

Program Symposium
Shifting focus: Strengths and Power of Youth
March 15, 2017
Boothzaal

12.00 – 13.15 p.m.	Lunch	
13.15 – 13.30 p.m.	Catrin Finkenauer	Welcome
13.30 – 14.30 p.m.	Virtues and talents in youth	
	Sander Thomaes	Happy to be me
	Sheida Novin	Emotion, appreciation, empathy, friendships
	Reine van der Wal	The protective effect of forgiveness for children's psychological wellbeing
	Heleen Vossen	Do social media foster or curtail adolescents' empathy? A longitudinal study
14.30-15.15 p.m.	Youth needs and rights	
	Merel Jonker & Jet Tigchelaar	The supportive role of children's rights for the strengths and power of youth
	Marijn Stok	Hungry for an intervention? Adolescents' ratings of acceptability of eating-related intervention strategies
	Seren Dalkiran	Millennial Perspectives: How to transform leadership for the next generation?
15.15 – 15.35 p.m.	Coffee & Tea	
15.35 – 16.20 p.m.	Ensuring youth strengths across countries	
	Lara Maestripieri	Young without a cause. The Social Investment challenge and the condition of Italian youth.
	Dom Weinberg	Strength-based youth development: Lessons from the UK
	Mara Yerkes	Youth on the Move: enhancing the capabilities of young adults?
16.20 – 17.00 p.m.	Real-life Applications	
	Marja Blom	Mobilizing talent: Experiences in "be a Nelson" schools
	Margreet de Looze	Youth brain development: Seize the opportunities
	Discussion	
17 p.m.	Drinks	

Abstracts

Happy to be “Me?” Authenticity, Psychological Need Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being in Adolescence

Sander Thomaes

Adolescents have a strong desire to “be themselves.” How does experiencing authenticity—the sense of being one’s true self— influence subjective well-being? What allows adolescents to experience authenticity? This research tests a working model of how authenticity is implicated in adolescents’ well-being. Using survey, diary, and experimental methodologies, four studies (total N=759, age-range=12-17) supported the main tenets of the model. Authenticity (1) enhances well-being, (2) co-varies with satisfaction of psychological needs for relatedness and competence, and is caused by satisfaction of the need for autonomy, and (3) mediates the link between need satisfaction and well-being. Authenticity is more than a powerful motive: It has robust, replicable effects on well-being, and may thus be a pervasive force in positive youth development.

Emotion appreciation and empathy for positive friendships in adolescents

Sheida Novin & Carolien Rieffe

Friendships play a crucial role in adolescents’ lives. Friends do not only provide the opportunity to engage in pleasant activities, but also provide a sense of belongingness and support at a time that independence from parents is increasing. To form and maintain friendships, a certain degree of emotional competence is needed. Prior work shows that being able to empathize with others contributes to establishing intimate, positive relationships. In the current study, we tested the prediction that in order for empathy to enhance positive friendships, one should appreciate the own and others’ emotions and their antecedents. Three hundred twenty-five adolescents ($M_{age} = 13.65$, $SD = 0.43$) completed various self-report questionnaires. Indeed, higher levels of empathy (on an affective, cognitive, and prosocial level) were related to higher positive friendship quality. Moreover, as predicted, appreciation of both the own and others’ emotions indirectly related to higher positive friendship via higher levels of empathy. Additionally, appreciation of others’ emotions was directly related to higher positive friendship quality. Our results suggest that appreciating emotions, thus valuing emotions as an importance source of information, is a prerequisite to empathize with others, which in turn, plays an important role in adolescents’ positive friendship quality.

The protective effect of forgiveness for children’s psychological wellbeing

Reine van der Wal

Although the topic of forgiveness has received abundant attention in research with adults, little is actually known about forgiveness processes in children. This is unfortunate, as research suggests that the capacity to forgive is associated with many beneficial outcomes, such as improved social relationships and psychological wellbeing. In my presentation, I will address the basic question whether a forgiving response benefits children’s psychological wellbeing. I will present data of 1) children’s forgiveness in response to offending peers in

the classroom, and 2) children's forgiveness in response to the divorce of their parents. In samples of children aged 9-12 years old, who completed self-reported and behavioral measures of forgiveness and various indicators of psychological wellbeing, I found evidence that children's forgiveness toward offending others is associated with enhanced psychological wellbeing. These findings highlight that forgiveness may be an important protective factor that can help to prevent the otherwise negative consequences of interpersonal conflict on children's psychological well-being.

Do social media foster or curtail adolescents' empathy? A longitudinal study

Helen G.M. Vossen & Patti M. Valkenburg

Recently, concerns have been raised that adolescents' prolific social media use may cause them to become less empathic. However, direct empirical evidence is missing and research suggests that social media use can also be beneficial for adolescents' psychosocial development. The present study aims to investigate whether and how social media use influences empathy. We surveyed 942 Dutch adolescents (10–14 years) twice, with a one-year interval. The results showed that social media use is related to an increase in cognitive and affective empathy over time. Specifically, adolescents' social media use improved both their ability to understand (cognitive empathy) and share the feelings of their peers (affective empathy). In line with previous research, this study suggest that social media can be used by adolescents to practice social skills.

The supportive role of children's rights for the strengths and power of youth

Merel Jonker & Jet Tigchelaar

In which ways can children's rights support the strengths and powers of youth? Article 3 of the Convention on the rights of children is considered to be the core right or principle of the convention: it obliges States to consider the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies. This principle of the best interests of the child seems to support the strengths and powers of youth considerably. It gives guarantees for access and participation rights in very different social and legal areas. In this presentation, we will highlight some of these areas and we will give examples from our research into the way in which family law judges take the best interest of the child into account in cultural and religious disputes between parents with regard to e.g. choice of school.

Hungry for an intervention? Adolescents' ratings of acceptability of eating-related intervention strategies

F. Marijn Stok*, Denise T. D. de Ridder, Emely de Vet, Liliya Nureeva, Aleksandra Luszczynska, Jane Wardle, Tania Gaspar, & John B. F. de Wit

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An important prerequisite for the successful implementation of interventions is that the target population accepts them. The current study investigated what types of intervention strategies would be accepted by adolescents in the context of promoting healthier eating behavior. While previous research has assessed adults' acceptance of eating-related interventions for adolescents, research on the opinion of adolescents themselves is lacking. Over 2500 adolescents (aged 10–17 years) from four European countries (Poland, Portugal, UK, the Netherlands) completed a survey on individual characteristics and rated the acceptability of ten eating-related intervention strategies. These strategies varied in type (either promoting healthy eating or discouraging unhealthy eating), level of intrusiveness, setting (home, school, broader out-of-home environment), and change agent (parents, teacher, policy makers). Results showed that acceptability was significantly higher for strategies promoting healthy eating than for those discouraging unhealthy eating. Level of intrusiveness only made a difference in acceptability of strategies discouraging unhealthy eating, while setting and change agent appeared not to affect acceptability at all. Acceptability of intervention strategies was higher among girls, younger, overweight and immigrant adolescents, and those reporting healthier eating. The findings provide practical guidance for the selection of acceptable intervention strategies to promote desired (health) behavior.

Millennial Perspectives: How to transform leadership for the next generation?

Seren Dalkiran

University of Notre Dame Australia, Utrecht University, Varna University of Management
and supported by Professor Geert Hofstede
In collaboration with Synergized Earth Network, TNS-NIPO

Comprising more than half of 7.35 billion people on our planet, the so-called Millennial Generation (age 18-25) is coming of age. They will not only comprise 75% of the global work force in 2025, but as young emerging leaders within this generation they are (future) decision-makers and architects and collaborators in the future prospects of our world. This study conducted worldwide sheds light on new forms of leadership, cooperation and the narrative this cohort adheres to within the framework of social and sustainable change processes. For the methodology of this study, a mixed-method approach through both quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted in order to generate new data in order to assess the values, worldviews and leadership paradigm of the Millennial leader cohort. Consequently, this study generated new data, knowledge and insights in human cooperation and alternative leadership paradigm in responding to the pressing challenges of the 21st century.

Young without a cause. The Social Investment challenge and the condition of Italian youth

Lara Maestripieri

University di Pavia - Department of Social and Political Sciences

At the basis of the Europe 2020 strategy there is the confidence that post-industrial societies have a stronger need of qualified workers and that this will reinforce the economic sustainability of the European social model. Not unsurprisingly given the unfavourable context, from the perspective of social investment strategy Italy is a *worst practice* in Europe. Young generations in Italy are extremely less copious than any older generation (especially confronted with other European countries), but despite their low numbers their labour market indicators are worst. Some scholars actually doubt that Italy will effectively benefit from the improved human capital of new generations, thus putting under investigation of the principle of social investment.

In this paper, I will contribute to the current debate by analysing two relevant policies that have been proposed for young workers in recent years: apprenticeship in high education (*apprendistato in alta formazione*) and youth guarantee (*garanzia giovani*). The analysis will show how those policies – although different in their targets as in the first case they address the higher educated strata of young workers, while in the second one the NEET strata – have resulted in poor performances given an unfavourable context of local productive and educational systems. The analysis will be conducted under the perspective of the generational divide between outsiders and insiders in the Italian labour market, consider youth as outsiders in the Italian socio-economic context.

Strength-based youth development: Lessons from the UK

Dominic Weinberg

Young people's problems and risk behaviour, rather than skills and assets, have too often been the focus of research, policy-making and practice. Yet there is a long tradition of youth organisations working to build young people's potential and recognising their role as agents of social change. Appropriate measurement tools are needed to evaluate the impact of these organisations on strength-based outcomes. In 2012 a consortium of UK youth organisations produced a *Framework of Outcomes for Young People*. This Framework, since adopted by many youth programmes and funders, proposed a model with seven capability clusters – including relationships, resilience, and creativity – and identified tools for measuring them.

This presentation, from the perspective of a researcher who previously worked in UK youth policy, will explore the role of researchers in a movement for strength-based youth development. It explores case studies of organisations who have used the Framework, working with academics to introduce Theories of Change for their work, based on understanding causal mechanisms in adolescent development. The results suggest that researchers need new techniques to develop closer links with practitioners and should consider co-creating appropriate measurement tools that enable youth organisations to effectively evidence their practice.

Youth on the Move: enhancing the capabilities of young adults?

Mara A. Yerkes & Trudie Knijn

A basic function of welfare states is guaranteeing social protection to all citizens. European citizenship aims to create a level playing field for citizens of all member states. In the process, some categories of citizens tend to be overlooked, or even deprived of previous rights. In this article we focus on young adults as a vulnerable category of citizens. They appear to suffer the most from high unemployment rates, and are encouraged in the Europe 2020 strategy to be mobile to explore opportunities outside their country. However, the rights of young, mobile Europeans are not per se guaranteed if they migrate. As part of Europe 2020, the EU aims to increase the mobility of young people to enhance their employability and education through a package of policy instruments, *Youth on the Move*. A critical analysis of the *Youth on the Move* program, and recent National Reform Programmes of member states will identify key discrepancies between EU goals for young adults' mobility and their capabilities, as related to their social, political, legal and economic position.