

Network on Adolescent Well-being and Development



Innovations for Youth (I4Y) and the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society co-sponsored a conference focused on youth trauma.

Adolescents make up one-fifth of the world's population, and many low-income countries are experiencing a "youth bulge," with a higher proportion of their population made up of adolescents. In the U.S. and globally, youth of color and those in conditions of poverty experience major health and educational disparities. Yet the field of adolescent health is typically organized around individual problems such as pregnancy, sexually-transmitted infections, or violence. What is lacking is an integrative development lens that factors in how contexts—such as families, schools, neighborhoods—shape adolescent health and behavior.

UC Berkeley is uniquely positioned to meet this challenge, given its social-science expertise on the interconnected systems and individual processes that affect adolescent well-being and development. To support researchers working in this area, Social Science Matrix is sponsoring the "Network for Adolescent Wellbeing and Development" (NAWD), a team of researchers who are developing innovative approaches for research into key issues related to adolescent health, including technology and adolescent well-being, violence prevention, reproductive health, and methodological innovations (including participatory research and develop-



ing new approaches to causal inference in epidemiological and policy research).

Led by Emily J. Ozer, PhD, Professor of Community Health Sciences in the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, this Matrix team brings together experts in diverse fields such as public health, social welfare, education, adolescent medicine, sociology, and policy. The team is focusing its work on: 1) promoting and scaling interventions to enhance positive youth development via improving the environmental conditions and systems in which young people develop and (2) innovative multi-method approaches to studying the impact of interventions on adolescent development and the transition to adulthood.

Since the launch of their work at Matrix, this team received a grant from the UC Berkeley Vice Chancellor for Research Office (VCRO) to advance their work in reducing inequalities among youth. The "Youth and Inequalities" initiative—to be led by Ozer, along with Prudence Carter, Dean of the UC Berkeley School of Education, and Colette Auerswald, Associate Professor in the UC Berkeley School of Public Health—will further strengthen connections with education and economics, as well as other units across campus. They will also continue collaborating with Innovations for Youth (I4Y), a growing UC Berkeley center that focuses on the social determinants of health, health disparities, connectedness, and networks for adolescents through a multidisciplinary and multigenerational approach.

RESEARCH GOALS

- Design a structure and process to bring scholars across disciplines and departments together around key issues related to adolescent health, including technology and adolescent well-being, violence prevention, reproductive health, and methodological innovations.
- Establish a research agenda and develop publications and proposals to expand integrative research focused on adolescent health.



The Matrix-sponsored Network for Adolescent Wellbeing and Development successfully earned a grant from the UC Berkeley Vice Chancellor for Research. The initiative is supported by a growing center called Innovations for Youth (I4Y), which has been actively engaged in the NAWD. To learn more, see <http://i4y.berkeley.edu>.

"UC Berkeley has tremendous potential to respond to this call to transform research and interventions in adolescent health, and to serve as an international leader in an interdisciplinary re-shaping of the field," the researchers explained in their proposal. "It takes structure and vision to stretch us to work together collaboratively beyond our own research programs. What is needed now is a structure and process to bring scholars across disciplines and departments together on some feasible short-term first steps to establish a research agenda and develop funding proposals to support medium and long-term goals."



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