



**The potential of positive youth development
in non-formal environments.
An example of a quantitative
survey in a summer camp in Sweden.**

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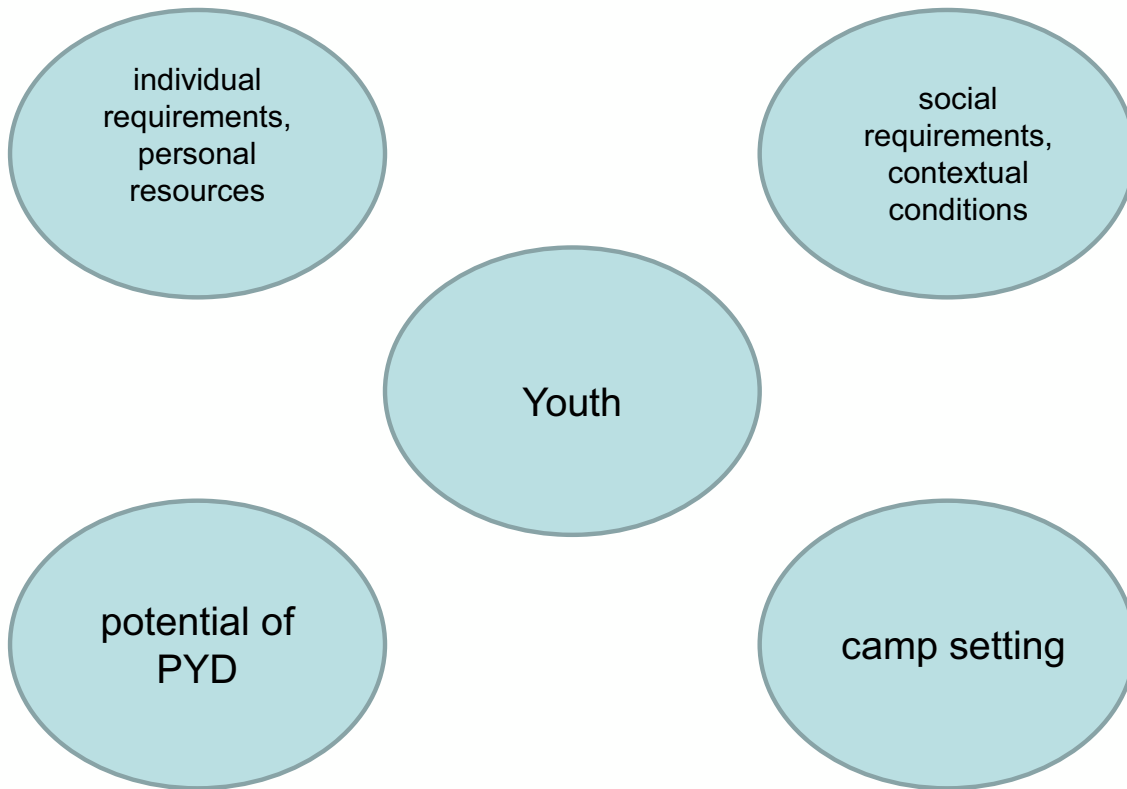
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Background

dynamic societal conditions influence the maturation of youth in present times (Marshall, 2013; Schmidt, 2015; Shell Deutschland Holding, 2015)

- interaction between social contexts and individual requirements youth have to deal with during the stage of adolescence (beneficial non-formal learning environments)
- development of competencies as a major outcome of youth activities in non-formal contexts (Dahl et al., 2013 ; Grunert, 2012)
- camp experience is uniquely suited for youth development (Lerner, 2009; Thurber et al., 2007)
- camps are characterized as motivating, physically demanding, challenging, caring, and supportive (Garst et al., 2011; Lerner, 2011; Thurber et al., 2007)
- Aim: to explore the camp setting as a sustainable context to predict multidimensional growth (PYD)

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Positive Youth Development

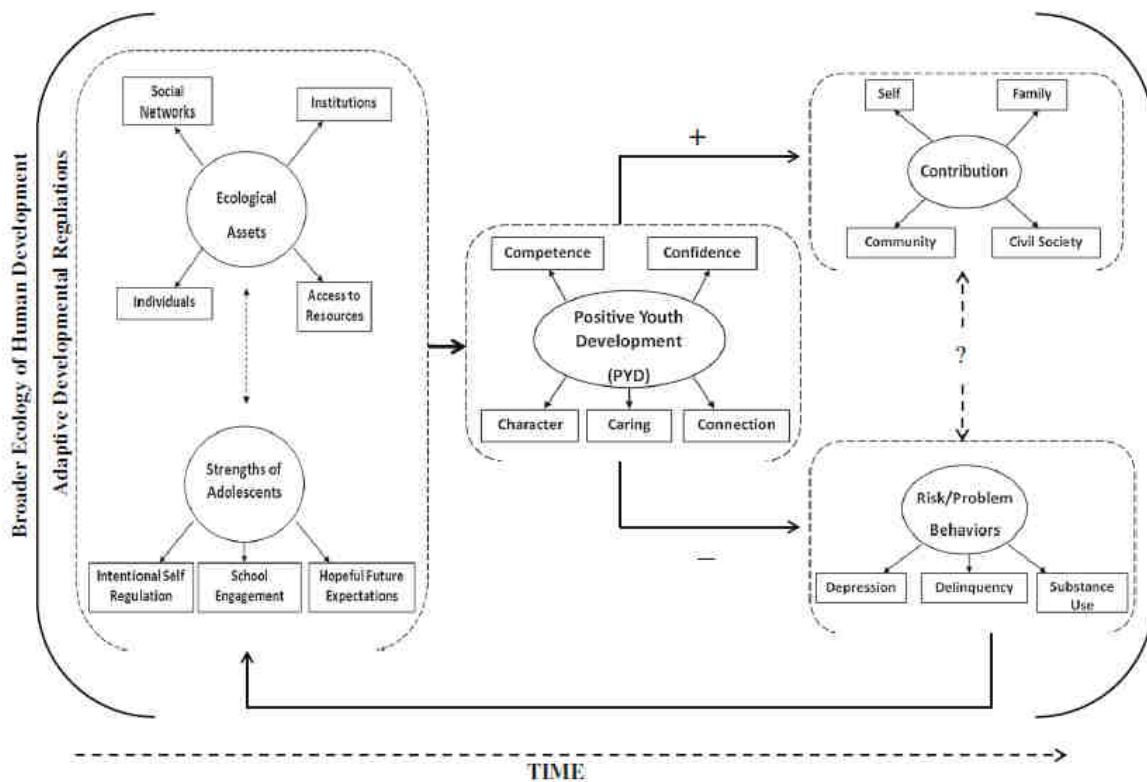


Figure 1: The relational, developmental system model of individual context relations involved in PYD (adapted from Lerner et al., 2011, p. 7)



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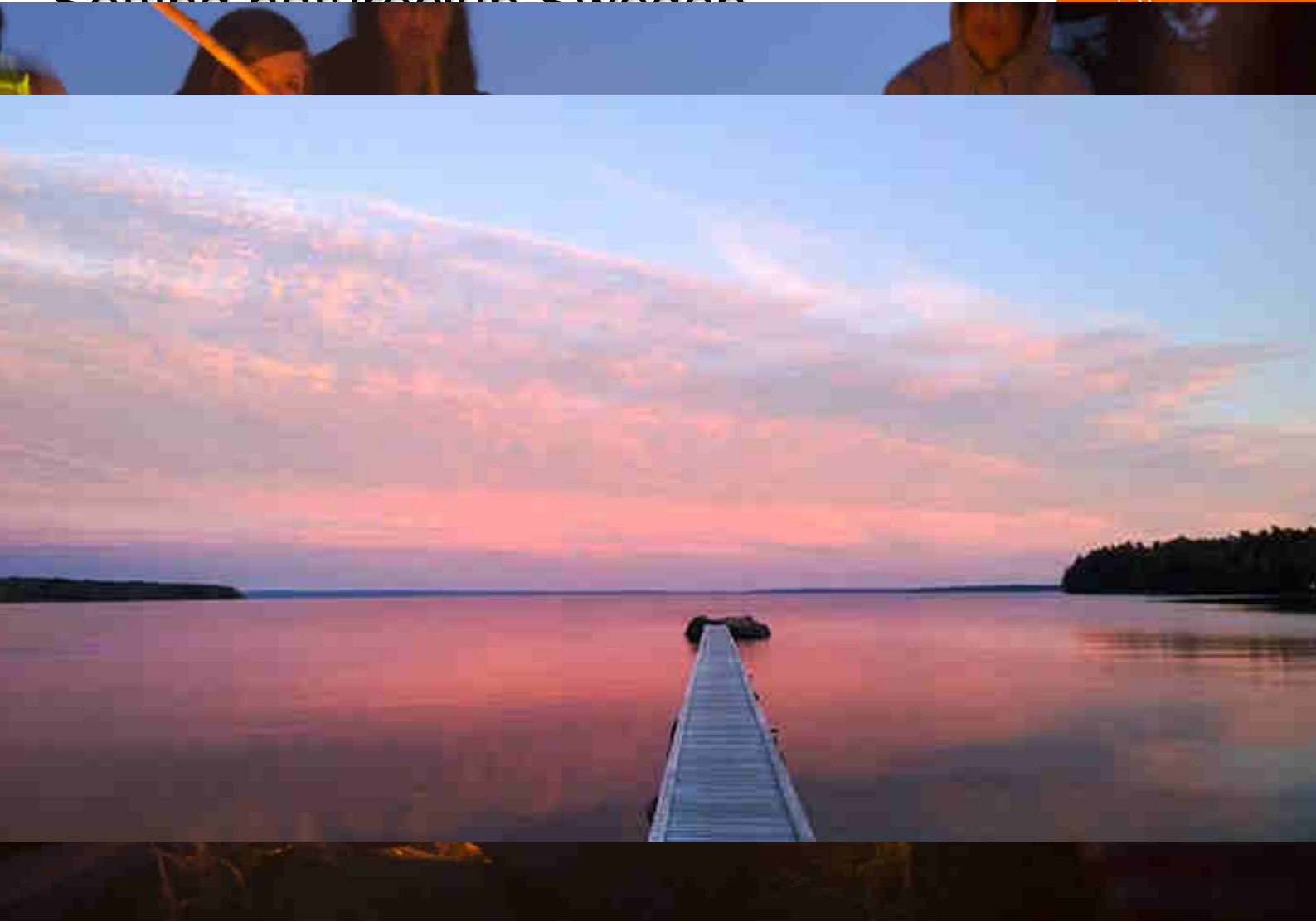
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Study Design

- *Research purpose:* youth development occurs through the camp experience
- *Place of research:* natureclub Sweden
- *Study Design:* cross-sectional design, quantitative survey with standardized questionnaire
- *Sample:* 123 German youth: 56.9 % female (mean age= 15.97); 43.1 % male (mean age= 15.37)
- *Method:* standardized self-reporting questionnaire (75 items in 9 categories, YOB), five-point Likert scale
categories: friendship skills, independence, teamwork, perceived competence, interest in exploration, responsibility, affinity for nature and sport, problem-solving confidence → sub constructs of five C's of PYD



Setting natureclub Sweden



Setting natureclub Sweden

Table III: Descriptors of features of positive developmental settings linked to features of the natureclub (adapted from NRCIM, 2002; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Larson et al., 2004)

features of developmental setting	Descriptors
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities; and practices that increase safe peer group
Appropriate Structure	Limited setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; clear boundaries; age-appropriate monitoring
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behaviour; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals
Support and Efficacy and Mattering	Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community.



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Results

'Youth consider developmental improvement through the camp experience in the named constructs.'

Table I: Self-reported mean scores by adolescents in general and after camp

construct	n	general	n	improvement
Friendship skills	122	4.2	118	1.11
Independence	123	4.55	119	1.41
Interest in exploration	123	4.49	119	1.43
Perceived competence	123	4.22	119	1.08
Responsibility	123	4.28	119	1.14
Teamwork	122	4.08	119	.99
Affinity for sport and nature	122	4.26	118	1.16
Problem solving competence	119	3.89	116	.75

Sample sizes vary due to missing data



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Results

'The camp experience fosters developmental outcomes in the eight constructs'

Table II: Self-reported mean scores by adolescents including effect size and correlation

construct	general	improvement	n ²	r
Friendship skills	4. 2	1. 11	.66*	.58*
Independence	4. 55	1. 41	.64*	.43*
Interest in exploration	4. 49	1. 43	.67*	.57*
Perceived competence	4. 22	1. 08	.63*	.57*
Responsibility	4. 28	1. 14	.74*	.63*
Teamwork	4. 08	0. 99	.72*	.68*
Affinity for sport and nature	4. 26	1. 16	.71*	.63*
Problem solving competence	3. 89	0. 75	.70*	.71*

Sample sizes vary due to missing data; *Significance level: $p \leq .01$



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Results

'Youth are more physical active at summer camp.'

→ Slightly higher participation in physical activity at camp than at home (mean= 3. 68)

'The camp experience influences the affinity for sport.'

Table III: Self-reported mean scores of affinity for sport by adolescents in general and after camp including effect size and correlation

	n	sex	general	improvement	n ²	r
Affinity for Sport	53	m	4. 2	1. 16	.96**	.89*
	69	f	4. 3	1. 16	.69*	.64*
	122	all	4. 26	1. 16	.7**	.75*

Sample sizes vary due to missing data;*Significance level: $p \leq .01$

Conclusion

- Diversity of opportunities affects the developmental process of adolescents → influential factors are apparent
- Summer camp can offer a sustaining and engaging experience in an environment of supports and opportunities for developmental outcomes, also participation and promotion of physical activity
- camp setting as a sustainable context to predict multidimensional growth (PYD)
- Limitations: setting of priorities, likert-scale, small sample size, time of measurement
- Implication: realignment of social processes seems to open a new sector for experience-orientated environments
→ future program planning (perspective for physical activity programs)



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Thank you for your attention!

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