

**Global Holistic Youth Development Summit**  
**June 25-27, 2008 at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena**  
Hosted by the Center for Youth and Family Ministry  
In partnership with the Search Institute



### **Purpose of the Global Summit**

From June 25-27, 2008 at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, the Center for Youth and Family Ministry (CYFM) convened an exploratory summit for leaders of international ministries who work with children and youth. The purpose of the three-day gathering was to begin creating an agenda for research, capacity building, networking, and action for introducing, adapting, and utilizing the framework of Developmental Assets as a tool for ministries with children, youth, and communities internationally, particularly in developing nations. While much of the discussion centered on the 40 Developmental Assets developed by the [Search Institute](#), other holistic ministry models and practices were also discussed.

### **Defining Holistic Ministry**

At the outset of the Summit, participants discussed a twofold definition of holistic ministry. Holistic ministry strengthens the whole person (i.e., their spiritual, emotional, physical, social, and emotional development) and also strengthens the broad ecology around that person (i.e., engages and serves families, friends, churches, and other adults in the community). To a greater and greater degree, both types of holistic ministry are recognized as imperative for high-risk kids and families globally.

### **Desired Outcomes of the Global Summit**

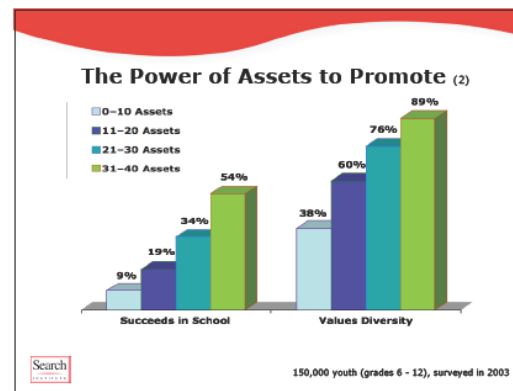
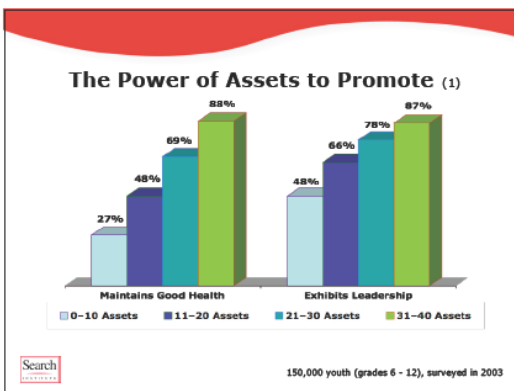
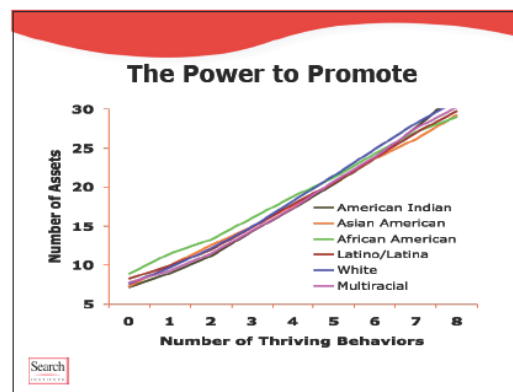
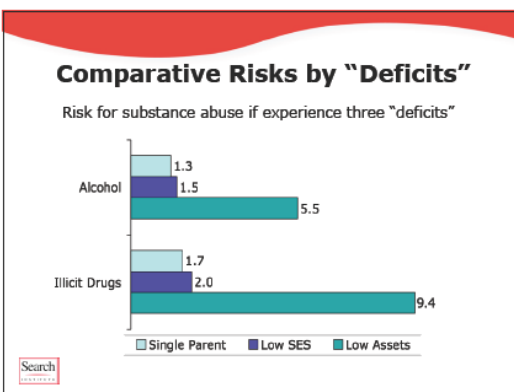
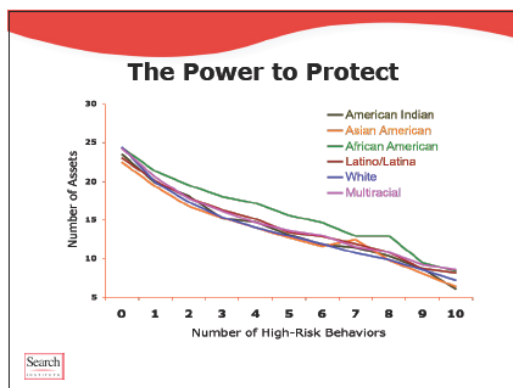
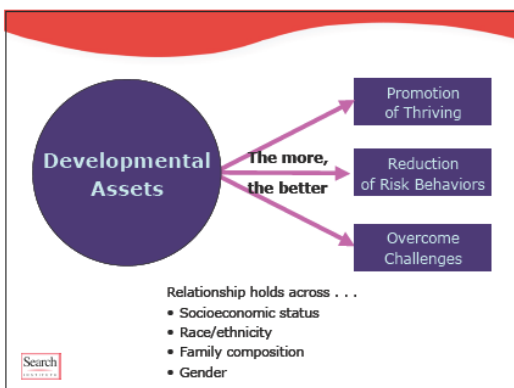
The 27 Summit participants included representatives from ministries in multiple regions, including Compassion International, World Vision, Word Made Flesh, International Justice Mission and Young Life. In addition, CYFM also invited strategic leaders from other ministries in Africa, Asia, South America, and Latin America who are already engaged in exemplary holistic ministry.

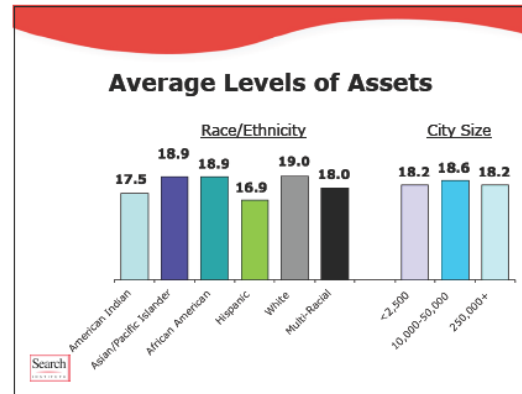
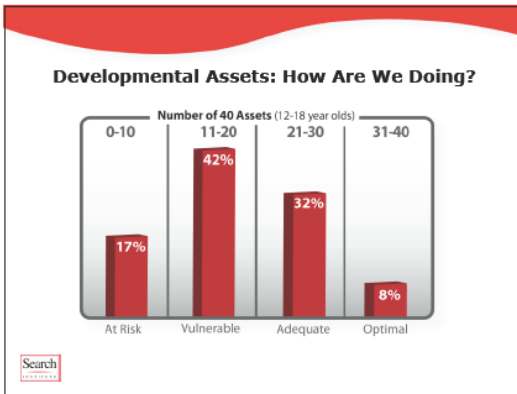
All participants worked toward the following outcomes:

1. To begin forming the core of a learning community of leaders interested in holistic ministries with children and youth in international contexts, particularly non-Western cultures.
2. To articulate the benefit or added value of utilizing an asset-based approach to holistic ministries with children and youth within the programs and ministries of international ministries.
3. To further an understanding of effective models of holistic ministry being practiced in developing countries as well as participants' understanding of positive development and thriving.
4. To identify needed bridges to effectively contextualize and utilize Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets in these contexts.
5. To identify priorities for dialogue, convening, research, training, and field experimentation to move a shared agenda forward together.

## The Power of the Assets

To help accomplish outcomes #2, #4, and #5 above, Dr. Gene Roehlkepartain from the Search Institute shared the following data based on a 2003 survey of 150,000 sixth to twelfth graders in the United States. As evident from the charts below, the more assets kids have, the better they do on multiple levels.





## Assumptions of Holistic Ministry

After studying the documented value of holistic ministry, Summit participants listed ten salient assumptions that affect their holistic ministry commitments and practices. Listed in random order, those ten assumptions are:

- Holistic ministry welcomes all people and finds ways to draw them towards Christ.
- There is a sense of urgency about the need to offer holistic ministry.
- Holistic development is integrated, not fragmented.
- Holistic development is always a dynamic and fluid process, never static and never cookie-cutter.
- Holistic ministry affects multiple facets of an individual who is embedded in a broader ecology.
- Organizations can focus on different aspects of holism but they must also think holistically.
- It's hard to do holistic ministry well.
- In holistic ministry everyone is transformed.
- It is biblical. It's the non-verbal part of the Great Commission.
- For holistic ministry to be done right, leaders have to keep the end goal or product in mind.

## Principles of Cross-Cultural Implementation

Menchit Wong, Director of Child Advocacy for Compassion International, shared some insights related to cross-cultural implementation of ministry philosophies and practices. The table below is based on her presentation.

What Does Not Work?	What Works?
Compliance orientation – i.e., someone (perhaps a regional or national office) saying, “You must adopt this.”	Outcome orientation that gives more freedom as to how the outcomes are reached.
Give a prescriptive checklist	Provide a program template that can be assessed and modified across cultures – a thinner, broader template. Getting participation from field offices is a longer process, but it brings better results.

The expectation that development can be readily observed and consistently measured across countries	Using the above method to give people options to use for measurement.
A central office assuming that cultures and countries have little in common and can't learn from each other. An over-emphasis on program expectations	What works well in a field country is more likely to be received by other field countries  A focus on quality of relationships among youth and nurturing adults and a facilitative approach that equips church partners.

## How to Introduce Developmental Assets to New Contexts and Cultures

Because the Developmental Assets are derived from research on U.S. teenagers, care should be taken when introducing, adapting, and implementing them in new contexts and cultures. The desire is not to “impose” them on a new setting but rather learn from that new setting and co-create a contextually appropriate framework that enables teenagers to thrive. In a handout distributed at the Global Summit, Search Institute recommended the following:

### 1. Dialogue with local “asset champions”

Search Institute begins with dialogue with local leaders who see in asset building a resource or approach that would benefit and resonate with their culture, context, or country. These leaders may be pastors, parachurch leaders, policy leaders, physicians, community organizers, or others. In some cases, U.S. citizens who work cross-culturally have also played this role. These initial conversations typically explore a variety of issues including:

- What aspects of asset building seem to resonate (and why)?
- What issues and challenges must be addressed to make the approach more relevant and appropriate?
- In what ways will young people be actively involved in the process and planning as leaders and contributors? What other populations must be intentionally included to be effective within a particular context?
- How broad or targeted will the effort be? Is there a desire (and readiness) to move forward at a national, regional, or local level? What sectors (church, private, public, nongovernmental organizations, health care/public health, primary and secondary education, universities, faith-based community organizations, etc.) might be involved?

### 2. Begin formal exploration

Numerous specific strategies for moving forward more formally can emerge from these initial conversations, depending on priorities of the asset champions, local realities, available resources, and perceived alignment between the existing Developmental Assets framework and the local culture, context, and language. Search Institute remains open to a wide range of approaches, including the following (which may be combined):

### *Approach #1: Enculturate the Developmental Assets framework and approach*

- Implement an open-ended dialogue process with youth and adults about the factors they perceive to be important in growing up successfully, then explore how this “indigenous wisdom” maps to the current framework of Developmental Assets.
- Engage local researchers in examining existing research that confirms, challenges, or reframes the Developmental Assets framework and the asset-building approach.
- Convene local experts in child and youth development to dialogue about the applicability of the Developmental Assets framework to their local context and setting.

### *Approach #2: Launch a pilot research or mobilization project*

- In some cases, a small research study using existing tools or instruments can yield important information, insight, and motivation for future work. This might include, for example, a survey of young people to ascertain whether the relationships between Developmental Assets and thriving or risk behaviors remain robust within that setting.
- A community or organization may be interested in experimenting with Developmental Assets in their activities and programming to determine whether the general approach will resonate with children, youth, and families. These pilots raise additional issues and opportunities that can set the stage for future work on a broader scale.

## **Next Steps in Holistic Ministry Research and Resources around the Globe**

In the midst of the unanimous acceptance of the value of holistic ministry among Summit participants, each ministry is in the process of devising its own action plan to begin implementing a more holistic approach to serving kids at risk. Because the ministries at the Summit need to involve field leaders in discussions about any changes toward more holistic ministry, it is inappropriate to share too many specific action points in this report.

Having said that, each organization agreed to consider how, if at all, they would like to bring more holistic ministry emphases to their training. As they do so, organizations were encouraged to consider being bridge-builders by providing training for other organizations in their region(s). Understandably, it seemed that the larger the ministry, the longer the change and implementation process.

In addition, CYFM has received a seed grant to conduct follow-up research in a few countries from 2008-2009. While the exact nature of this research is still being determined by Summit participants, research questions are likely to include:

1. What does a thriving young person look like in your culture?
2. What does a child need to thrive?
3. What role does spiritual development play in a child’s development?

One potential scenario is for CYFM to partner with research personnel already in Latin America, Asia, and/or Africa to conduct focus groups and interviews with kids, parents, and leaders.



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