism and patriotism and promote national cohesion and development. To achieve this goal, the agency organized two youth volunteer camps nationwide in 2018 and 2019 and successfully recruited 1,100 youth volunteers to participate in program activities. Camp activities include building classrooms, street clean-ups, planting trees, and summer schools for middle and high school students. Lastly, the NYA has also developed two projects, namely a National Youth Volunteer infrastructure and a National Youth Volunteer Programme (NYVP) to recruit 10,000 Ghanaian youth to volunteer in various sectors of the country's economy within the next three years (*Youth Policy Governance and Leadership / National Youth Authority, n.d.*)

The NYA has developed and implemented six infrastructure projects through the infrastructural project and logistical support initiatives. These projects include the construction of

10 Youth Resources Centers of Excellence in 10 regions throughout the country to provide Ghanaian youth facilities to organize sporting and other recreational activities; 2 Astro-Turfs under construction in two selected municipalities in southern Ghana, 11 Youth Leadership & Skills Training Institutes (YLSTIs) in various regions to train youth in different skilled labor such as masonry, electricals, carpentry, building & construction, catering & decoration, fashion & design, metalworks, and agriculture. The agency constructed four dormitories, two multipurpose halls, and eight classroom blocks within these institutes. The NYA also renovated national, regional, and district offices throughout the country (*Infrastructural Project and Logistical Support / National Youth Authority. n.d.*)

As a rising democracy and economic power on the continent, Ghana has been in the spotlight over these past few years for hosting numerous international events. Through global networking and leadership initiatives, the NYA seeks to engage Ghanaian youth in planning and hosting these events. Some of the international events that the NYA planned and hosted included the launch of the West African Chapter of the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE-WA) in 2017, the 8th African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC) training Programme in 2018, the 2nd Annual Forum of National Volunteer Agencies in West Africa in 2018, the 3rd Annual Forum of National Volunteer Agencies in West Africa in 2019; the Commonwealth Youth Senior Officials Meeting for the Africa Sub-region in 2019, the Validation Meeting of the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE) in 2019. Most notably, the NYA, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ghana office, organized and launched the YouthConnekt Africa 2021 Summit in Ghana. YouthConnekt Africa (YCA) is the continent's Largest Youth Summit and pan-African platform, which seeks to "empower young Africans by enhancing their knowledge, experiences,

and skills while investing in their ideas, innovations and initiatives" (YouthConnekt Africa. (n.d.). *About YouthConnekt Africa*). Finally, regarding leadership, NYA promoted and sponsored several Ghanaian young leaders who are changemakers to hold various positions within international youth-led organizations across the continent (*International Youth Networking and Leadership* / National Youth Authority, n.d.)

4) Liberia: Country Profile and Youth development background

a. Country Profile:

The Republic of Liberia is located in West Africa between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast (Côte D'Ivoire). As one of the few African countries colonized by European powers, Liberia was, Liberia was the country where numerous freed African Americans immigrated and established settlements after slavery was abolished during the 19th century. These settlers are often referred to as Americo-Liberians. Before their arrival, the country was occupied by 16 ethnic groups, classified into three linguistic groups: the Mende, Kwa, and Mel. Together, they led the groundwork to develop the country's first constitution and established Liberia as Africa's first republic in 1847 (*Liberia - the World Factbook*, n.d.). Tensions between the Americo-Liberian and the local ethnic groups arose after a series of military coups overthrew governments that had members of both sides as political. In 1989, the political tensions escalated when former Liberian Charles Taylor launched a coup to overthrow the Samuel DOE authoritarian. This coup started the civil war that ended briefly in 1997, during which Taylor was elected president. The war resumed in 2000 and officially ended in 2003 after a peace treaty was signed between President Taylor and the opposition. President Charles then resigned from his role. The Civil War had a devastating impact on the country's economy and the lives of Liberians.

In 2011, Liberians elected the first female African president, Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (*Liberia / History, Map, Flag, Population, & Facts*, 2023). Monrovia is the capital of Liberia, and it is named after former U.S. President James Monroe, who supported free African Americans' move and settlement to Liberia. English is the national language, with over 20 additional ethnic languages spoken throughout the country. The most notable ethnic languages spoken are Kpelle, Bassa, and Kru, to name a few. Liberia's population is young and estimated to be over 5 million people with a 2.73 % population growth, a median age of 18 years (17.7 years for males and 18.2 years for females), and a birth rate of 36.64 births per 1000 population. More than 50% of the country's population live in urban areas. As related to the population age breakdown, 43.35% of the population are between the ages of 0 to 14 years, 20.35% are between the ages of 15 to 24 years, 30.01% are between 25 to 54 years, 3.46% are between 55 to 64 years, and 2.83% are 65 years and over. (*Liberia / History, Map, Flag, Population, & Facts*, 2023).



Figure 13 Map of Liberia, World Maps

b. Youth Development efforts in Liberia

Within the Liberian context, youth are defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 (*Liberia / Factsheets / Youthpolicy.org*, n.d.). Like their peers across the continent, Liberian youth also face various challenges mentioned above. The most prevalent challenges that Liberian youth face are prominent levels of poverty, unemployment, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, disabilities, and lack of access to quality education and resources. The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) is the formal governmental institution charged with developing and implementing policies and programs that will help empower and promote sports for all youth in Liberia. (*Mission & Vision / Ministry of Youth & Sports*, n.d.). Since its creation in 1982, the

MYOS has implemented a National Youth Policy and Action Plan (NYPAP) to leverage the strengths and assets of the Liberian youth and provide them with the skills and opportunities to contribute to the nation's government goal of Liberia Rising 2030 which goal is to have the country achieve middle-income country status by 2030 (Government of the Republic of Liberia [Ministry of Youth and Sports], 2017). The MOYS of Liberia has revised the NYPAP over the years, with each revision having strategies to be accomplished within five years. The current NYPAP being implemented is the 2019 – 2023 policy agenda and was revised with assistance from both national and international partners such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY). The goal of the 2019-2023 NYPAP is to provide an appropriate framework that will promote fundamental human rights, protect the health, social, economic, and political well-being of all young men and women in Liberia, and enhance their participation in the overall development process and improve their quality of life (Government of the Republic of Liberia [Ministry of Youth and Sports], 2017).

The NYPAP has the following groups of youth as targets: In-and-out of school adolescents, unemployed and under-employed youth, youth with disabilities; young women and girls, youth affected by HIV/AIDS, youth sex workers, and youth in the informal commercial sector. This plan plans to address 13 priority areas to help empower Liberian youth. These areas of priority areas are education and training, employment and empowerment, sexual, reproductive health, and mental health; justice and governance, peacebuilding, agriculture, environment; sports and recreation; young women and girls; information communication technologies (ICT) and Globalization, HIV/AIDS, culture and family life, substance abuse. To address each priority area, the MYOS of Liberia has developed various strategic interventions to execute the national

plan and ensure the policy's goals and objectives are accomplished. The MOYS Liberia also partners with other government ministries, county authorities, national youth agencies and associations, private and NGOs, International development agencies, and media companies to develop programs, projects, and activities to maximize the resources available and better serve Liberian youth (Government of the Republic of Liberia [Ministry of Youth and Sports], 2017). An example of such a partnership is the ongoing project Advancing Youth implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the MOYS, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Liberia. The project seeks to rebuild Liberia's educational and economic infrastructure by providing increased access to quality alternative primary education (ABE), social and leadership development, and livelihood training for out-of-school youth ages 13–35 with no prior education. The project has enrolled thousands of Liberian youths in various educational courses since it started in 2011, trained MoE teachers and administrators on ABE, and communities on sexually transmitted diseases (*USAID Advancing Youth Project*, 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This case study seeks to uncover how 4-H Ghana and Liberia have implemented PYD in their respective countries to assist their youth participants in experiencing positive development. To effectively answer this question, the researcher narrowed down three research objectives, which are to 1) explore programming activities 4-H Ghana and Liberia have created to help their youth develop their PYD assets and agencies and experience positive development, 2) explore the benefits of PYD programming for young Africans and 3) address the challenges both countries' 4-H programming encounters while implementing PYD within their cultural contexts. The study will use a descriptive case study design to answer the research question and objectives. The information described in this chapter will be organized and highlighted under the following subsections: research design, participants, measures and procedures, analysis plan, and ethical consideration.

IX. Research Design

The qualitative research study highlights various ways the PYD framework has been implemented in Africa, specifically in Ghana and Liberia. Based on the preliminary fact-checking, the researcher identified and selected to review 4-H programming in Ghana and Liberia as the country programs within the 4-H network that are currently active and engage their youth participants in PYD-informed activities. To answer the research question and support the objectives, the researcher used a qualitative case study research design as it enables the researcher to explore an issue or a phenomenon within a specific context through diverse lenses using various sources (Baxter & Jack, 2010, 2015). Scholars have defined case study research design as “an empirical inquiry which investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context. In a

case study research, multiple methods of data collection are used, as it involves an in-depth study of a phenomenon” (Yin, 2009, p.18) or “qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2014, p. 241). A case study research design allows different facets of the issue or phenomenon to be studied and revealed.

While there exist various methods within a qualitative research design to explore a scientific inquiry, the researcher selected interviews along with a systematic review of existing literature on the programs as the scientific methods to collect the necessary information to answer the research questions and support the stated objectives. The interviews were the primary data sources for the case study, while the existing literature was the secondary source. The researcher interviewed 4-H Ghana and Liberia High-level leaders (e.g., directors and CEO) to gather data on how their organizations operationalize and implement activities to assist their youth in experiencing positive development. The researcher also interviewed High-level leaders of partner organizations (e.g., CEOs) to extract information on the various meta-levels of support and assistance they lend to 4-H country programming. Finally, the researcher reviewed existing literature on each country's 4-H programming efforts, such as program reports, project documents, and articles, as secondary data to supplement and add depth to the interview data.

1) Participants

To answer the study’s overarching research question, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select a list of participants with knowledge and expertise about both 4-H programs to provide the researcher with the necessary information. Purposive sampling is a technique in which research deliberately selects a specific setting, person, or activity to provide

relevant information to the research question and goals that other sources cannot obtain (Maxwell, 2013). In qualitative research, purposive sampling is often used to select participants who can provide helpful information and better understand the inquiry and phenomenon being studied (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Palinkas et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2020). The research subjects in this study were leaders of their respective organizations and were selected based on their affiliations and roles within each program and partner organization. The researcher set the criteria for the selection and inclusion of research participants, which included: a) officials that were part of the leadership boards of each country program and organization, b) had extensive knowledge of their program and organizations (e.g., history, organizational structure, activities), c) have worked closely with both beneficiaries (e.g., teachers, students, community members), d) and can provide detailed information regarding their respective programs/organizations' mutual partnerships.

2) Selection of Participants

To select the participants for this study, the researcher conducted preliminary fact-checking consisting of web searches and browsing on each program and organization's website and social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). During this fact-checking process, the researcher also discovered short articles and reports on 4-H Ghana and Liberia written by various organizations that have partnered with them in the past. Frequently, either one of the 4-H program's websites would not be available or functional, but the researcher found their social media pages. Browsing each 4-H program website and social media pages, the researcher identified the leadership or administrative board members of each 4-H country program and partner organizations. 4-H Ghana's leadership board is made up of five staff members: the executive director, the program chair, a lawyer, a human resources representative, a lecturer, and a journalist. 4-H Liberia

administrative board members include the national executive director, a program officer, a finance and administrative officer, and a gender and arts program officer.

Further, during the fact-checking process, the researcher discovered that 4-H Ghana and Liberia have partnered with several international organizations and agencies. Based on the information found, some of the partnerships were conducted over short-term projects (e.g., two years), while others have been ongoing. To be proactive and effective in selecting research subjects, the researcher selected organizations with which both 4-H Ghana and Liberia were currently partnering. One of the organizations that both 4-H Ghana and Liberia have partnered with over the past few years is AgriCorps. 4-H Ghana also partners with Texas A&M University's Borlaug Institute.

AgriCorps is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization (NGO) that “connects American Agriculture volunteers to the demand for experiential, school-based, agricultural education in developing countries” (*Homepage - AgriCorps*, 2015). Its founder is a rancher, businessman, and economist and has served nationally and internationally on many boards, including as an agriculture advisor to the U.S. Military in Iraq and an agricultural economist to the United Nations' World Food Programme in Liberia. He is passionate about agriculture and international development and founded AgriCorps to assist rural communities in thriving through school-based agriculture education (AgriCorps Inc, 2016).

The Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and Development is an organization named after Dr. Norman Borlaug, a scientist and international agriculture professor known as the Father of the Green Revolution. The Institute is housed in Texas A&M University's College of Agriculture and Life Science. It aims to empower small-holder farmers worldwide to fight against poverty and hunger through agricultural science (*About Us / Norman Borlaug Institute*

for International Agriculture and Development, n.d.). To accomplish this mission, the Borlaug Institution has created science-based agricultural development and training programs that assist small-holder farmers and rural communities in improving their agriculture production. One such program is the International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP), created in partnership with AgriCorps and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program recruits' fellows from various universities and trains them to become agricultural teachers in various countries. During the 2021-2022 academic year, IAEFP fellows were sent to Ghana and placed in various rural communities where they taught agricultural practices to 4-H Ghana youth (*International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP)*, 2022).

AgriCorps and the Borlaug Institute also have their respective leadership structures. AgriCorps has a leadership team comprising its founder or CEO, a director of finance, a chief of party, and an administrative assistant. The Borlaug Institute's International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP) leadership team comprises a program director, a program manager, and a program coordinator (Texas A&M, Borlaug). For this study, the researcher selected the executive directors and program officers of both 4-H Ghana and Liberia, the CEO of AgriCorps, and Borlaug Institute's IAEFP program coordinator.

Lastly, the researcher interviewed the IAEFP's Coordinator, who manages the implementation of IAEFP's projects in his host countries and communities. In total, eight people were selected and interviewed for this research study. The list of participants interviewed and their affiliated organizations for this research is included in Appendix A.

X. Measures and Procedures

1) Data Collection

The researcher collected data from primary and secondary sources to answer the overarching research questions. The primary data sources were the interviews of the selected eight research participants listed. The secondary sources of data were collected in a review of existing literature. Interviews were conducted in two rounds. The first round consisted of preliminary fact-checking with 4-H Ghana, Liberia, and AgriCorps leaders to generate general overview information of their programs and organizations. These three interviews were conducted during the fall 2021 (August-December) and spring 2022 (January-May) semesters, using the Zoom platform, and lasted an average of 60 to 90 minutes. Interview questions for this phase were open-ended and structured and ranged, on average, between twenty to thirty questions. Please see Appendix B for the list of the first round of interview questions.

The second round of interviews was conducted during the summer break of 2022 (June-July). This round of interviews consisted of the executive directors and CEOs of both 4-H country organizations and partner organizations, the two program officers of both 4-H organizations, and the program coordinator of IAEFP. In this round, the interview questions for the executive directors and CEOs were semi-structured and open-ended, had six questions, and lasted thirty to forty-five minutes. These interviews of both 4-H executives were focused on getting first-hand knowledge of the meaning of youth development within their respective countries and cultural context and their understanding of PYD. The interviewing of AgriCorps' CEO consisted of getting a deeper understanding of his partnership with 4-H Ghana and Liberia and the benefits both organizations gain. The interviews of 4-H Ghana and Liberia's program officers delving into the programming and activities their organizations develop to assist their

youths in experiencing positive development, the challenges they encounter while implementing these activities and programming in their respective countries, and lastly, the benefits of PYD informed programming and activities on their youth.

The second-round interview questions were semi-structured, open-ended, and ranged from nine to eleven². The interviews of IAEFP's program director and program coordinator focused on gaining an in-depth knowledge of their program's partnership with 4-H Ghana and its benefits. In addition to the interviews, the researcher collected parts of the necessary information via secondary sources. These secondary sources were written impact reports, program manuals, and end-of-year reports regarding both 4-H country organizations and partner organizations' activities. The reports and documents were requested and provided by interview participants from each organization. In addition to the program reports and manuals, journal articles written on the topic of PYD, youth development, and empowerment were acquired through internet searches, Penn State's library database, and scholarly journals databases (e.g., Sage Journal, Journal of Youth Development, JSTOR) These program documents and journal articles were reviewed and analyzed using thematic analysis method to extract vital information regarding the PYD concepts, its various frameworks, and models.

2) Data Analysis

In qualitative case study research, there are three main methods of analyzing data collected through qualitative methods: categorizing, connecting, and memos and displays (Maxwell, 2013). In qualitative case study research, there are three main methods of analyzing data collected through qualitative methods: categorizing, connecting, and memos and displays

² The second round of interviews are fewer in numbers (9-11) to allow for the researcher and interview to ask the participants as needed during interviews.

(Maxwell, 2013). Categorizing methods consist of coding and thematic analyses. Merriam (2016) defines coding as assigning designations to various aspects of your data so the researcher can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data. The designations can be words, letters, numbers, phrases, or combinations of these. Maxwell (2013) defines coding analysis as extracting relevant concepts or topics from the data collected and organizing them into categories. Once organized into these categories, the researcher can make comparisons and connections between the categories. Thematic analysis involves organizing the data collected into general themes. Other scholars define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Maxwell (2013) also adds that there are various approaches to conducting coding analysis, namely organizational, substantive, and theoretical approaches. The organizational approach involves the researcher identifying the key concepts or subjects related to the research study's topic before beginning data collection. The substantive coding approach describes the research participant's beliefs and concepts, while the theoretical approach organizes the data into existing frameworks or new ones developed by the researcher. The connecting analysis seeks to understand and contextualize the data and establish a relationship between different aspects of the data. Lastly, memos and displays are often comments, notes, and observations the researcher writes down throughout the data analysis process. They help the researcher establish connections between the data collected (Maxwell, 2013).

In this case study, the researcher used thematic and connecting analyses. To conduct the thematic analysis for this study, the researcher employed Braun & Clark's (2006) six-step approach to thematic analysis, shown in the figure below. These steps of thematic analysis involve the research: a) familiarizing him or herself with data, b) generating initial codes, c)

searching for themes, d) reviewing potential themes, e) defining and naming themes, and f) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The graphic below details how the researcher conducted the thematic analysis for this research study using the six-step approach mentioned above.

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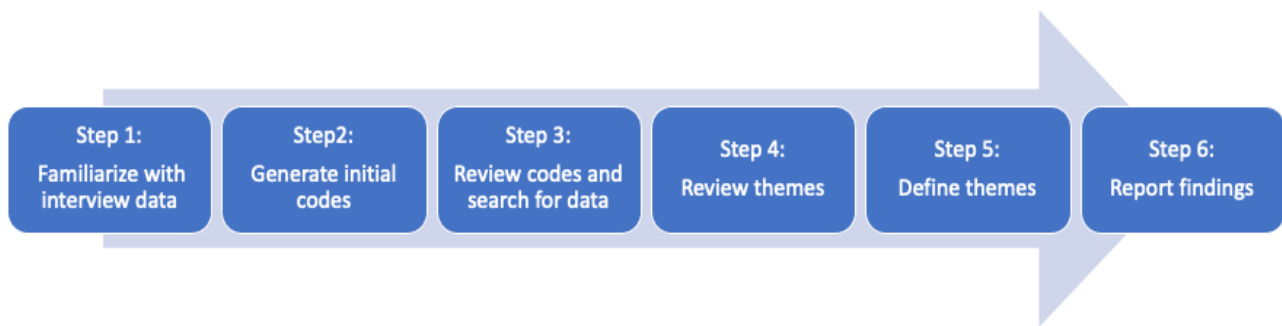


Figure 14 Thematic Analysis 6 phases process (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

In step one, the researcher began familiarizing with the data collected by listening to the interviews' video recordings while reading their respective transcripts. During this process, the researcher also reviewed the transcripts for errors or missing words that the Zoom automation and professional did not capture. The researcher also highlighted initial phrases or subcodes that stood out throughout the data. In step two, the researcher analyzed and reviewed the subcodes I highlighted and extracted keywords or concepts that emerged from them. In step three, the researcher analyzed and reviewed the codes to identify topics or themes of similarities between them. Once identified, the researcher grouped or clustered the codes with similar themes or issues. The researcher then proceeded to step four by reviewing the identified topics and

concepts and ensuring they aligned with their corresponding clustered codes, the data set, and the 4-H Formula for Success PYD framework. Moving on to step five, the researcher defined and named each theme identified in step four. Lastly, the researcher used the subcodes, codes, and themes I extracted from the data set to report the findings in the results chapter.

Upon drawing the various themes within the data set, the researcher also surveyed the data set for potential similarities and differences between the organizations represented. Using connecting analysis, the researcher established the relationship between selecting themes identified using thematic analysis. The data analysis processes were inductive and comparative. Zoom automatically generated interview transcripts during the recordings, providing the researcher with eight transcripts. The recordings and transcripts were stored in the researcher's password-protected Penn State Zoom cloud account. One primary challenge I encountered during the data collection process was contacting 4-H Ghana and Liberia officers. Although it is registered as a nonprofit organization in Ghana, 4-Ghana does not have a formal website. The organization has a Facebook page documenting its programming efforts, yet no contact information was provided. After a few attempts to reach out to 4-H Ghana via Facebook Messenger, the executive director shared his contact information with the researcher. As for 4-H Liberia, the organization has a formal website, yet the information provided is outdated, and the contact information did not provide any lead to reach out to the organization's leadership. Nevertheless, with the help of the AgriCorps leader, the researcher connected with 4-H Liberia's officials.

Another challenge I often faced while conducting the interviews, especially with international participants, was unstable internet connections. Interviewees residing in countries outside of the U.S. and constant internet instability caused Zoom's live transcription not to

record words or phrases accurately. While analyzing the video of the interviews, the researcher reviewed and edited the transcripts for any relevant information that was automatically recorded or missed in the transcripts.

XI. Ethical Consideration

To ensure that all activities undertaken throughout this case study research were conducted according to the appropriate ethical measures, the researcher submitted the research proposal to be reviewed by Penn State's Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the Office for Research Protections (ORP). The ORP determined this research study to be exempt from IRB review. Interview participants were above eighteen and did not experience adverse effects from this research study. No known risks were associated with this research study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could discontinue participation at any time. No rewards or incentives were provided to subjects for their participation throughout this study. As the primary investigator, interview recordings and transcripts were only accessible to the researcher. Also, this study's reporting did not include names or other forms of individual identification to protect the participants' identities.

XII. Validity

Validity in research refers to how credible, correct, and truthful a research study's findings, interpretation, and conclusion are (Maxwell, 2005). Merriam (2016) refers to validity as the trustworthiness of the research findings. In qualitative research, there are two threats that researchers must minimize, namely bias and reactivity. Both bias and reactivity threats occur when the researcher's perceptions and variability influence data analysis. To address and

minimize any unanticipated threat to the validity of this case study research, the researcher employed the triangulation method, which involves collecting data from various sources. To employ this method, the researcher interviewed two high-level officers from 4-H programs and their partner organizations and collected data from secondary sources, as discussed above. Furthermore, the interview questions were reviewed by experts in the field of youth development and 4-H programming. Upon completing their reviews, experts provided feedback used to restructure the questions so they could better capture the information that would help answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

This research study aims to explore how 4-H has implemented and adopted PYD programming within Ghanaian and Liberian cultural contexts. In this study, I sought to explore a) the specific activities 4-H Ghana and Liberia have developed to help their youth with their PYD assets and agencies, b) the benefits of PYD programming for African youth, and c) the challenges that 4-H Ghana and Liberia have encountered when implementing the PYD framework. Interviews were transcribed and coded using an inductive coding method. There were no predetermined codes before transcription and coding). From the coding process, I identified key themes, macro-level codes, and micro-level codes. These themes were broadly consistent across interviewees from both 4-H Ghana and Liberia, except for each country's program's youth development cultural contexts, the profiles of young people, and PYD-influenced activities and partnerships. All themes and codes are included in Tables 1 and 2. Lastly, the findings from the study are below.

Table 3. 4-H Ghana Themes & Codes

Themes	Codes	Subcodes
Youth Development in Ghana	Challenges	Unemployment
		Lack of quality education
		Lack of support
		Gender bias
	Adversity/Instability	Quick money schemes/business (Okada)
		Lack of interest in agriculture
		Risky behaviors (substance abuse, adolescent pregnancies)
	Skills Building	Life skills
		Positive lifestyle
		Growth
		Agriculture/farming
	Engagement	Youth engagement
		Camping

		Field trips
		Community building
		National service
		Patriotism
4-H Ghana Organization	4-H Ghana Presence	60,000 youths (8-18 years in-school), (18-25 years, Out-of-school)
		800+ clubs
		~ 2000 club advisors
		Headquarters: Koforidua 6 regions: East (Koforidua), North (tamale), Ashanty, Greater Accra, Volta, Central
	4-H Personnel	National leadership board (5 members)
		Extension officers
		District advisors
		Club advisors
	Skills Building	School Enterprise Garden
		Agriculture Ed/Farming crops (corn, rice, millet)
		4R program
		Home garden
		Raising livestock (chicken, rabbit, etc.)
		crop harvesting
		Market research
		Marketing
		Selling crop
		Business acumen
		Income generation
		Health Promotion/Awareness
		IT/technology
		Crafts (beads, keychains, etc.)
		Dance/Choreography
	Caring relationship with adults	Mentorship
		Supervision

		Guidance
		Relationship with club advisors
	Leadership	Club leadership
		Meeting presiding
		Club activities planning
		Record keeping
4-H Ghana Partnerships	Collaboration	Ministry of Food & Agriculture
		4-H National Council
		4-H Global
	Partnership	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
		AgriCorps
4-H Ghana Challenges	Challenges	Lack of familiarity with PYD
		No Financial Support
		No Support/Buy-in from the Ghanaian Government
		Once and Done Int'l partnership
		Unfavorable partnership terms
		No Evaluation system
	Family & Community Transformation	School feeding program
		Student to parents' knowledge transfer
		Improved farming practices
		Increased crop yields

Table 4. 4-H Liberia Themes & Codes

Themes	Codes	Subcodes
Youth Profile: Pre-Civil War	Engagement	Educated
		Engaged citizenship
		Responsible
		Focused
	Family/Community investment	supported
		cared for
Youth Profile: Post-Civil War	Challenges	
		Uneducated
		Untrained
		Lack of resources
		Lack of guidance/support
	Adversity/Instability	Vulnerability
		Unemployment
		Economic downturn
		Violence
		Child soldiers
		Marginalized youth
		Purposeless
		Survival
		Substance abuse
		Uneducated
		Untrained
Youth Development	Skill building	Life skills
		Language
		Positive thinking
		Sustenance
		Enrichment opportunities
	Empowerment/self-sustaining	Independence
		Potential
		Empowerment
		Maturity
	Values	Family Values /home training
		Quality schools/education
		Faith/religion/spirituality
4-H Liberia Pre-Civil War	Partnership	Peace Corps
	Collaboration	Ministries Ag/Education/Internal Affairs
	Life Skill Building	School Garden Initiative
		Agriculture Education
		Farming Practices
	Outcomes	Food Security

		Self-Sufficiency	
		Independence	
		Leadership	Club leadership
		Contribution	Knowledge transfer
		Impact	150 clubs
	27000 youth members		
4-H Liberia Post-Civil War			
	Life Skills Building	School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE)	
		Agriculture education/training	
		Enterprise school garden	
		Crops farming: Cassava, Cabbage, Corn	
		Home Entrepreneurship Project (HEP)	
		Agriculture leadership camp	
		Agriculture fair	
		Market linkage/	
		Entrepreneurship	
	Leadership	Club leadership	
		Meeting presiding	
		Club activities planning	
		Record keeping	
		Agriculture fair	
	Caring relationship with adults	Mentorship	
		Supervision	
		Guidance	
		Relationship with club advisors	
4-H Liberia Partnerships			
	Collaboration	Government Institutions (Ministry of Agriculture, Education)	
		4-H National Council	
		4-H Global	
	Partnership	AgriCorps	
		Ralph C. Norman Foundation	
World Food Program -			

		US African Development Foundation
		Cultivating New Agriculture Frontiers (CNFA)
4-H Liberia Impact	Empowerment/Self-Sufficiency	Independence
		Self-Sufficiency
		Entrepreneurship
		Independence
		Business acumen
		economic empowerment
	Values	Competence
		Character
		Confidence
		Caring
		Girl empowerment/gender equity
4-H Liberia Challenges	Challenges	Lack of familiarity with PYD
		No Financial Support
		No Support/Buy-in from the Ghanaian Government
		Youths' negative perception of Agriculture
4-H Liberia Outcomes	Family & Community Transformation	Youth participants as change agents
		Knowledge transfer
		Improved farming practices
		Increased crop yields
		Community cohesion

XIII. Youth development in Ghana & Liberia

1) Ghana

Ghana is a diverse country with many ethnic groups and languages. The interview with 4-H Ghana officers revealed that understanding of the meaning of youth development and the process of children growing into adults varies from person to person within the Ghanaian culture. The program officer shared that his understanding of youth development involves creating “programs and activities that will certainly lead the youth to become contributing members of society and responsible people in the future.” The executive director believes youth development engages youth to develop skillsets that will positively impact their growth, lifestyles, and overall development. The executive director also shared that they didn’t have a clear definition or regulation for youth development and engaging Ghanaian youth before starting 4-H Ghana. While working as a community initiative director for the Ghana Youth Authority, the director used to organize youth engagement activities within his municipality of placement. Their programming efforts aim to equip youth with life skills, patriotism, and connection with their peers. Examples of activities the Ghana Youth Authority and other government agencies organize to engage youth include employment workshops (i.e., carpentry, masonry), community projects (i.e., building schools/recreational facilities), field trips, camping, and Independence Day parades. Moreover, the program officer added that the Ghanaian government also organized programs and workshops to attract and encourage Ghanaian youth to learn more about agriculture, farming, and opportunities in this field.

Unfortunately, many Ghanaian youths negatively perceive agriculture today due mainly to the view that the field isn’t lucrative. Through agriculture initiatives, Ghanaian youths learn to farm and plant crops, rear animals, and get connected to job opportunities. Furthermore, the

executive director shared that the Ghanaian government also organized the National Service Scheme. The National Service Scheme program allows Ghanaian youths, 18 and above, to volunteer and serve their country. Youth volunteers get placed in different parts of the country and work in both the public and private sectors. Through their service, Ghanaian youth gain exposure to various employment opportunities and valuable skills (*About Us / Ghana National Service Scheme*, n.d.). The executive director went on to share that the Ghanaian government used to organize and host youth engagement programs often quarterly or several times yearly. However, over the past few years, the frequency of these programs has decreased substantially to one program per year and sometimes none. This lack of youth engagement programs at the national level can be attributed to the fact that the Ghanaian government and corporations do not prioritize Ghanaian youths' issues, the youth development sector is less lucrative, and resources are scarce. In the words of the program officer:

“So, I was saying that priority is the issue. Although resources are not much available, with a strong priority for the young people, they could have equipped them with resources. And what I see is that the available small resources are focused on physical and capital projects, like building a market, building a place of convenience, a public one, maybe a road. You see, those projects are so special to the government. So, you realize that programs like youth development attract much less.”

Instead, Ghanaian government officials are more interested in investing funding in more visible projects that will garner people's support in their favor during election campaigns. Nevertheless, the executive director shared that international and local non-profit organizations organize programs to assist Ghanaian youth in overcoming their challenges

2) Liberia

Youth development within the Liberian context, first and foremost, recognizes that young people have potential and skills as individuals. According to a 4-H Liberia program officer, youth development in Liberia involves developing strategies to *“help young people understand they have potential and skills.”* Additionally, youth development programs often employ strategies to assist young people with challenges they may encounter. Ultimately, youth development in Liberia is viewed as pushing young people in the right direction and supporting them in identifying their values. Three key institutions contribute to the development of Liberian youth. These include schools, family values, home training, faith, and spiritual belief systems. Schools and educational programs equip youth with the education, skills, and preparation they need to succeed in their careers. Family and faith-based institutions provide young people with home training and teachings that instill the cultural and religious values that will guide them through life.

a. Liberian Youth Profile

The profile of Liberian youths can be summarized into two periods: the pre-civil war and the post-civil era. The program officer shared that their families supported Liberian youth, were educated, and were active members of their communities and society during the pre-civil war period. They also took the necessary steps toward becoming responsible members of society. However, the positive outlook of Liberian youth was marred by the 14-year civil war that ravaged the country. The Liberian civil war began in 1989 and ended in 2003. During the war, many Liberian youths were recruited and forced to fight either for the government forces or the rebel troops to increase their numbers. Both young boys and girls were recruited to fight in the

war. However, boys, especially the ones who were uneducated, were recruited more often than girls because they were not aware of the facts surrounding the war and were promised food and promotion when they joined the war. Girl soldiers were frequently abducted and forced to become servants to their counterparts. Many were sexually abused, while others were made to fight in the war. Once soldiers, the child soldiers were brainwashed to torture and kill people, often “deemed” members of the opposing forces, but the majority were civilians (i.e., men, women, and even children). Child soldiers suffered and witnessed many atrocities throughout the Civil War. Some managed to escape from the armed forces, while others were unfortunate; however, those who were caught would be tortured and even killed in front of their peers to set examples (“Child Soldiers in Liberia: History, Honor, Hope,” n.d.).

Though the war ended in 2003, Liberia is still working to recover and rebuild itself. The program officer said that many Liberian youths today, especially past child soldiers, struggled to reintegrate into society and find their footing. Due to the war, they face challenges such as poverty, lack of access to quality education, and unemployment. Nevertheless, the Liberian government and national and international organizations have organized many rehabilitation initiatives to assist and empower Liberian youth. These efforts include technical and vocational training programs, cash, and financing assistance programs to help them start their businesses, and educational programs. 4-H Liberia is an example of an educational organization that seeks to support Liberian youth and the adversities they encounter.

XIV. Organization Background & History

1) 4-H Ghana

a. Background

4-H Ghana's executive director shared that 4-H Ghana's national headquarters reside in Koforidua, the capital city of the eastern region of Ghana. The executive director founded the organization in 2000 with two pilot clubs in Koforidua. The organization grew as more clubs were formed throughout the country. The executive director added that the 4-H Ghana program's goals reflect the Ghanaian government's efforts in fighting poverty and raising awareness about drugs, substance abuse, and life-altering diseases. 4-H Ghana strives to help foster and develop an interest in agriculture among Ghanaian youth, helping them acquire the necessary skills and agencies to become productive and self-reliant. The organization also aims to assist youth in gaining their education and transferring knowledge to their communities. Lastly, 4-H Ghana empowers its youth participants to become leaders who improve food security and contribute to Ghana's socio-economic growth and development

b. Organizational structure

4-H Ghana's organizational structure consists of four levels: a national advisory board, a regional and district management board, a club management board, and a participatory level. The national advisory board has five members, including a retired public servant who serves as the board's Chair; a lecturer at a local teaching training college who serves as the programming committee chair; a regional director of Ghana News Agency who serves as the communications and marketing chair, in the registrar's office at the Ghana School of Law serves as the finance

chair, and finally the executive director. The national advisory board also supports and advises 4-H advisors, leaders, and members at every level of the organizational structure.

Additionally, the national board fosters national and international stakeholders (i.e., humanitarian organizations) who desire to contribute to 4-H Ghana's mission. At the regional and district management levels, extension officers from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and Ghana Education Services (GES) serve as advisors to club advisors and leaders in their areas. They train club advisors and leaders and help coordinate and guide them on their school clubs' projects and activities. At the community level, club advisors and leaders (teachers and community members) volunteer to serve and supervise 4-H members to ensure they complete their selected club projects. Club advisors train and guide club leaders with the management of clubs and assist them in implementing and completing their projects and writing annual reports on the clubs.

c. Clubs

The executive director shared that 4-H Ghana Clubs are formed when a given school reaches out to the national office and expresses interest in gaining more insight into 4-H Ghana. Once a school has expressed interest, members of the national office visit the school and deliver a presentation on 4-H Ghana to the school's leaders, teachers, and students. After the meeting, students who desire to become members sign up and form the club. 4-H Ghana club members range from 8 to 25 years old and participate in their respective clubs for 3 to 4 years on average. On average, club members typically join the club from middle school to high school and meet after school on average for an hour to one hour and a half weekly or monthly based on the advisors' and members' availabilities. Most clubs have 30 to 40 members. If more students sign up to participate, two clubs could be at a given school. Each 4-H Club is supposed to have two

advisors, yet this number isn't often met because advisors often relocate or change schools. Nevertheless, most 4-H Club members have one club advisor who successfully guides them in completing their projects.

2) 4-H Liberia

a. Background and History

International organizations' volunteers introduced after-school youth development and enrichment programs in Liberia. 4-H programming specifically was presented and organized by Peace Corps volunteers in the 1960s. Peace Corps is a Humanitarian agency that recruits skilled American citizens to serve in more than 60 development countries by working on projects in various vulnerable communities, building relationships, engaging in cultural and knowledge exchange, and helping transform lives (*About Peace Corps*, n.d.). When Peace Corps volunteers arrived in Liberia, they established 4-H clubs in the communities of their placement. After 4-H clubs successfully engaged Liberian youth, the Liberian Ministries of Education and Agriculture partnered with the Peace Corps to implement 4-H programming and clubs in local schools nationwide. This support from the Liberian government helped increase the popularity and success of 4-H programming in Liberia (*History / 4H-Liberia*, 2018).

From the 1960s to the 1980s, 27,000 4-H Liberia members were recorded in 150 clubs nationwide. However, when the civil war began in the late 1980s, Peace Corps volunteers had to leave the country, and the Ministries of Education and Agriculture no longer supported the clubs. Consequently, 4-H programming came to a halt in the country. After the war ended, the Liberian government and many organizations put forth efforts to empower Liberian youth and help them overcome the challenges they faced because of the war. In 2016, 12 students from three different universities in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia, took the initiative and sought to establish a

program that would equip Liberian youth with practical leadership skills that would help them experience positive development and become self-sufficient (*History / 4H-Liberia*, 2018). While researching youth development programming, they found information about 4-H programming in the U.S. and establishing the program in Liberia. They contacted the national 4-H headquarters with their interest and were granted permission to re-establish their country's program (*History / 4H-Liberia*, 2018).

b. 4-H Liberia Organizational Structure and Presence

4-H Liberia's current leadership consists of a board of directors of 9 members with expertise in various fields such as education, law, and business: a national director, director of operations, program officer, and finance officer. To re-establish its clubs in 2006, 4-H Liberia's executive director shared that he and his team visited schools in various counties and shared information about the organization and its activities with school leaders. Once they received buy-in from school leaders, 4-H leaders organized an informational session with teachers, students, families, and community members. Students and their parents learned about the 4-H program, activities, and benefits during this meeting. If interested in starting clubs, students would sign up, and the school leaders would designate a teacher to oversee the new club members and activities. As the news of 4-H Liberia and its impact on club members spread across communities, some schools took the initiative to reach out to the national office with their interest in starting their clubs.

The executive director shared that 4-H Liberia has recently partnered with The Innovative Poverty Action (IPA) organization and Northwestern University, with the assistance of A of Agri Corps, to expand the research of 4-H programming across Liberia, study and evaluate the effectiveness of its PYD programming and impact on Liberian youth. Through this partnership, Western University, in collaboration with the Liberian Ministry of Education, selected local

schools to implement the 4-H programming. Northwestern partnered with IPA to collect data on 4-H Liberia programming at the selected schools and research its effectiveness in helping Liberian youth experience positive development. Through this partnership, 100 additional clubs have been reached.

XV. PYD's Framework and Implementation

4-H Ghana and Liberia have adopted the 4-H “Formula for Success” PYD framework (figure 2) to implement appropriate activities through which its club members will experience positive development. The 4-H “Formula for Success” framework depicts how 4-H youth experienced positive development. This framework has three sections: PYD inputs, PYD outcomes, and impact. These PYD inputs provide 4-H members with the opportunities to develop long-term relationships with caring adults, build life skills, and become meaningful leaders. These three key inputs influence the 4-H members' activities and foster positive development.

Both organizations train their club advisors and leaders and provide them with programming manuals containing instructions and procedures on how to plan and organize their projects and activities. 4-H Ghana directors shared four manuals they give to their club advisors: the Leaders manual, the School Garden and Nutrition manual, the Enterprise Garden manual, and the Gender manual. In the section below, I will describe the PYD and culturally appropriate activities that form the developmental contexts in which 4-H Ghana and Liberia assist youth participants in developing caring relationships with adults and building life and leadership skills.

1. Caring Relationship with adults

a. 4-H Ghana

4-H Ghana Clubs' advisors serve as caring adults to youth participants as they lead them in completing their projects. Advisors help 4-H Ghana members start their clubs' Enterprise School Gardens (ESG), through which they learn about agriculture education, improved farming skills, and growing various crops. The club advisors aren't paid to supervise 4-H Ghana clubs and members; they rather volunteer their time and expertise to invest in their students after school hours. As club advisors, the teachers mentor and guide the club members throughout starting the club, selecting, and completing their projects and activities. Through these interactions between advisors and members, both groups develop positive relationships. In the words of the 4-H Ghana program officer:

“The volunteers that we train who tend to be the advisors recruit these young people, share with them, try to build their rapport between them and the young people for them to see them as mentors, for them to see them as their friends, for them to see them as they are caring adults who they can run to in terms of any difficulty in terms of mentoring, in terms of any guidance. They build this long-term relationship with them”

b. 4-H Liberia

When 4-H Liberia and local school leadership agree to start clubs within the schools, 4-H Liberia collaborates with the Ministry of Education to select agriculture or science instructors or volunteer teachers in the schools or within the communities to help start the clubs and recruit students to become members. Once the clubs are up and running, the selected teacher volunteers and serves as a club advisor to club members. As club advisors, teachers guide and teach 4-H Liberia members in selecting, planning, and implementing their club's activities, meetings, and events. They also ensure that members establish the appropriate procedures and equipment and

work with community members to provide members with the necessary supplies to implement their club activities. Furthermore, the club advisor supervises members to ensure that they complete, keep a record of their activities, and organize their club activities (Liberia Department of Agriculture, n.d.). Through their interactions, club advisors develop connections with their club members and mentor them beyond their club topics, such as their interests and career goals. Through these connections, club members learn to relate with their club advisors and develop caring relationships with them.

2. Life Skills Development

a. 4-H Ghana

4-H Ghana has primarily adopted the agriculture education curriculum to assist its youth participants in developing life skills to create economic opportunities in agriculture and a prosperous future for themselves, their families, and their communities. 4-H Ghana has five goals to achieve through agriculture education. The first goal is to motivate 4-H youth to value and appreciate agriculture, and secondly, to teach them improved farming methods and practices that can contribute to an increased yield in food crops. With these new farming methods, youth become agents that help transform farming techniques and attitudes within their communities. As a result, youth and their families can have higher yields of crops to supplement food and animal products for their families and communities. Having sufficient food can lead to better nutrition, health, and a high standard of living in their communities.

As part of the agriculture education curriculum, 4-H Ghana implements its most popular and successful project, the School Enterprise School Garden (SEG). 4-H Ghana youth participants learn about agriculture and business through the SEG project. 4-H youth participants learn about agriculture and new and improved farming methods through the school enterprise garden. 4-H

Ghana requires each club to have a demonstration farm at their schools or within their communities to start a school garden where members learn and develop their agricultural skills. Under the guidance of their club advisors, extension, and agriculture educators, 4-H Ghana youth plant crops such as staple foods that most Ghanaians commonly consume, such as corn, rice, millet, lettuce, yam, etc. Once the club members harvest the crops, they learn to conduct market research and analysis to set the prices for their crops, identify potential buyers, and sell them their crops.

The income generated from the School Enterprise Garden is invested back into the clubs to purchase materials for activities such as farming tools, crop seeds, etc. 4-H Ghana national programming office also shared that some 4-H Ghana club members often choose animal husbandry and learn to raise small animals such as chickens, rabbits, and pigs. 4-H Ghana's program officer mentioned that aside from the School Enterprise Garden, 4-H Ghana has implemented other projects in topics unrelated to agriculture over the years. Such projects include Health, Informational Technology (IT), young girls' empowerment, and arts and crafts. Through the health project, 4-H Ghana seeks to raise their youth participants and their communities' awareness about healthy living and preventable diseases such as malaria, HIV, and AIDS, healthy lifestyle choices, and stress management.

Through the IT project, club members learn to use software applications such as Microsoft Word document and Excel. The Gender “Learning by Doing” project focuses on motivating and empowering 4-H Ghana young girls to engage in club activities, step into leadership roles, and develop life skills to become contributing members of society. As leaders, young girls learn to collaborate with their male peers. Moreover, some club members engage in arts and crafting projects using traditional crafts items such as beads to make products, bracelets, and key holders.

Another project 4-H Ghana implements is the Home Entrepreneurship Project (HEP), through which its youth participants further practice and master the skills they learn in their clubs. 4-H Ghana club members can start a home garden, do animal husbandry, or create arts and crafts projects through these projects. They then sell their HEP crops, animals, and crafts products and generate income for personal use.

b. 4-H Liberia

4-H Liberia aims to “empower young people to become self-sufficient citizens by developing their potential in premiere leadership, agricultural ability, and essential life skills.” 4-H Liberia envisions Liberia developing and transforming into “a wholesome, functioning, democratic society with an abundance of domestic food production” as 4-H Liberian youth grow to experience positive development and contribute to the development of their communities and Liberia (*Mission, Vision, Values / 4H-Liberia*, 2018). To accomplish this vision and help club members develop life skills, 4-H Liberia has implemented the School-Based Agriculture Education (SBAE) program (School-Based Agriculture Education, n.d.). SBAE is a century-old American extension educational system that disseminates new agricultural innovations into rural farming communities by teaching young people. SBAE aims to empower rural youth by supporting their academic, vocational, and life skills development through experiential and hands-on learning. It also aims to transform rural communities by transferring skills and agricultural innovations into these communities through schools (School-Based Agriculture Education, n.d.).

The SBAE system presents four methods to deliver agricultural innovations to communities to achieve this goal. The four methods include classroom instruction, a school demonstration

farm, an enterprise project, and leadership development. Through classroom instruction, 4-H Liberia club members are taught about the field of agriculture, various theories of agriculture education, introduced to new and improved methods of farming (planting and cultivating) crops and harvesting that differ from the traditional ones, and different careers that exist with this field. The club advisors are often tasked with delivering classroom instructions to club members. Additionally, 4-H Liberia collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture to recruit county extension officers to partner with 4-H Liberia club advisors and help teach the club members. According to the programming officer, 4-H Liberia requires each club to have a farm at their schools or within their local communities. This becomes the demonstration farm on which 4-H Liberia club members can practice the knowledge they learn during classroom instruction.

On the farm, club advisors, government extension officers, and international agricultural educators from international organizations guide 4-H club members as they practice the new innovative farming techniques learned during classroom instruction and plant cultural staple food crops such as corn, cassava, yam, and lettuce. During the practice sessions on the demonstration farms, local farmers within the communities are also invited to attend these sessions and learn new and improved farming methods. Additionally, one of the effective ways new farming techniques were taught during the demonstration farm sessions is to plant varieties of a particular food crop next using the traditional and novel farming techniques side by side. For example, AgriCorps' founder shared that a 4-H Liberia club may experiment with growing three varieties of cassava (the carita, orange blistry, and sava) on a mound, ridge, and flat ground. After harvesting the cassava, both club members and local farmers compare the farming techniques that yielded more cassava harvest. After witnessing the results, both groups can decide which strategies to adopt to grow their crops.

When 4-H Liberia club members harvest their crops, under the guidance of their club advisors, they conduct market research and analysis, as well as business planning to set their crop prices and sell them to local business owners within their communities. Once they sell their crops, they generate income that they reinvest in their clubs to fund their activities. This activity fulfills the school enterprise project that each 4-H Liberia club must have. Below is an example of a market linkage provided by 4-H Liberia program officer:

“One of our universities in the country is called Cuttington University. It's located in Bong County, one of the counties where we work. And particularly at this college, I was able to, in partnership with the clubs, buy their cassava and root and tubers any time they were produced. Now, this school has a market, and it's not one of the schools, so their school connects to other schools that 4-H in and tells them, "Look, any time you have root and tubers for sale, we've already got a place to sell it." That was a market linkage, a big relief for the schools that are producing root and tubers.”

Another project that 4-H Liberia has developed to help its members gain life skills is its gender education project (*Gender Education / 4H-Liberia*, 2018). Given that the culture within Liberia, like many African countries, tends to be patriarchal, 4-H Liberia seeks to help its members overcome the common belief that there are gender-based occupations within the workforce, educate them on viewing one another as partners and appreciating the value each member brings to their clubs irrespective of their gender, and empower them in engaging arts and crafts activities that could help them generate income for themselves and their families. Club members engage in activities including arts and crafts making (e.g., sewing handbags with clothing scraps and creating potholders from recycled items such as bottle caps). Club members then sell these products and generate income to support themselves and their families. Through

this project, 4-H Liberia seeks to empower girls to create opportunities to help them become self-sufficient and not depend on male partners' financial support to stay afloat (*Gender Education / 4H-Liberia*, 2018).

In addition to their club projects, 4-H Liberia club members are also required to have a Home Entrepreneurship Project (HEP) where they are expected to have a home garden and practice the farming techniques, they learn from the classroom instruction and demonstration farm sessions. The program officer added that 4-H Liberia club members can master their agricultural and entrepreneurial skills while maintaining individual home gardens. While working on their projects at home, they are also expected to keep records of their gardening activities and update their club advisors on their successes, failures, and progress. Once they harvest the crops from their home gardens, they can decide to keep them for their home consumption or to sell them and generate income for their personal use and sometimes support their families. Finally, the program officer highlighted the success story of one of the youth participants and showcased the transformative impact of HEP in their lives. Below is the expert of story:

“One of the successes is that just like seeing that some of the students now are making their own money for some of the materials that they need for school, like back and shoes. One of our students at one of the schools, Chaz, took away from the demonstration farm the training that he learned. And he went back to his home province site and made his pepper garden. And now he harvests and sells the pepper, and he's able to pay for his uniform and school fees.

c. Leadership Development

4-H Liberia and Ghana club members organize and manage their school clubs for leadership development. Club advisors encourage members to run for positions on the club leadership board and lead their meetings and activities. Members, in turn, elect their club officials or leaders. The leadership positions available include the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. As club officials, they learn parliamentary procedures and manage all aspects of their clubs' activities. Each of these club officials has distinct roles and responsibilities but works together to ensure their clubs function in an orderly manner and meet their club goals. In the words of the 4-H Liberia program officer:

"You've got to teach them (youth participants) leadership skills. As part of the program, all the schools that we are in, we also teach the children how to be good leaders through parliamentary procedures. We want them to be leaders in their communities. And they could engage in community work... and say, "Yes, in this community here, we need to create a business tomorrow or the next day." And put friends together and colleagues together to take up some development work within their community."

What's more, both 4-H club members are also required to attend club meetings. During these meetings, club officials lead members to schedule their club meetings, brainstorm, plan, and strategize their club projects and recreational activities (Liberia Department of Agriculture, n.d.). Serving as club officials allows youth participants to take the initiative and responsibility for their clubs' success. Additionally, having the HEP enables them to develop leadership skills while working independently on their chosen project. Lastly, 4-H Liberia organizes an agricultural fair once per year and leadership camps once to twice yearly that club members attend. During these camp gatherings, members participate in leadership activities and learn how to become influential leaders within their clubs and communities.

At the end of each academic year, 4-H Ghana and Liberia organize culminating events to showcase their youth participants' efforts and talents. 4-H Ghana holds the Leadership, Education, Agriculture, and Development (LEAD), where youth from all the clubs at all levels gather and have debates about various topics among one another and display their public speaking and leadership skills. In the words of the executive director:

“And the programs we have, for instance, the lead contest, it is modeled from the Future Farmers program in the US where the kids engage themselves in a debate, and they recite the agricultural creed, which makes them gain a lot of knowledge and begin to teach people that they're independent. Those programs make people see that 4-H has a lot to offer the kids in trying to make them more resilient and independent, to be able to lead their own lives and programs.”

Similarly, 4-H Liberia organizes an agricultural fair for a couple of days once per year. The fair aims to gather youth participants to present their best crop harvests and compete against one another for prizes. At the fair, youth participants get to talk about their clubs, projects, and activities to national, regional, and county-level leaders who are invited to attend.

XVI. Programming Outcomes

1. 4-H Ghana Outcomes

The three critical inputs included in 4-H Ghana programming and activities result in youth participants' engagement and experience in the positive development process. When 4-H club members experience positive development, they develop the five competencies, popularly referred to in the PYD literature as the “5 Cs,” namely competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. 4-H Ghana youth participants become competent in agriculture, farming, and entrepreneurship by participating in their various club projects. They gain critical thinking,

problem-solving, decision-making, self-motivation, and business acumen skills. By leading their clubs and projects, they develop character traits such as honesty, integrity, and humility and gain leadership skills such as planning and organizing, goal setting, record-keeping, wise use of resources, and resiliency. Moreover, as 4-H Ghana youth participants engage with one another, they learn to connect and relate to one another through teamwork, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

Equipped with their life skills and encouraged by caring adults, 4-H Ghana youth participants also develop a sixth “C” Contribution. Contribution corresponds to the positive impact youth can bring to their lives, families, and communities. When 4-H Ghana youth learn the innovative methods and techniques of farming on their school demonstration farm, they can replicate them in their home gardens and teach their parents and family members, who are also often farmers. When the parents and farmers within the communities try new methods and observe the improvement of their farms and crop yields, they implement them throughout the communities. Through this knowledge transfer, 4-H Ghana youth participants contribute to improving their families' livelihoods and developing their communities. Ultimately, youth who experience positive development, build their assets and competencies, and contribute to the development of society are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and activities (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2013).

A successful project that 4-H Ghana clubs also implemented in their communities that demonstrates PYD's sixth C's is the school feeding program through which they engage in community service and volunteerism. In this program, 4-H Ghana youth participants contribute to their communities by using the income or produce yielded from the enterprise garden to provide meals for students from various schools within their communities. Parents, community

members, and leaders volunteer to cook the meals. Through this program, 4-H Ghana youth participants learn to care and look out for one another, their peers, and their communities. Through their activities, parents and community members alike also learn about 4-H Ghana and witness the impact the organization makes in the lives of young people. As more youth participants and parents learn about 4-H Ghana, youth enrollment and club attendance also increase (*4-H Ghana Overview*, n.d.) Furthermore, through this feeding program, 4-H Ghana youth learn to empathize, show compassion, and care for the less fortunate within their communities.

Moreover, 4-H Ghana youth spend most of their time working with their club advisors. In the interview, the executive director shared that 4-H Ghana advisors view PYD as revolutionary as a framework that is still novel to them. When advisors learn about PYD and implement its practices with their youth, they witness the transformation it brings to their classroom settings and their relationship with their students.

2. 4-H Liberia outcomes

When 4-H Liberia youths develop life and leadership skills and experience a positive, caring relationship with teachers at school and adults within their communities, they also develop the six core competencies that are well-known within the PYD literature. Through the SBAE program, School Enterprise Garden, and home garden, 4-H Liberian youth participants become knowledgeable and skilled in gardening, farming, and agriculture. With more practice over time and learning to start their club or personal agricultural enterprise, they become competent in agriculture entrepreneurship and business. In the words of 4-H Liberia's executive director:

“We are teaching young people how to think creatively. For example, the teachers do the demonstration, and the students see and then put it into practice. And then there are some things

that we do not teach our children, but we provide them to be able to think outside the box. For example, I told you I cannot tell a 4-H club member, "You have to plant cucumber." I'm not the one to do that. Yeah. The child must be able to go and do research. What exactly they must plant. And then if, for example, he plants something that doesn't do well within a club period, he would be able to learn from his mistakes and improve on it the following year."

The program officer added that through these activities, they develop the ability to think critically, research the types of crops they would like to grow in their school or home gardens and be creative about marketing their crops to attract potential clients. Moreover, while managing their clubs' projects and activities, they lead their club meeting and activities, develop connections with their peers during the fair and leadership camp events, learn to communicate their ideas and thoughts effectively, use public speaking, develop other character traits such as integrity, humility, teachability, persistence, endurance.

XVII. Partnerships

1) 4-H Ghana

To strengthen its programs and projects and better serve its youth participants, 4-H Ghana has partnered with various international organizations. Two current international organizations partnered with 4-H Ghana are AgriCorps and The Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture through its International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program (IAEFP). AgriCorps' mission is to connect American agricultural educators to the demand for experiential and school-based agricultural education in developing countries (AgriCorps.org). 4-H Ghana assisted AgriCorps in establishing its program in Ghana. Through this assistance, 4-H Ghana created a partnership where AgriCorps places its agricultural educators in various communities where 4-H Ghana clubs reside. Agricultural educators train and assist district and club advisors on PYD

principles and improved agricultural practices. Similarly, Texas A&M University's Borlaug Institute is an organization that aims to help elevate small-holder farmers out of poverty and hunger through agricultural science. The organization created the IAEFP program in partnership with AgriCorps, which trains students from various American universities to become agriculture extension officers and agricultural teachers and places them in different schools in Ghana (Borlaug Institute, IAEFP).

IAEFP fellows also trained and supported 4-H Ghana club advisors and leaders. In communities, local leaders support 4-H Ghana clubs by providing plots of land, farming tools, and crop seeds to help students start their schools' Enterprise Gardens. The Borlaug Institute placed its student fellows with knowledge and experience in agricultural education in communities, where they taught and shared with 4-H Ghana club members and local farmers the best agricultural methods and practices to increase crop yields, minimize spoilage, support farming communities (Facebook.com, Borlaug Institute). The students' fellows also trained 4-H Ghana advisors and leaders on developing these best practices. Through these partnerships, 4-H Ghana leaders and club advisors better understood PYD and developed the right tools to serve their youth participants better.

2) 4-H Liberia

Since resuming in 2006, the executive director stated that 4-H Liberia has partnered with various organizations and agencies to strengthen its capacity and programming efforts. The first partnership 4-H Liberia made was with the national 4-H council to re-establish its programming. According to the executive director, the national 4-H council provided them with online learning resources, with which they started the first few clubs in 2006 and assisted the country in organizing the 4-H Global, a network of 4-H programming across the world. Through this

network, 4-H Liberia connects with 4-H programming across Africa, such as 4-H Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Gambia. The executive director also added that the leaders of active 4-H programming across Africa convene once or twice yearly to learn the best programming and PYD best practices to improve their country's programs. Although the national council does not fund 4-H programming in Africa, the executive director shared that the council has connected them to potential international organizations that have partnered with 4-H Liberia. Another partnership was established in 2012, with the Ralph Norman Foundation and the World Food Program granted 4-H Liberia funding to implement programming that taught its youth participants agriculture education, leadership, and community engagement.

In 2014, the United States African Development Foundation granted the organization funding, which helped 4-H Liberia to establish the school enterprise garden programming, scale to additional cities, and host its first leadership camp and agriculture fair. Furthermore 2016, AgriCorps officially began its partnership with 4-H Liberia, providing funding to the Liberian organization and American agriculture educators to teach school-based agriculture education to Liberian youths and train staff members and club advisors. In 2020, The Cultivating New Frontier in Agriculture granted AgriCorps funding to further assist 4-H Liberia in implementing the school-based. Lastly, 4-H Liberia collaborates with the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture extension officers to teach its club advisors, youth participants, and farmers agriculture techniques. However, 4-H Liberia has no formal partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture. Nevertheless, 4-H Liberia has partnered with AgriCorps, The Innovative Poverty Action (IPA) organization, and Northwestern University, with the assistance of Agri Corps, to expand the research of 4-H programming across Liberia and research and evaluate the effectiveness of its PYD programming and impact on Liberian youth.

XVIII. Programming Presence and Impact

1) Programming Presence

Today, over 350 4-H Ghana clubs are located throughout six Ghana regions, servicing over 60,000 Ghanaian youth, and have more than 2,000 club advisors. Most 4-H Ghana clubs have 30 to 40 members, and club members range from 8 to 25 years old and participate in their respective clubs for 3 to 4 years on average. According to the 4-H Liberia executive director and programming officer, there are currently 157 clubs located in seven counties throughout the country. The counties that 4-H Liberia clubs are currently present in include the following: Montserrado, Bomi, Gbaporlu, Margibi, Bong, Lofa, and Nimba. Each club has an average of 30 youth participants, ranging from 10 to 25 years old. Through its PYD-informed programming, 4-H Liberia currently engages more than 4000 youth and 157 club advisors across Liberia.

2) Programming Impact

a. Impact on youth participants

4-H Ghana's executive director shared that it is common for former youth participants to become volunteers when they become adults and leave their clubs because of the positive impact the organization is having on its youth participants. I also had the opportunity to interview a former club 4-H Ghana youth participant. This current university student volunteers at the national office and has helped start multiple 4-H Ghana clubs in various cities. During the interview, the *former club member* shared that "*4-H Ghana has a way of attracting youth with its positive impacts and motivating its youth to contribute to the organization and their communities*". More Ghanaian youth should have the opportunity to experience positive

development and become healthy, productive, and engaging agents that transform their communities and their country, Ghana.

When 4-H Liberia was still operating the school garden initiative during the pre-civil war period, many youth members gained life skills in agriculture. Governmental agencies, institutions, and infrastructures were pillaged or destroyed during the civil war. The Unemployment rate was high, food was scarce, and many Liberians had to abandon their homes and livelihoods and flee to neighboring countries for safety. Some remaining in the country were former members of 4-H Liberia and had to employ the agriculture and farming skills they developed to grow food and sustain themselves. According to the 4-H Liberia director:

“...so those people that they trained in agriculture in the '60s through the 4-H program. From 1960 to 1990 is about 30 years period. So, some people who never had food depend on their 4-H idea, because in the war, you cannot just find food around, so you must be able to plant food to grow. So, some of our 4-H club members use their skills to be able to plant food and sustain themselves during the war”

Furthermore, both 4-H programming activities provide educational opportunities to Ghanaian and Liberian youth in urban and rural communities. Many Liberia youths, often in their mid to late teens and early twenties, live in poverty, and their parents can't afford to pay for their education. Consequently, they become young farmers in rural communities or migrate to bigger cities for employment opportunities. Those remaining in their rural communities are often recruited to participate in 4-H Liberia activities. With their newfound life skills (i.e., farming, business, research, market linkage, seller-client relationships, marketing, etc.), they are empowered to start their business and be on the courses to become self-sufficient and financially independent without relying on their families or relatives. The income that 4-H Liberia youth

participants generate from their school enterprise gardens is invested back into their clubs to fund their projects and activities and purchase the necessary resources and equipment. The income they generate from their home gardens or HEP is used to buy their personal school supplies and uniforms, pay for their siblings' school feed and supplies, or support their parents.

b. Impact on club advisors

The 4-H Ghana executive director also spoke about the impact the organization has on their club advisors. For example, in Ghana's educational system, students receive corporal punishments when they disobey classroom rules or their teachers' orders. By implementing PYD principles in their classroom settings, club advisors discovered new ways to appropriately discipline their students without resorting to physical punishment. They also noticed that their students became more comfortable and confident about approaching and communicating with them. Through their weekly interactions and guidance, 4-H Ghana youth participants developed a caring relationship with their advisors who supervised and guided their projects. In addition, club advisors started spreading the word about 4-H Ghana and the PYD framework to their colleagues. As news spread about 4-H Ghana, more clubs are formed.

4-H Liberia is well-recognized across the country. Many of the early 4-H Liberia alumni serve in leadership positions whether in government, organizations, or companies today. Some even serve on the 4-H Liberia board, while others are currently teaching at the schools that host 4-H clubs. d When teachers are selected to become club advisors, 4-H Liberia and its international partners would train them on the 4-H programming, PYD, SBAE and how to effectively advise their club members and guide them on their projects. There were times when the selected club advisors would be a volunteer teacher within the community who didn't

necessarily have a scientific background or one in agriculture education. Hence the training assists the teachers gain new knowledge on youth development and engagement, agriculture education, techniques, and methods, become skilled at teaching SBAE and experiential learning to their students.

c. Impact on local communities.

As mentioned above, extension officers and club advisors often invite local farmers and community members to attend the agriculture practical sessions that 4-H Ghana and Liberia clubs organized on their school demonstration farms. These sessions transfer novel and innovative agricultural techniques and methods directly to the local communities. Although the Ministry of Agriculture in many African countries place extension officers within regions and counties, each extension officer can be assigned to many farmers in several communities and villages. Plus, many farmers in rural African communities often do not have the means of communication devices to communicate with extension officers constantly. They often would have to travel to their regional or county offices to request extension officers. AgriCorps founder shared that the direct knowledge transfer from both 4-H programming club members to their families and communities has proven to be a more effective way for international organizations and partners to reach local farmers' communities than through the county or regional extension officers.

d. Impact on families.

When 4-H Ghana and Liberia youth participants choose to have gardens as their HEP, they further practice the farming techniques they are taught during their club meetings and practice sessions on the demonstration farms. When youth participants harvest their crops, and their parents witness their children's harvest, they notice that their children outproduced them using their new farming techniques compared to traditional methods. With this comparison, they often ask their children to teach these new techniques to implement them in trial runs. In the words of one of the 4-H Liberia's executive director

"...So, in fact, sometimes the parent will ask their child, "Why you have to do it this way?" And then the child will have to tell the parent, "We do it this way because we want to get this done." Over the period of time, they will be able to sit and see with the child the result of it. Sometimes, when they see the result, "Teach me how you get it done."

Once their parents see improvement in their family farm's crop yields and the benefits of their children's participation in 4-H clubs, they adopt these innovative techniques and motivate their children towards continued involvement in 4-H Ghana and Liberia. In this manner, 4-H Ghana and Liberia youth participants become the direct extension officers to their parents, families, and communities.

XIX. Overall Impact: Community Cohesion

When 4-H Ghana and Liberia club projects and activities produce plentiful harvests and are successful, they transform the lives of youth participants and their families. This draws the attention of community leaders who are motivated to support the 4-H Liberia mission when they witness the positive transformation. For example, community leaders and members would often

donate plots of land and seeds to 4-H Liberia clubs for members to start their demonstration farms, and parents would provide land from their farms for their children to expand their home gardens. They would also share with neighboring communities the news about 4-H Liberia programming and the positive impact that the programming had on theirs. Club leaders would also spread the word about 4-H Liberia to their fellow teachers at schools within their communities. The more the word spreads about 4-H Liberia across communities and counties, the easier it is for its officials to develop partnerships with schools, start new clubs, reach more Liberian youth, and help them experience positive development. More importantly, when 4-H Liberian youth experience positive development, they leverage their agriculture knowledge and life and leadership skills to become change agents that improve their families' lives and contribute to the development of their communities. This highlights the presence of the 6th “C” within 4-H Liberia programming outcomes. Ultimately, as 4-H Ghana and Liberia youth participants contribute to the development of their communities, their parents, community leaders, and members also invest in their positive development and ultimate success.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, & Conclusion

XX. Discussion

This qualitative study aimed to explore ways that PYD has been implemented in the non-Western nations of Ghana and Liberia. Ghana and Liberia have successfully implemented the 4H "Formula for Success" PYD framework to assist their youth participants in experiencing positive development. Using the 4H formula for Success framework, they have focused on ensuring their youth participants develop life and leadership skills and meaningful relationships with caring adults. To this end, they have primarily implemented an agricultural education-based curriculum through which they've developed activities such as the School Enterprise Garden and the Home Entrepreneurship (HEP) projects. Through the School Enterprise Garden projects, 4-H Ghana and Liberia youth participants learn to start a garden or a farm for their clubs and plant and harvest various crops such as vegetables and roots. After harvesting the crops, they learn to conduct market research and analysis to scope out vendors to sell their crops and generate revenue. They, in turn, invest this revenue into funding their clubs and activities.

For their HEP projects, the youth participants can decide whether they want to have personal gardens in their homes to perfect their farming skills and harvest crops through which they can also sell those crops to generate income for their personal use. Others can choose to have other projects, such as traditional arts and crafts, such as beads, that they can sell, generating income for all their needs. Through their school and home entrepreneurship projects, they learn how to start and run their club and individual businesses, become good stewards of

their finances, make wise financial decisions, and run their clubs efficiently. Outside of these projects, both organizations organize other projects, such as girl empowerment, to advocate for girls and gender equity among youth participants.

1) 4-H Programming Comparison: Ghana vs Liberia

When comparing 4-H programs in Ghana and Liberia, Liberia started its 4-H program with the assistance of Peace Corps volunteers in the 1960s, thus having a long history of implementing PYD activities and building international partnerships. Although Liberia had terminated its 4-H country program because of the civil war, 4-H Liberia had a longstanding impact across various generations. As shared by the executive director, teachers serve as club advisors to current 4-H Liberia youth participants who were former participants in the 1960s to the 1980s. The skills they learned as club members allowed them to sustain themselves during the Civil War period. Additionally, the impact that 4-H Liberia programming had on them motivated them to volunteer as club advisors today. Because of this familiarity and consistency over time, PYD-informed programming is welcomed within Liberian educational settings. Teachers who were former 4-H Liberia youth participants are enthusiastic about promoting the organizations' efforts within their schools and community settings and encouraging their students to participate in club activities.

On the other hand, 4-H Ghana has existed since 2000 and has been working to establish itself as an impactful youth development organization. Throughout the past two decades, 4-H Ghana leaders have promoted PYD and attempted to educate school administrators and teachers about the benefits of this framework. 4-H Ghana has built a robust collaborative network that has aided its efforts. What sets Ghana apart from other 4-H programs in Africa is its connection to the National 4-H Global as the executive director is a member of the advisory board for 4-H

Global, with 4-H program leaders across the globe and various international partners. The organization has also partnered with multiple International stakeholders. Although 4-H programming was introduced in Ghana later than in Liberia, 4-H Ghana has reached more Ghanaian youth than 4-H Liberia, based on numbers provided by their respective executive directors. This impact is mainly due to 4-H Ghana having consistently kept its programs running since starting in 2000, whereas 4-H Liberia has shut down its operations due to the Civil War in the 1980s and rebuilt the program from the ground up in 2006. Over the past few years, 4-H Ghana has implemented diverse projects beyond the school-based agriculture education-focused school enterprise and home entrepreneurship projects.

Compared to the 4-H programming in the United States, both 4-H Ghana and Liberia are implementing foundational agriculture extension-focused curricula through which 4-H programming began in the United States. As discussed in the literature review chapter, 4-H started between the late 1800s and early 1900s with agriculture education clubs where educators and extension officers taught rural youth new methods and techniques of farming that they transferred to their parents and community members who were also parents. Although the National 4-H Council has expanded its programming efforts beyond agriculture education, 4-H Ghana and Liberia continue to utilize this curriculum. In most African countries, such as Ghana and Liberia, agriculture still constitutes a relevant sector that contributes significant shares to their countries' economies and Gross Domestic Products (GDPs). However, programs leaders from both countries shared that the youth population in the countries views the agriculture sector as outdated and not lucrative. In response to this view, both 4-H Ghana and Liberia have concentrated on implementing agricultural-based projects to promote an appreciation for

agriculture among their youth participants while also gaining valuable life skills that enable them to become self-sufficient.

2) 4-H Ghana and Liberia Challenges.

a. 4-H Ghana

4-H Ghana leaders spoke at length about their organization's challenges as the only PYD organization within the country. The primary challenge the organization struggles with is the lack of sufficient funding to run its operations. Initially, the National 4-H Council assisted the executive director in securing seed funding through various sources such as Bill and Melinda Gates and Dupont foundations to help start the organization. However, as the organization seeks to expand its network throughout the country, 4-H Ghana has had challenges securing consistent funding support from internal (i.e., national Ghanaian government) and external (international humanitarian agencies and organizations) sources throughout the years. Similarly, 4-H Ghana does not have a formal partnership with the Ghanaian government and does not receive financial support from it. During the interview, the executive director explained that it had been difficult for them to get buy-ins from governmental agencies, mainly because PYD is a new and unfamiliar educational framework in Ghana. Additionally, nonformal education opportunities such as after-school learning enrichment programs are novelties that are not institutionalized within the Ghanaian educational system. Instead, they are often education organizations and centers created by private individuals who see the need to prepare and empower Ghanaian youth to succeed in the global marketplace.

An example of such a learning center is the Ghana Code Club. Created in 2015, Ghana Code Club is an after-school program created to leverage information technology knowledge tools such as computer programming as tools to empower and ensure that every Ghanaian youth "has access to the skills they need to thrive in our increasingly digital world" (Ghana Code Club, n.d.). Additionally, it is often challenging for school leaders or teachers to volunteer their time after regular school hours to help form 4-H Ghana clubs because of the additional time and effort required. Although 4-H Ghana has received some funding through partnership international partners to implement, the executive director shared that the funding is not equitably shared within the partnership and that most of the funding is kept within the organization. For example, Western educators are often paid more than 4-H Ghana officials who work alongside them and may even share similar responsibilities on a select project. Once a project is concluded, 4-H Ghana is often left to resume struggling to look for new funding opportunities

Moreover, some challenges that are more common in Western Africa (i.e., a lack of financial resources) present unique challenges to the success and sustainability of programs implementing the PYD concept through large-scale organizations. 4-H Ghana executive director also shared that private sector organizations most often do not financially support youth organizations in Ghana as they do not view investing in the positive development of young people as lucrative or profitable. Consequently, this lack of funding has forced 4-H Ghana to reduce the training services it provides to its regional and club advisors. 4-H Ghana officers from the national office previously traveled to the regions, districts, and communities to train their clubs' advisors, teachers, and volunteers. However, they have resolved to offer them Zoom training twice a year.

Additionally, they cannot provide any support or incentives to teachers who serve as club advisors. It has also been a challenge for 4-H Ghana to demonstrate the impact of its work, as the organization currently does not have any system to evaluate the effectiveness of its programming efforts and its implications for youth participants, club advisors, and communities. Finally, 4-H Ghana often finds it challenging to retain club advisors as teachers who usually switch schools or move away from their hometowns restrict the number of caring adults that club members have access to and can benefit from within the organization

b. 4-H Liberia

As mentioned in the results, 4-H Liberia has tremendously impacted Liberian youth since restarting its programming in 2006. Yet, this success didn't come without challenges and adversities. According to the executive director, the primary challenge that 4-H Liberia faces is the lack of funding to support its programming efforts throughout the country. As a non-profit organization, 4-H Liberia relies heavily on funding from international partners. However, the funding granted to the organization is often given to implement specific projects and capacity training, which limits the activities that 4-H Liberia can implement to engage youth participants. An excellent example of this is 4-H Liberia's partnership with AgriCorps. The common goal of this partnership is to implement school-based agriculture education and facilitate the knowledge transfer of innovative agriculture practices from young people into their communities.

Additionally, the lack of funding does not allow 4-H Liberia to train its club advisors or support its clubs consistently. 4-H Liberia does not have a longstanding partnership with the Liberian government and youth-related agencies such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which limits the organization from reaching more Liberian youth. Lastly, 4-H Liberia has difficulty convincing youth participants to appreciate agriculture. The program officer shared that their

youth participants often complained about how laboring and difficult farming can be because they do not have advanced machinery to assist them. Instead, they must farm and cultivate their gardens by hand, supporting young people's views about agriculture. Liberian youth's negative perceptions of agriculture make it challenging for 4-H Liberia leaders to recruit them to join local clubs. Ultimately, 4-H Liberia must address these challenges to scale its programming efforts

3) 4-H Ghana and Liberia Successes

Despite their challenges, 4-H Ghana and Liberia are transforming the lives of thousands of Ghanaian and Liberian youth participants, teachers, and communities. Both 4-H Ghana and Liberia executive directors shared that compared to students in Western countries, their students who attend public schools often do not have the opportunity to participate in learning enrichment opportunities such as after-school clubs, job shadowing, and internships. Engaging their youth participants in PYD-informed programs bridges the education equity gap between young people in major cities and low-income and rural communities. Additionally, both country programs' leaders added that the Ghanaian and Liberian educational systems are usually structured so that teachers transfer knowledge to their students, who are then expected to memorize and regurgitate their understanding and mastery of that knowledge gained during exams. However, as they expand their PYD-informed programming efforts throughout their respective countries, 4-H Ghana and Liberia's leaders are educating stakeholders (i.e., schoolteachers, principals, district leaders) they partner with within the educator sector on the benefits of partnering with PYD organizations to enhance and optimize their students' learning potentials. Once these stakeholders witness the positive impact of 4-H Ghana and Liberia's programs on their students,

they readily share the news about both programs with their networks of educators and even recommend schools that 4-H Ghana and Liberia could potentially partner with.

Through implementing PYD programming, 4-H Ghana and Liberia are helping transform their countries' education systems and challenging the idea that students should only learn through rote learning, such as memorization and passing exams. They introduce experiential and enriching learning opportunities, such as after-school programs, to primary education settings. By promoting PYD in school settings, 4-H Ghana and Liberia leaders also shared that club advisors (i.e., teachers) noticed changes in their approaches to engaging with their students. They are more communicative and patient with the students and do not often use corporal punishment to solve classroom behavioral problems. As a result, students are more comfortable approaching teachers for guidance on their club projects.

Furthermore, 4-H Ghana and Liberia are helping their youth participants gain a head start by equipping them with life and leadership skills and mentorship opportunities. Many of their youth participants live in rural and poverty-stricken communities and depend on their parents, who are often small-scale farmers, for their education needs, such as purchasing school uniforms and supplies. If parents can't afford to meet their Children's school needs, 4-H Liberia and Ghana participants can leverage the income they generate from their HEPs to support their children's education and sometimes pay siblings' school fees. Lastly, through their participation in their clubs, 4-H Ghana and Liberia youth participants are building long-lasting connections with one another beyond the boundaries of daytime classrooms, communities, towns, cities, and provinces. These connections are the ones they can leverage in the future to build businesses, organizations, and institutions that can help transform systems and structures within their communities and beyond.

XXI. Implications

Given the limited research surrounding PYD-influenced organizations and activities among African youth, this study provides Western youth development researchers and practitioners with more evidence of PYD-informed programming in Africa. Whenever I mention the topic of this study to American professionals within higher education and youth development, most are often taken aback and quite surprised about 4-H programming in Africa. Their surprise reactions are attributed to Western youth development scholars and professionals' lack of awareness of 4-H programs in African countries. 4-H programs in the Global South are not well promoted by the National 4-H Council. Additionally, based on the testimonials provided by both 4-H Ghana and Liberia, it seems that they don't receive much support from the National 4-H Council beyond sharing programming resources such as manuals to help them begin their activities. Hence, the more this study is shared and reviewed within Western youth development and educational spaces, the more exposure 4-H Ghana, Liberia, and other country programming across the continent receives. With more awareness about implementing the concept of PYD in countries in the Global South, Western and non-Western youth development scholars and practitioners can begin to engage in discussions about strategies to include diverse racial and ethnic youth in the U.S. and the Global South. Scholars should research the critical role racial and cultural identities and values play in the positive development of diverse racial and ethnic young people.

Further, this research study proves that PYD can be implemented successfully through youth development organizations in African countries. It can also serve as a programming roadmap for youth development professionals in Africa and the Global South interested in learning more about PYD and starting 4-H programming within their country. 4-H Ghana and Liberia leaders. Additionally, this research is also valuable to African youth because it shows

they have the potential to develop the life skills and competencies to become leaders who can positively transform their lives and communities. The study demonstrates the positive impact of education and learning enrichment programs on African youths' youth development process. It also reinforces the importance of all young people having access to quality education and learning enrichment opportunities irrespective of gender and societal background.

XXII. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research study, it is clear there are many areas where 4-H Ghana and Liberia can target their efforts to overcome the challenges they face. To improve and scale their programming efforts and reach more young people in their respective countries, I am providing below a list of recommendations that leaders of both organizations and country programs should take into consideration:

- Collaborate with the 4-H national council to organize workshops to update and train 4-H Ghana, Liberia, and other country programs' leaders on its newly adopted organizational PYD frameworks (i.e., the new 4-H thriving model)
- Develop a comprehensive protocol that will enable country program leaders (g., board members and officers) to engage and collaborate

with national and local universities and businesses to enhance program features.

- Consider partnering with the national universities' extension departments and officers to develop a plan to evaluate the impact of PYD programming on youth participants, club advisors (teachers), and local communities.
- Recruit local leaders in various job sectors to volunteer and serve as additional club advisors to youth participants.

- Collaborate with local leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals in various job sectors to create projects that can provide youth participants meaningful engagement and the opportunity to explore their interests.
- Create an alum network to engage with past youth participants and encourage them to volunteer as mentors to current participants.
- Initiate conversations with international and local agencies to increase 4-H Ghana and Liberia programs' visibility and secure more partnerships.
- Develop mechanisms to help establish more financially equitable partnerships with organizations.
- Leverage existing connections and contacts within Ghanaian and Liberia government agencies (i.e., Ministries of Education and Agriculture, youth engagement agencies) to inform high-level officials about the potential of after-school and learning enrichment programs on the impact PYD programs have nationally.
- Create a 4-H program network in Africa, in which executive directors of active and non-active 4-H programs across the continent can meet to organize and hold events (e.g., training workshops and conferences for youth to present their projects) to foster collaboration between country programs

XXIII. Limitations and Future Directions

The 4-H Ghana and Liberia stakeholders interviewed for this case study gave a detailed overview of their organization's programming efforts and relative impact on its club advisors, youth participants, and communities. Partner organizations' leaders also provided information on their relationships with both countries' programming and how they assist them in achieving their

goals. However, the results and findings of this case study only reflect 4-H Ghana and Liberia high-level officials' testimonials about the impact of their efforts. This study didn't include the testimonials and perspectives of youth participants, club advisors, and community members who are direct beneficiaries of the 4-H Ghana and Liberia program efforts. Given the timeframe and the international scope of this study, the researcher didn't have the opportunity to interview the valuable stakeholders mentioned above and record their thoughts and perspectives on the impact that 4-H Ghana and Liberia programming efforts have on them. Additionally, though both organizations have been running for the past two decades, they haven't evaluated their activities comprehensively. Therefore, there isn't quantitative evidence available to demonstrate the effectiveness of their projects and activities. Consequently, the lack of inclusion of the club advisors, youth participants, and community members' perspectives and measurable data from evaluating the effectiveness and impact of 4-H Ghana's PYD are missing links that pose limitations to this study.

The development process of African youth is understudied, and there is a lack of awareness of Afro-centric evidence-based research that conceptualizes the process. Africa is a continent rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. Each ethnic group has specific beliefs and practices by which parents raise and guide their children through their developmental stages. Although there are African scholars who have published research on youth development across different ethnic groups (Adams et al., 2018; Lateef, 2020; Lateef & Balakrishnan, 2023; Udeh et al., 2024), western scholars and educational institutions often overlook these publications, resulting in research and literature by scholars within the continent and throughout the diaspora are also undermined. Consequently, western youth development scholars should consider and

review the work that their colleagues from the continent and the diaspora have published thus far and find ways to collaborate to expand the field of youth development to a global scale.

Regarding the future directions of this study, youth development researchers, especially within the African diaspora, should consider conducting quantitative research on the effectiveness of 4-H Ghana and Liberia's programming activities in helping their youth participants experience positive development. They can also research the long-term impact of 4-H Ghana and Liberia programming on their former youth participants and host communities. Researchers can also study club advisors' perceptions of PYD and 4-H Ghana and Liberia programming efforts. Lastly, future research endeavors can focus on exploring the effects of PYD on club advisors' teaching methods and engagement with the students

XXIV. Conclusion

Despite PYD being developed and implemented primarily in the United States and other Western nations, this research demonstrates that the PYD concept has been implemented in non-western countries through 4-H programs. Both 4-H Ghana and Liberia have implemented the 4-H "Formula for Success" PYD framework with a school-based agricultural education curriculum as their programming foundations. Leveraging the 4-H Formula for Success framework, 4-H Ghana and Liberia projects implement a school-based agriculture education curriculum to ensure their youth participants develop three essential assets: relationship with caring adults, life skills, and leadership and personal development. The school-enterprise garden and home entrepreneurship projects, school feeding programming, and other agriculture-focused projects are the most successful activities in which 4-H Ghana and Liberia engage their youth participants and assist them in experiencing positive development.

4-H Ghana and Liberia have positively impacted club advisors, youth participants, and host communities over the past few decades. However, no empirical evaluation data exists to showcase this impact. The lack of funding makes it difficult for both countries' programs to organize various projects and expand to reach more young people in other provinces and communities. For future endeavors, 4-H Ghana and Liberia will need to establish an evaluation system to determine the effectiveness of its programming and generate evidence-based data to attract future national and international funding and partnerships. 4-H programs in Ghana and Liberia can use a PYD framework to create positive changes in youths' lives and their communities. Now, they must concentrate on building their programming efforts to ensure increased reach and sustainable success.

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Appendix A: List of Research Participants

1. 4-H Ghana
 - Executive Director
 - Chief Operation/Program Officer
2. 4-H Liberia
 - Executive Director
 - Program Officer
3. AgriCorps
 - Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
4. IAEFP/Borlaug Institute
 - Country Program Coordinator

Appendix B: List of fact-checking interview questions

1. How did the chapter start in your country?
2. Who initiated the first contact? 4-H Global or You?
3. What steps were taken to start the country program?
4. What other cities, towns, or villages is your 4-H program present?
5. How many clubs does your country program have?
6. What is your organization's leadership structure?
7. How does your organization implement PYD within the Ghanaian cultural context?
8. Did you have to modify the PYD framework? If yes, how did you modify it to fit your country's program?
9. What curriculum have you developed and used for your country's program specifically?
10. What projects/activities have you and are currently engaging your student participants?
11. Which projects/activities have been successful thus far?
12. Do you partner with other organizations to help with curriculum development?
13. Where and how do you recruit your students?
14. What are your targeted age and grade groups for student participants?
15. What incentives do you provide the students to participate in the program?
16. What is the average number of students you have per club?

17. How long do students participate in the clubs on average?
18. How many club leaders/facilitators do you have on staff?
19. How do you recruit your club advisors and volunteers?
20. Do you provide any incentives to the club advisors? If so, which ones?
21. What training programs do you provide your club advisors and volunteers?
22. How do you get community leaders and parents to buy into the program?
23. What support do community leaders and parents provide to the program?
24. What support and resources has 4-H provided or is currently providing to your chapter?
25. What challenges does your country program face while implementing PYD activities?
26. What noticeable impact has 4-H Ghana had on student participants?
27. What noticeable impact has 4-H Ghana had on the community and its members?
28. Do you keep in contact with former student participants/members?
29. How do you measure your program's success?

Appendix C: List of second round of interview questions

C.1: Interview Questions: 4-H Ghana& Liberia Executive Directors

1. What comes to mind when you hear the words “Youth development”?
2. What does Youth Development look like in your country and cultural context?
3. Which governmental institutions or agencies are charged with youth development programming in your country?
4. How are these governmental institutions or agencies working to empower young people in your country?
5. What is your understanding of PYD?
 - a. How would you define the term PYD?
6. How do you implement PYD through your program?

C.2: Interview Questions: 4-H Ghana & Liberia Program Officers

1. When you hear the words “youth development,” what comes to your mind?
2. What does Youth Development look like in your country and cultural context?
3. What is your understanding of PYD?
 - a. How would you define the term PYD?
4. How do you implement PYD through your program?

5. Have you modified the PYD model to fit your country's cultural context?
 - a. If so, in what ways?
6. What challenges have you encountered while implementing PYD within your country? /
 - a. What Successes have you encountered?
7. How many clubs does your program have currently?
 - a. Which city(ies)/township are they located?
8. What is the profile of your members?
 - a. How do you recruit your club members?
 - b. What are the targeted age and grade groups for club members?
9. How many club leaders/facilitators do you have on staff?
 - a. How do you recruit club leaders/facilitators?
 - i. Is there training for these members? What does this entail?
10. Club impact on members and community
 - a. What noticeable impact does your program have on your club members?
 - b. What noticeable impact does your chapter have on the local community?
 - c. How do you measure your program's success?
11. Have you kept in contact with former program participants?
 - a. Any success stories you would like to share about what they have been doing since leaving the club?
 - i. How are they using the skills they have gained through participation?

C.3: Interview Questions for Partner Organizations: AgriCorps

1) Background/History of AgriCorps

- a. Please share a little bit about how AgriCorps started.
- b. Why does AgriCorps recruit 4-H and FFA members specifically?
- c. Has AgriCorps partnered with other agriculture-related organizations, such as MANNRS?
- d. If so, what ways have you partnered with such organizations?

2) Working Ghana and Liberia:

- a. When did you begin AgriCorps' partnership with 4-H Ghana and Liberia?
- b. Who initiated the first contact? Who are these two countries specifically?
- c. Does AgriCorps partner with governmental institutions and organizations in Ghana and Liberia to assist them? If so, which ones?
- d. In what capacities does this partnership benefit all parties?

3) Agricultural and Life Skills Training and transfer of knowledge

- a. What new agricultural practices do AgriCorps educators teach Ghanaian and Liberian youth?

Which skills or competencies do these trainings help African youth develop?

Are skills/practices different from Ag practices traditional to communities in Ghana, Liberia, and Senegal?

If so, why this approach?

- b. Are traditional methods leveraged to complement the new agricultural practices taught to youth? If so, in what ways?

4) Building the Capacity of Local Agriculture Teachers

- a. Do you provide training programs to local agricultural teachers and farmers in Ghana and Liberia?
 - If so, what is the primary focus of these programs?
 - Are there any other components of these training programs?
- b. Outside of training, are there any other ways your organization build the capacity of Ag teachers and local farmers

5) Expanding to other countries

- a. Are there any plans to expand AgriCorps to other African countries?

What does this include?

- b. Are there plans to work with or support youth organizations outside 4-H in Africa?

Appendix D: Research participants recruiting emails

D.1. Emails for 4-H program leaders

Hello Mr./Ms.....,

My name is Muriel Go-Maró, and I am a master's student at Penn State University, located in Pennsylvania, USA. My degree's concentration is in Education, Development, and Community Engagement (EDCE). I am reaching out to formally ask if you could please grant me an interview to learn more about 4-H..... (country's name)

I am researching the implementation of Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Africa for my thesis research. I am specifically looking into 4-H programming in three countries, namely Senegal, Ghana, and Liberia, and how the PYD framework has been implemented within their individual cultural contexts. I am interested in learning how each country's 4-H program is helping its youth experience positive development through its various activities and projects.

As the executive director/program officer of 4-H... (country's name), I believe you are the right person to provide me with the depth of knowledge about your 4-H program. Furthermore, it will be helpful and a great advantage to my research to interview you. If you are interested in granting me 1 this interview opportunity, please let me respond to this email at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Muriel Go-Maró

D.2. Emails for Partner Organization

Hello Mr./Ms.,

My name is Muriel Go-Maró, and I am a master's student at Penn State University, located in Pennsylvania, USA. My degree's concentration is in Education, Development, and Community Engagement (EDCE). I am reaching out to ask if you could please grant me an interview to learn more about ... (Program/Organization's name) partnership with 4-H (country's name).

I am currently researching the implementation of Positive Youth Development (PYD) in African for my Thesis research. I am specifically looking into 4-H programming in three countries, namely Senegal, Ghana, and Liberia, and how the PYD framework has been implemented within their individual cultural contexts. I am interested in learning how each country's 4-H program is helping its youth experience positive development through its various activities and projects.

(Program/Organization's name) is a current partner organization of both 4-H...(country's name), I am interested in learning the various ways (organization/program name) is helping build the agricultural capacities of agricultural educators and 4-H leaders and members in Ghana/Liberia/Senegal. Specifically, I would like to get an overall idea of agricultural expertise and practices (organization/program) educators transfer to Ghanaian/ Liberian/Senegalese agricultural educators that are different from and supplemental to existing Ghanaian and Liberian cultural agricultural knowledge and practices.

As the CEO/program coordinator/program officer of (organization's name), I believe you are the right person to provide the necessary information to support my thesis research. It would be tremendously helpful if we could possibly connect via zoom and discuss my interests. If interested, please let me know your availability over the next few days. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Muriel V. Go-Maró