



China

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IT'S better for me to get on with life happily than to live in sorrow.

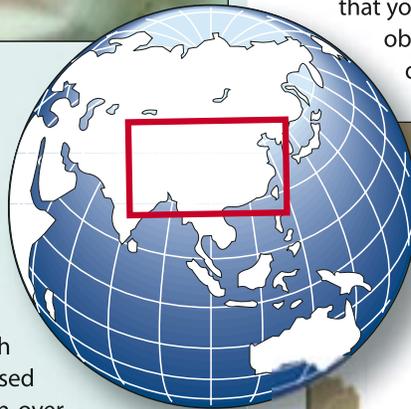
— Hong Kong girl, a victim of family violence

Context and Risk Factors:

HONG Kong, with a population of 6,943,600, is located on the south-eastern coast of China. Hong Kong is relatively autonomous from China, as it has its own treaty for negotiating rights, air traffic and aircraft landing rights, immigration laws, legal system, currency, and customs. It also has a highly liberal economy boasting strong finance and trade sectors. China, and in particular Hong Kong, has undergone sweeping demographic and social change in recent decades, and much of it has affected youth. Despite this, the Government does not have a consistent policy focusing on youth development. Enrollment levels in schools have skyrocketed; and researchers are now beginning to see the effects of stress related to school pressures in youth. Youth are choosing to marry later, but engage in sexual activity earlier. As a result, the number of abortions in Hong Kong is increasing. Other risks that youth in Hong Kong face include mental health problems and suicide, obesity and eating disorders, crime, drug abuse, and depleted health due to smoking.¹

WHAT is the International Resilience Project (IRP)?:

The IRP is a mixed-methods, culturally sensitive approach to understanding how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The IRP now has partnerships with researchers and community-based organizations on six continents in over 25 communities. The IRP is currently bringing to a close the first three-year phase of research, in which data was collected with over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. Hong Kong, in China, was one of those communities. There, youth told us of how the availability of social support helped them overcome significant odds despite the social and political factors that affect their well being.



Participants: Of the 344 youth that participated in the study from China, 45% (155) were female and 55% (188) were male. The average age of participants was 16 years, ranging from ages 13 to 29. Most of the youth who participated were in grade 7, but education levels of the participants ranged from grades 3 to 11. The communities of the participants saw the youth as coping well, based on culturally appropriate norms for behaviour.

What does resilience mean in Hong Kong? Qualitative interviews, consisting of nine 'catalyst' questions, were conducted with youth considered by the community to be 'coping well with adversity.' Youth in Hong Kong explained to the IRP what resilience means in their context. For example, one Hong Kong girl spoke candidly with IRP site partners about the difficulties of weathering years of family violence. She had, despite increasing fears for her mother and siblings, managed to maintain faith that other people would care and help them. She told of how the availability of social support in school and by friends contributed to her optimistic approach to life and people.

For further information:

For a full discussion of the *International Resilience Project*, please see the accompanying Project Report contained with this package or visit us at our website www.resilienceproject.org

For copies of this report, please contact:

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Studying Resilience:

A team of international researchers created the content for the **Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)**, a 58-item instrument administered across all 14 research-sites. Local research teams also added 15 contextually and culturally specific questions to the CYRM during its administration in their communities. Questions were scored from 1 (do not at all agree) to 5 (agree a lot) by the youth themselves.

Sample of China CYRM Mean Scores

(Highest, lowest, and largest variance when compared to overall CYRM mean)

Order	CYRM Question listed by Mean Score	Site mean	Global mean	Variance	Color codes
1	Do you eat enough most days? (CYRM 21)	4.2	4.0	0.2	■
2	Are you able to see a doctor when you need one? (CYRM 32)	4	3.9	0.1	■
3	Is getting an education important to you? (CYRM 10)	3.9	4.4	-0.5	■ ■
4	Do you think each individual is responsible to make the world a better place? (CYRM 13)	3.9	3.8	0.1	■
5	Do you think having fun and laughing can help solve problems in life? (CYRM 1)	3.6	3.2	0.4	■
6	Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards? (CYRM 39)	3.5	3.1	0.4	■
7	Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes? (CYRM 19)	3.3	2.9	0.4	■
8	Are you proud of your ethnic background? (CYRM 25)	3.2	3.9	-0.7	■
9	Are you proud to be (Nationality: Chinese)? (CYRM 53)	3.2	3.9	-0.7	■
10	Do you participate in organized religious activities? (CYRM 46)	3.1	2.7	0.4	■
11	Do you talk to your family about how you feel? (CYRM 29)	3.0	3.1	-0.1	■
12	Does your family or community encourage non-violent solutions to deal with somebody who commits a crime? (CYRM 54)	2.9	3.2	-0.3	■
13	Are you comfortable talking with people you do not know? (CYRM 12)	2.8	3.0	-0.2	■
14	Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems? (CYRM 33) Reverse scored	R1.8	3.9	-2.1	■ ■
Overall Mean across 58 CYRM questions		3.4	3.4	0.0	

■ Highest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Below Global Mean (-)
■ Lowest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Above Global Mean (+)

China CYRM Results:

■ Across all 58 measures of the CYRM, China's site mean (3.4 out of a possible 5) was equivalent to the global sample mean. Youth in China placed particular importance (or scored themselves highest) on CYRM statements: 21 'Do you eat enough most days?'; 32 'Are you able to see a doctor when you need one?'; 10 'Is getting an education important to you?'; and 13 'Do you think each individual is responsible to make the world a better place?'

■ Chinese youth scored lowest on CYRM questions: 29 'Do you talk to your family about how you feel?'; 54 'Does your family or community encourage non-violent solutions to deal with somebody who commits a crime?'; 12 'Are you comfortable talking with people you do not know?'; and 33 'Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems?'. It is important to note that CYRM question 33 is reverse scored. A low score indicates that youth *do* think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help when they have to deal with lots of problems.

■ When compared to the global sample, Chinese youth showed the most *positive variance* (scoring higher than the overall mean) on questions: 1 'Do you think having fun and laughing can help solve problems in life?'; 39 'Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards?'; 19 'Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes?'; and 46 'Do you participate in organized religious activities?'

■ Chinese youth showed the largest *negative variance* (scoring lower than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 10 'Is getting an education important to you?'; 25 'Are you proud of your ethnic background?'; 53 'Are you proud to be (Nationality)?'; and 33 'Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems?'. Again, CYRM question 33 is reverse scored, with a low score indicating youth *do* think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help when they have to deal with lots of problems.

China Site Specific Question Mean Scores

Site Specific Questions	Mean/5
SSQ 9: Do you agree man is not born to greatness; he achieves it by his own effort?	4.0
SSQ 4: Do you believe that if you work hard enough you can turn an iron rod into a needle?	4.0
SSQ 3: Do you agree that where there is a will, there is a way?	4.0
SSQ 19: Do you agree that people should find a way to forgive and let go?	3.8
SSQ 15: Do you agree that people should live with integrity, relying on self rather than others?	3.7
SSQ 8: Do you agree with the idea: happy is he who is contented?	3.7
SSQ 7: Do you agree that man is master of his own fate?	3.7
SSQ 5: Do you agree that poverty stifles ambition?	3.7
SSQ 22: Do you feel comfortable to have intimate behavior with the opposite sex in front of others?	3.7
SSQ 21: Do you feel comfortable with the way you act like a boy/girl?	3.5
SSQ 2: Do you agree that where life is good or bad depends on fate?	3.5
SSQ 18: Do you agree that a difficult life is not what one chooses; it's given?	3.5
SSQ 20: Do you feel comfortable with the way you relate to the opposite sex?	3.4
SSQ 16: Do you agree that when life isn't going well, one should give oneself a break and cast it away from one's mind?	3.4
SSQ 13: Do you agree that we are obliged to persevere, even if it means going beyond our limit, in order to fulfill our duty to loved ones?	3.4
SSQ 11: Do you need support from people around you if you want to succeed?	3.4
SSQ 1: Do you agree that hardship increases stature?	3.4
SSQ 6: Do you agree that diligence is an important factor to overcome poverty?	3.3
SSQ 14: Do you agree that life is not for the person to defy; they have to accept life as it is and live it?	3.2
SSQ 12: Are you proud to be from Hong Kong?	3.2
SSQ 17: Do you agree that you should take one step at a time?	3.1
SSQ 10: Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age?	3.0

Chinese youth's mean score across all site-specific questions was 3.5 out of a possible 5, which was higher than their overall mean on the 58 globally administered CYRM questions (3.4/5).

Understanding the Results "Ecologically":

The IRP team reached a consensus that the 58 global CYRM questions could be separated into four unique and important aspects of resilience: *individual traits and characteristics, relationships factors, community contexts, and social and political aspects of culture*. Of the 58 CYRM questions, 23 related to individual traits and characteristics, 7 related to relationship factors, 15 to community contexts, and 12 related to aspects of culture. Focus on these four areas of resilience shows which aspects are most relevant to children's success in difficult contexts. One can see from the chart below which aspects of resilience are more or less important to Chinese youth when compared to youth across all 14 research-sites.

Four-part Ecological Model:

Gender Comparison of China Site Means with Overall Sample Means (All Sites)

Ecological Model (Aspects of Resilience)	Site	Global	Girls		Boys	
			China	Global	China	Global
Individual Aspects	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4
Relationship Aspects	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.0	3.3
Community Aspects	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.5
Culture Aspects	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3

Endnotes

1 Risk factors obtained from: Yip, Teem-Wing (October, 2000). A sustained commitment towards youth in Hong Kong: A policy to meet their needs, acknowledge their worth and enrich their lives. Retrieved November 6, 2005 from Website: <http://www.citizensparty.org/community/youth/youth-paper.pdf>