

## **Navigational capacities for youth success/development in adversity**

### **1. What do we mean by adversity?**

Schonkhoffs Biology of adversity – the effects of poverty among children

Categories of youth in the Global North and South

Global North	Global South
Migrant City Roma	Poverty Slum Risk Marginalised Discrimination Conflict Homeless Instutionalised

Why existing approaches are inadequate for youth in adversity.

### **2. What are desirable youth outcomes and what approaches have been used to determine these?**

Critical youth studies vs. developmental approaches to positive youth development

School 1: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and Critical Youth Studies – opposition and resistance instead of delinquency or risk

School 2: Positive Youth Development, ecological model, risks, protection and developmental assets

Positive youth development – Pittman, Eccles

Asset based youth development – Richard Lerner

5 Cs - competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring

- Physical and psychological safety
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities for belonging
- Positive social norms
- Opportunities for building skills
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Integration of family, school and community efforts
- Appropriate values, practice, and structure

### **3. What theories help us to answer the question of youth needs in adversity?**

Bourdieu and Putnam – Social capital. Race, class and gender. Marginalisation. Critical youth studies.

Sen – the freedom to choose the life you value.

Appadurai – the capacity to aspire.

A rights approach, an emancipatory approach.

Not just rights in theory but in practice.

4. **What is our conceptual framework?** An explication of what is meant by 'navigational capacities'

*What are navigational capacities?*

1. Navigational capacities are a collective term, inspired by the work of Rae & Walton (2004), Douglas (2004), Appadurai (2004), Vaughan (2005) and Swartz (2009), used to denote a series of tools that are obtainable/available to young people in the pursuit of employment.
2. Navigational capacities are the capabilities that young people already possess, and that given some guidance and skill, are able to use to navigate personal, institutional and environmental factors in order to find and keep employment. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, it functions at multiple sites in the multiple contexts in which young people find themselves.
3. It relates to prevalent notions of cultural and social capital young people possess, but also includes the effect of individualist and collectivist cultures on unemployment
4. While we can't yet say exactly what these are (hence the need for this study), we do know that they are 'factory floor' i.e. rough and innate capacities and capabilities rather than 'supermarket shelf' i.e. ready made and complete assets or attributes.
5. Navigational capacities take very seriously contexts of impoverishment and limited capitals (social, cultural and economic), and hence the aim of a study is to find out what youth possess, what they need, and what is needed to bridge these.
6. Concrete examples of navigational capacities may include:
  1. How they understand their own adversity?
  2. The alternative pathways they navigate towards successful outcomes?
  3. Their ways of negotiating racial and class 'glass ceilings'?
  4. The energy levels and motivational strategies they bring to the pursuit of success?
  5. The stories they construct to explain their actions.
  6. The role models and connections they follow and use in their quest?
  7. Their ability to both aspire and realistically evaluate possibilities of success?
  8. Their strategies against discounting the future?
  9. Their ability to choose between alternatives, accept or adapt to what's available;
  10. The way they might follow 'desire lines' over institutional pathways, or create new pathways?
  11. Responses to respond to critical incidents, including success and disappointment?
  12. How they invest or generate capital (broadly defined)?
  13. The characteristics that contribute to success (such as courage, perseverance, adaptability, patience, tools against despondency and depression, strategies for overcoming avolition, and the ability to 'hussle').

14. The values needed?

7. Key research questions to be asked:

1. What navigational capacities do young people in adversity need?
2. How do navigational capacities set young people up for success?
3. Which ones are possible?
4. How are navigational capacities related? What are essential, good to have, which bring about incremental benefit?

## 5. What is our research methodology?

An emancipatory approach.

An envisaged research study asks:

1. What 'navigational capacities' are youth agencies offering to youth?
2. What does the literature say are essential 'navigational capacities'?
3. What do youth say they need? (use SNI here to elicit best possible data)
4. Is there some agreement on what these may be? Use these to create a measure for Phase B.
5. How might we measure the presence of and necessity for these navigational capacities for transitioning youth, especially in impoverished contexts?

## Appendices

*Principal Investigators*

*Institutions*

Human Sciences Research Council  
FXB Centre for Health and Human Rights

*Budget*

*Draft instruments*