

## INTRODUCTION

- Immigrant youth are at increased risk for experiencing adverse events such as family separation, psychological problems, discrimination, gaps in education, and acculturation difficulties (Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguinetti, 2013; Patel & Kull, 2010).
- For newcomers, school plays a critical role during a particularly formative time of development and acculturation (Kao & Tienda, 1995). School has the potential to become the primary setting in which psychological issues present themselves and may hinder adjustment (Birman & Taylor-Ritzler, 2007).
- For immigrant youth exposed to multiple life stressors and traumatic events, feeling connected to a community can play a protective role in reducing negative psychosocial outcomes.
- Using a social-ecological framework (Cross et al., 2015) to understand the role of community, the school context presents itself as a promising setting for consideration, and acts as a convenient platform for assessing risk and fostering a sense of community and support.

## PROJECT AIM

- To demonstrate the beneficial nature of community-school partnerships to address the needs of immigrant youth and the means by which schools can positively shape students' first years after migration.
- The Pathways to Success Project (PSP) is a four-year longitudinal school-based community participatory research project examining trajectories of risk and resilience among immigrant adolescents.
- Community Partners:** The International Network for Public schools
  - San Francisco International High School (SFIHS)
  - Oakland International High School (OIHS)
- SFIHS & OIHS are dedicated to serving recently arrived immigrants and refugees from around the world by providing necessary academic and social emotional support. Resources provided include wrap-around services for physical and mental health, restorative practices, behavior coaching, and community building.

## STUDY AIM

Using data from year one of the PSP project, this study examined the relationship between risk factors or community stressors, community connectedness, and psychological outcomes of newcomer immigrant youth.

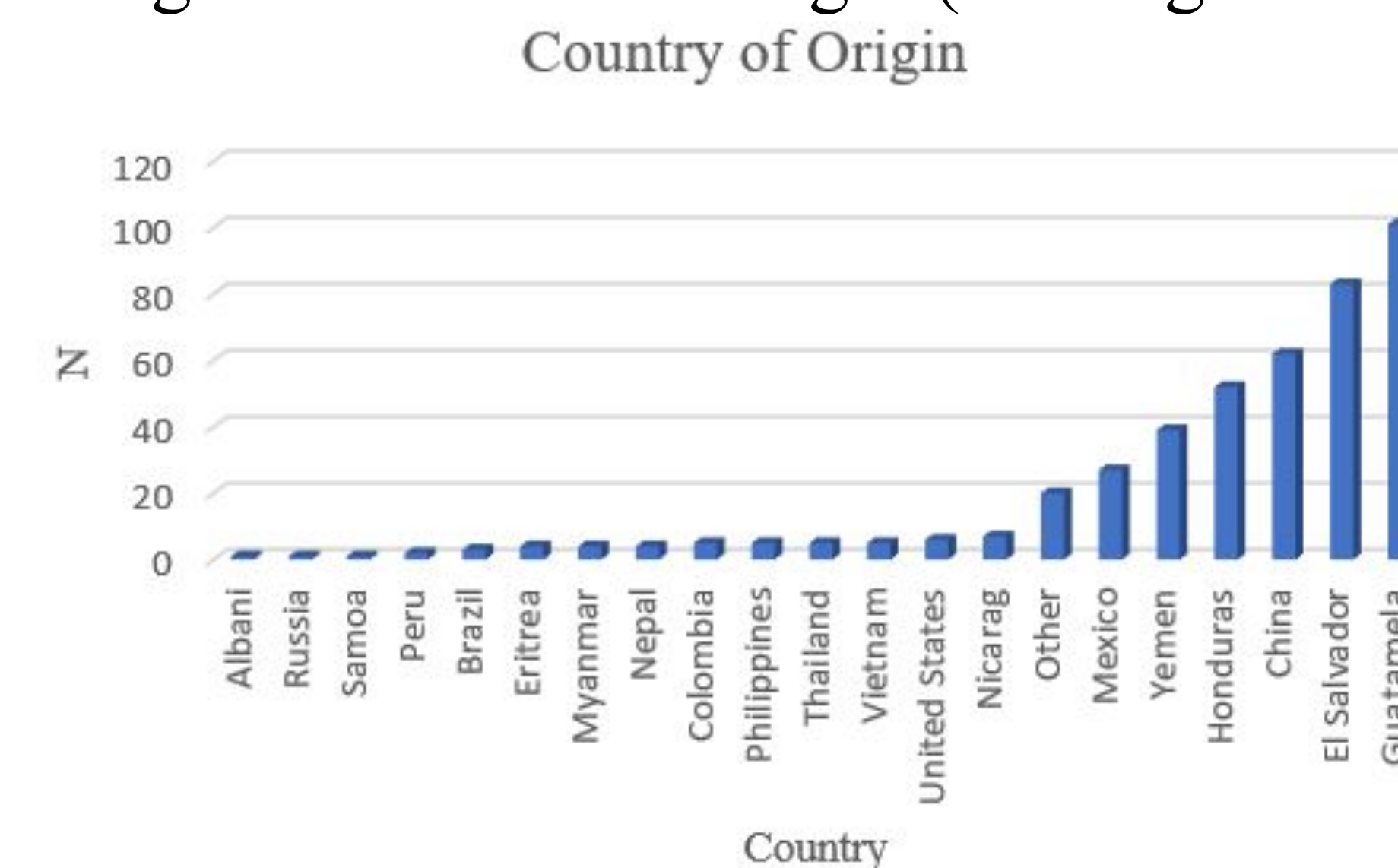
## METHODS

### Procedure

Participants completed online surveys available in seven different languages (English, Spanish, Cantonese, Farsi, Arabic, Tigrinya, & Karen) during non-instructional school time.

### Participants

Participants (N=455) all attended a public high school serving new immigrant youth. Participants were mostly 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students with an average age of 15.84, representing 21 countries of origin (See Figure Below).



### Measures

- Risk factors* were measured using the Multicultural Events Scale for Adolescents (MESA; Gonzales et al., 1996).
- Community connectedness* was measured using the Sense of Community in Adolescence (SoC-A; Chiessi, Menezes, Nata, & Marcon, 2010) questionnaire.
- Psychological outcomes* were measured with the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001).

### Data Analysis

Multiple regression analyses (using negative binomial regression distributions) examined the relationship between community stressors and psychological outcomes, as well as the potential moderating role of community connection.

## RESULTS

- Results demonstrated several risk factors for **externalizing symptoms**: sense of community,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 8.74, p = .003$ , familial conflict,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 4.68, p = .031$ , peer troubles,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 7.09, p = .008$ , and economic troubles,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 5.23, p = .022$ , as well as **internalizing symptoms**: sense of community,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 9.72, p = .002$ , familial conflict,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 4.39, p = .036$ , language difficulties,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 8.74, p = .003$ , and economic troubles,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 7.40, p = .007$ .
- Moreover, the relationship between school trouble and externalizing symptoms was significantly stronger for those who felt more connected to their school community,  $\chi^2(1, N = 293) = 4.84, p = .03$ .

## DISCUSSION

- Our findings suggest that central stressors for newcomer immigrant youth are familial conflict, economic trouble, and, paradoxically, sense of school community.
- Immigrant youth are faced with multiple complex risk factors before, during, and after migration, it is critical that school communities understand and develop capacities to foster their successful adaptation.
- Teachers and administrators are at the front lines in terms of assessing needs and providing referrals for supportive programming and services (Weinstein et al., 2002). Underscoring the potential for schools serving newcomer immigrant youth to foster resilience among their students.
- Given recent policy changes in the U.S., our findings provide a timely exploration of how community participatory research may address pressing issues for immigrant youth.