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Peace Is a Lifelong Process

The Importance of Partnerships

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If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children….You must be the change you wish to see in the world.—Mahatma Ghandi (1869–1948)

In a real sense, all life is inter-related. All persons are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.—Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968)

There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.—Nelson Mandela (1918–2013)

The true measure of a community’s standing is how well it attends to its children: their health and safety, their material security, their education, and sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and communities into which they are born.—UNICEF (2007)

A Conceptual Journey

In 2013, the Ernst Strüngmann Forum convened a think tank to review a premise that has fascinating implications for research, practice, and policy: Do the ways we raise children hold promise for promoting peace in the world? The idea behind this Forum began to form in the spring of 2010, when James Leckman met with the Mother Child Education Foundation, known as AÇEV (Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı), in Istanbul, Turkey. AÇEV wished to learn more about the biobehavioral systems involved in the formation of interpersonal bonds between parents and their offspring, and to receive a candid appraisal of their concept paper, “Building a Generation of Reconciliation: The Role of Early Childhood Development in Peace Building.”

This paper reported on AÇEV’s anecdotal experience with their father support program. This program, which began in 1996, brings together eight to ten fathers from poor areas of Istanbul as well as from rural regions of Turkey for 12–14 group sessions, to help them realize their importance in children’s lives and to encourage them to take a more positive and active role in their children’s development. In many of the groups, AÇEV observed that friendly relations were established between participating fathers despite their ethnic, religious, and ideological differences. Even more surprisingly, these friendships continued well after participation in the program ended. This led AÇEV to pose the question: Can early childhood interventions with families play a role in peacebuilding?

The need for an unbiased, scientific discourse was seen as integral. Thus, given James Leckman’s earlier work with Julia Lupp, he approached her to see if the Ernst Strüngmann Forum would be able to help. After extensive review and development, support was granted and the Forum convened an interdisciplinary steering committee to refine the scientific scope of the proposal and select the participants, whose expertise ranged from those involved in the biobehavioral mechanisms of social bond development and early childhood, to the socioecological contexts that shape risk and resilience in the pursuit of social, physical, and mental well-being, to the international policy realm of interfaith dialog, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. The goals established for this 15th Ernst Strüngmann Forum were to assess child development in the context of familial1 and group relations and to examine its potential role in building pathways to peace. To approach these goals, four questions were posed, each of which was addressed by a specific working group (see Morgan et al., Steele et al, Christie et al., and Britto, Salah et al., this volume):

1. How does human biological development impact peacebuilding?
2. How do events and relationships in childhood set the stage for peace at personal and social levels?
3. Given multiple challenges in society, what kinds of early childhood interventions have potential for promoting peace?
4. How can we use new knowledge about child development and its contexts to create effective programs and policies that will reduce violence and promote peace?

In lieu of keynote speeches or presentations, papers were commissioned to provide entry points into the Forum. In light of the ensuing discussions and peer review, they have been extensively revised so as to communicate current thoughts on these topics. Most address specific aspects of the four focal questions. However, two chapters introduce overarching concepts: Hinde and

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1 Throughout this volume, the term “family” is used to describe a group of people bound together by bound together by kinship, roles in caring for each other, cultural traditions, or close affiliation.
Stevenson-Hinde (this volume) provide a framework for analysis and highlight the role of early childhood in creating individuals and societies with the values, motivation, and skills to foster peace for future generations. Britto, Gordon et al. (this volume) present an “ecology of peace” that builds on Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and expands the initial concept of AÇEV, regarding the potential of early child interventions to contribute to peace.

To our knowledge, this Forum represents the first systematic attempt to consider whether the ways we raise children holds promise for promoting peace in the world. In this chapter we wish to introduce you to the main topics of the Forum. We begin with a reflection on the concept of peace and examine what biology has to offer. Threats to human well-being are then examined and we review what has been learned from past early childhood interventions. Several ongoing initiatives are highlighted and the importance of partnerships emphasized. We argue that the current body of interdisciplinary evidence provides an ample call to action. To strengthen families and societies in ways that will reduce violence and promote peace across generations, new knowledge about child development must be transformed into effective pathways to peace. It is our sincere hope that this volume will stimulate further dialog and prompt concrete steps that will move humanity toward this ultimate goal.

What Is Peace?

Every language has a word to describe “peace” but defining it is hardly straightforward. In the English language, for example, the Oxford English Dictionary provides six primary definitions:

1. freedom from civil unrest or disorder; public order and security;
2. freedom from quarrels or dissension between individuals, especially in early use, between an individual and God; a state of friendliness; amity, concord;
3. freedom from anxiety, disturbance (emotional, mental, or spiritual), or inner conflict; calm, tranquility;
4. freedom from external disturbance, interference, or perturbation, especially as a condition of an individual;
5. absence of noise, movement, or activity; stillness, quiet; and
6. freedom from, absence of, or cessation of war or hostilities; the condition or state of a nation or community in which it is not at war with another.

Comparisons with other English-speaking dictionaries reveal additional definitions—a fact that becomes even more apparent when one broadens the review to include other languages. Throughout the Forum, we constantly confronted what it is that we mean when we use the word “peace”: Is it the absence of...
“violence” or an entity itself? As we considered the closely related constructs of peacebuilding and peacemaking, the concept of peace proved even more elusive.

Given the multiple, yet related meanings, what do we mean by peace and its manifestations? We define peace through the following components (Figure 1.1):

- **Peace is an outcome** (e.g., it is assessed by the absence or cessation of violence).
- **Peace is a process** (e.g., peacebuilding is characterized by efforts to negotiate freedom from violence, through the creation of social bonds within and across groups of people).
- **Peace is a human disposition** (i.e., it is a personal and social orientation to secure freedom from distress and to foster a capacity to act, predicated on a fundamental recognition of freedom and dignity of all people).
- **Peace is a culture** (i.e., it is distinctive from a culture of violence, and fosters a sense of global citizenship).

Viewing the components of peace allows us to bridge approaches taken in the biological and neurological sciences (which strive to measure outcomes and processes in human development as they pertain to children and families) with approaches from the social and political sciences (which seek to understand shared goals and expectations that shape everyday human practices and the potential for change in policy, society, and everyday family life). This allows us to discuss the foundations of peace—in childhood, families, communities, and global policies—with the aim to initiate change across generations and engage children and families in pathways to peace.

When peace is viewed as a disposition (i.e., a state of mind that orients thoughts, behaviors, and principles of action), we recognize that it is also a

![Figure 1.1: Multiple components of peace.](image-url)
process conditioned by the historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts of people’s lives as well as the microenvironments of their families and communities. In an ideal world, peace is a source of freedom that allows individuals to pursue their lives in a meaningful way and to contribute to the realization of universal human rights, justice, and oneness of humanity (Britto, Salah et al., this volume). Yet beyond our own internal worlds, we must recognize that our lives are interdependent: every being influences and is influenced by others, as the above quote from Martin Luther King reminds us. We are all deeply interconnected with one another; our very survival depends on others. Aspects of this interconnectedness have their roots in the microsystems of families; these roots extend to the very beginning of life in utero and are deeply influenced by how we are raised as children (see Keverne; Maestripieri; Fox et al.; and van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg, all this volume).

The word “peace” and its adjective form “peaceful” could be interpreted as reflecting a degree of passivity or docility in response to injustice and discrimination (Christie et al., this volume). However, such a view distorts our argument. The pursuit of peace leads to giving voice and taking action to make our world a better place (see Punamäki; Dawes and van der Merwe; Masten; and Christie et al., this volume). Well-recognized exemplars of global citizenship can be found in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, who espoused nonviolence as a means to achieve social justice. Equally, however, others can be found in the actions of those who continually grapple with issues of violence and social justice, who through their actions bring agency in voice and action to considerations of peace and its linkages with society, families, and children.

We view peaceful children as individuals who are committed to relational harmony and social justice, resting on a steadfast attentiveness to human dignity, with the power to promote this human disposition across generations. Healthy children form secure attachments, have well-developed social skills, and exercise the capacity to reason and communicate. Peaceful children, however, have additional capabilities: the capacity for empathy, respect for others, commitment to fairness, and trust in relationships with other people (Christie et al., this volume). Having these peacebuilding capabilities goes beyond the creation and maintenance of harmonious relationships: they lead to the expression of a peaceful disposition, which enables individuals to think and act in ways that will promote equity, safety, and well-being for all people.

What Can Biology Teach Us?

The biobehavioral systems that underlie the development of selective social bonds between sexual partners and parent-child dyads are ancient and deeply rooted in mammalian evolution. Our threat-detection and stress-response systems have been evolutionarily conserved and are closely interconnected with
the biobehavioral systems associated with the formation and maintenance of social bonds. The neuropeptides oxytocin and vasopressin and their receptors are key elements within this system. They appear to influence, and be influenced by, many of the mental states and behaviors that directly pertain to peace, including trust, cooperation, and empathy (see Carter and Porges; Fox et al.; van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg, all this volume). Despite ever-expanding coverage in the scientific literature, unresolved questions remain concerning the interplay of the central and peripheral components of this complex biobehavioral system that dynamically engages the brain as children and caregivers interact over the course of human development.

In terms of brain structure and function, there can be no doubt that severe, early socioemotional deprivation can have a profoundly negative impact on an individual. There is also increasing evidence that there are “sensitive periods” of development that have a foundational effect on a broad range of skills and competencies (Fox et al., this volume). While the negative effects of institutionalization can be permanent, data from the Bucharest Early Intervention Project, the English Romanian Adoptees Study, and other studies of children adopted from institutional settings all indicate that some degree of remediation following adoption is possible, particularly when the adoption occurs before the age of two years and when the child has been with their adoptive family six years or more. These findings, along with data from other studies of children who were malnourished, neglected, and/or abused in their early years, provide compelling evidence that early experience matters and is an important determinant of brain structure and function as well as the children’s cognitive and social behaviors (see Morgan et al. and Christie et al., this volume). Multiple childhood adversities, from socioeconomic disadvantage to war-related violence, leave their mark on well-being that lasts well into adulthood (Kessler et al. 2010; Mitchell et al. 2014). These data give way to a call for action: What can we do to intervene on behalf of these children? More importantly, what can we do to prevent early adversity?

Epigenetics—the study of changes in the regulation of gene activity and expression that are not dependent on gene DNA sequence (Keverne, this volume)—is another area of biological science that is potentially relevant to peace. Animal studies have demonstrated that future parental behaviors can be shaped by epigenetic modifications and can have a lasting influence on patterns of gene expression in the developing brain, starting at fetal development. For example, investigators have documented that high versus low levels of licking and grooming behaviors by Norwegian mother rats during the first few days of postnatal life are associated with epigenetic modifications of the regulatory regions of a number of genes that can produce enduring effects on gene expression, leading to individual differences in stress response and future maternal behavior by the pups (Meaney 2010). These studies also indicate that individual differences in maternal behavior matter and can be transmitted across generations. If this finding is confirmed in humans, this will provide a solid foundation
for the assertion that interventions to strengthen families and to improve the
cognitive and socioemotional well-being of children have transgenerational
consequences. This possibility is a source of genuine excitement among well-
informed policy makers: it points to the huge, potential long-term benefits that
would result from efforts to refine and implement, in a sustainable fashion,
early childhood education and family support programs of proven value.

Despite an ever-growing body of research, much remains to be done be-
fore we fully understand the role of the epigenome in shaping human behavior
across generations. At present, we know that early-life adversity in primates
and humans is associated with distinct patterns of methylation across the entire
genome. For example, a recent study examined whether, in rhesus macaques
randomly divided into two groups at birth, differential methylation in early
adulthood was associated with different early-life social and rearing experi-
ences (Provençal et al. 2012). “Mother-reared” monkeys were raised by their
biological mother in a social group, whereas “surrogate peer-reared” monkeys
were reared with an inanimate surrogate as well as daily socialization periods
with age-matched peers. Provençal et al. (2012) found that differential rearing
led to differential DNA methylation in both the prefrontal cortex and peripher-
ally circulating immune cells. These differentially methylated promoters tend
to cluster by both chromosomal region and gene function. Studies in humans
also support the hypothesis that, in response to early-life adversity, there are
system- and genome-wide changes in methylation patterns in peripheral cells
that directly impact our stress-response and immune systems (Bick et al. 2012;

In humans, the timing, nature, and plasticity of these epigenetic modi-
fications may be especially important and complex. The recently completed
ENCODE project (ENCyclopedia Of DNA Elements) provides evidence that
variation in the regulation of gene expression during development, rather than
variation in protein sequence, is almost certainly the dominant factor in hu-
man brain evolution (Pennisi 2012). These changes in the sequence of the
“regulatory” portions of the human genome appear to have led to the creation
of new combinatorial expression patterns during development, which in turn
may be responsible for uniquely human aspects of brain circuitry and con-
nectome2 (Kang et al. 2011; Seung 2012). One plausible hypothesis that is
currently being explored maintains that these epigenetic modifications may
reflect evolutionarily conserved and broadly represented physiological pro-
cesses that translate specific environmental information at different stages of
development to “program” gene co-expression networks to adapt to specific
external environments (Karatsoreos and McEwen 2013; Szyf and Bick 2013).
Emerging evidence also indicates that there may be parental environmental
legacies through the male/female germ lines (sperm and ova) (Barouki et al.
2012; Soubry et al. 2014).

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2 A connectome is a comprehensive map of prominent neural connections within a nervous system.
Although challenging, future studies will need to examine these issues, particularly concerning the timing and plasticity of epigenetic modifications when the nature of the external environment is enriched. What is fixed and what can be reprogrammed? The use of animal model systems and the employment of random assignment to different rearing conditions, which change over the course of development, will likely be necessary (see Carter and Porges; Keverne; and Maestripieri, this volume). However, the ENCODE findings clearly indicate that the epigenetic modifications seen in our primate relatives may only hint at the complexity that is likely to exist in humans. In addition, while epigenetic modifications can often be developmentally sensitive and regionally specific, genomic imprinting is another set of epigenetic modifications that results in less variability in gene expression (e.g., the inactivation of large portions of the X chromosome in females) (see Keverne, this volume).

The underlying biology of groups constitutes another largely unexplored area relevant to “peace” (see Fry; Morgan et al.; and Steele et al., this volume). The influence of groups greatly impacts how individuals function in the world: we are born into groups; groups often provide the means by which we take care of each other, work and play, create and destroy; from groups we learn about our own identity and our beliefs about others. Social dominance hierarchies are nearly ubiquitous within groups and can directly influence the extent to which a society is despotic or egalitarian. Although groups at times can foster “us vs. them” social identities, there are many examples of neighboring societies where the identity of the in-group (“us”) expands to include external individuals (“them”; see Fry, this volume). Efforts to understand the underlying neurobiology of groups are just beginning (Jordan et al. 2013; Gordon et al. 2014) and should be prioritized in the future.

**Threats to Well-Being in Societies Today**

Many, if not a majority, of the world’s children live in environments that provide grossly inadequate foundations for good health, nutrition, and cognitive, language, and socioemotional development (Christie et al., this volume; UNESCO 2010; UNICEF 2012). Although poverty reduction is a central feature of the international development agenda, vast asymmetries exist in terms of income, access to food, water, health, education, housing, and employment. These inequalities produce and reproduce multiple deprivations and violations to basic human rights. Indeed, global health\(^3\) action has firmly shifted attention away from the narrow goal of poverty elimination to the broader goal of equity promotion (D’Ambruoso 2013).

\(\text{\textsuperscript{3} Global health addresses the persistence of harmful and unfair health outcomes, and views equity (or fairness) in social, economic, and political structures as an essential pathway to achieve health and well-being for all.}\)
What are the main threats to well-being in relation to peace? On the occasion of the Nobel Peace prize in 1966, Mohammed Yunnus stated succinctly in his acceptance speech: “Poverty is a threat to peace.” In this volume, we extend this viewpoint to include violence, insecurity, and inequity as significant and additional threats to peace. Violence and discrimination create injurious harm to communities, families, and children, while disparities within and across communities have been demonstrably linked to poor health (Galtung 1996; Farmer et al. 2006; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). In conflict-affected countries, widening income and ethnic inequalities are now understood to be significant drivers of violence and barriers to sustainable peace (Langer et al. 2012). Thus peace is not only linked to poverty, it is also inextricably linked to equity (i.e., fairness).

Peace and violence are often viewed as two sides of the same proverbial coin. Dawes and van der Merwe (this volume) discuss two primary forms of violence and injurious discrimination—direct violence and structural violence—and debate how these might be transformed by efforts to secure equity and justice. Without doubt, the most visible form of direct violence that inflicts harm on families and children is war-related violence (Punamäki, this volume). It is estimated that over one million children today live in countries affected by wars, armed conflicts, and military violence (Attanayake et al. 2009). It is important to understand that war-related violence cascades across generations, impacting households to subvert and overwhelm everyday family life in ways that threaten the health and well-being of both caregivers and children (Panter-Brick et al. 2014b). In Afghanistan, for example, children and families must negotiate several layers of interrelated violence; the stress of widening inequalities and shattered infrastructure, related to war-related violence, results in “everyday violence,” as manifested in persistent domestic quarrels and fierce disputes between neighbors. In the context of pervasive violence and weak governance, families prove to be children’s first line of defense.

Structural violence—an insidious, often invisible form of political, legal, social, and economic discrimination—produces persistent, unfair, and harmful health outcomes due to disparities in access or quality of resources by ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, or other backgrounds (see Dawes and van der Merwe, this volume; Galtung 1996). Similar to direct forms of violence, exposure to structural violence can initiate a series of unfortunate developmental consequences, which compromises full developmental potential. For example, children are less likely to develop the capacities and motivation required to be empathetic to the needs of others, to become productive members of society, and to work toward the goals of peace and equity. They may be more likely to engage in violent conduct (Walker et al. 2007). Later, should they become parents, these individuals raise not only children but also the expectations (social, political, economic, and legal) of their children, thereby inculcating thoughts and behaviors that shape the capacities to act.
Increasing evidence suggests that under conditions of severe life adversity, understanding pathways to resilience matters just as much as understanding pathways to risk in human development. Why and how children and families overcome violence and discrimination is just as important to understand as why and how “developmental cascades” may trap children into vulnerability (Masten, this volume). The concept of resilience as a holistic process—one that allows not only coping but transformation as well—provides a new paradigm to focus attention on the developmentally and culturally relevant leverage points necessary to foster healthy human development (Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013). In a similar vein, understanding “pathways to peace” and their connections to the everyday lives of children and families offers a perspective that extends understanding beyond what it means to minimize violence.

Given the existing global inequalities in children’s environments and opportunities, as well as the potential power that is inherent in early child development, what interventions, at the family and community levels, show promise for promoting peace in the world?

Lessons Learned

Early childhood is known to be the optimal period in which human capital is developed and formed; consequently, investments in early childhood enrichment programs provide the greatest potential for economic and human returns (Heckman and Krueger 2003; Heckman and Kautz 2013). Emerging evidence also indicates that investments in early childhood can substantially boost adult physical health (Campbell et al. 2014). By investing in early childhood intervention and family support programs, communities contribute to an enhancement of their social capital and gender equity (Coleman 1988). In addition, there is the potential for family-based intervention programs to permeate not just individual homes but entire communities. These interventions provide a bottom-up approach at the family level which can create cumulative change in communities and societies (Britto, Gordon et al., this volume). A particularly important feature of these programs is that they facilitate the formation of diverse in-groups. By focusing on commonalities among families, these programs provide an opportunity for productive relationships to be formed across ethnic, cultural, and religious divides (see Kagitcibasi and Britto, this volume).

Early childhood interventions aim to enhance the development and well-being of children during the early years of life and to improve family environments. These interventions encompass a range of programs across multiple dimensions (Britto et al. 2013):

- age of the child (e.g., infancy, toddlers, preschool ages),

• foci of intervention (e.g., health, nutrition, protection, education, the social capital of the parents),
• generation(s) being served (e.g., children or caregivers, or both),
• mode of implementation (e.g., home-based, center-based, one-on-one training vs. group-based interventions), and
• sponsorship of the program (e.g., government, nongovernmental organizations, private for profit).

A number of programs show promise, and a few have demonstrated long-term benefits. Notable examples of studies from the United States that have shown positive long-term outcomes into adulthood include the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Chicago Longitudinal Study, and the Abecedarian Project (reviewed in Kagitcibasi and Britto, this volume). The Turkish Early Enrichment Project (Kagitcibasi et al. 2001) and Jamaica Study (Grantham-McGregor et al. 1991b)—two of the few longitudinal studies conducted outside of the United States—have assessed the impact of overall development and cognitive/achievement outcomes that early childhood intervention programs have had on the participants in adulthood. These two projects share a number of common elements: both work with at-risk children, involve direct parent and child engagement, and use an experimental design. Most importantly, these two studies, like the U.S. studies, demonstrated measurable gains for the child into adulthood as a result of their participation in the program.

The Turkish Early Enrichment Project involved both center-based preschool environmental enrichment and home-based training for mothers in a quasi-experimental design. Mothers were trained to support their preschool-age children’s overall development, including preparation for school. At the end of the first stage of study, benefits were noted in virtually all areas: the child’s cognitive abilities, school adjustment and performance, social acceptance by peers, level of autonomy, and decreased use of aggressive behavior (Kagitcibasi et al. 2001; see also Kagitcibasi and Britto, this volume). As the participating children moved into adolescence, sustained benefits were noted with regard to cognitive development, school achievement, educational attainment, socioemotional development, and social integration. Secondary benefits were also observed: mothers and families benefited from better family relations and the intrafamily status of women increased. At the second stage of the study, carried out in young adulthood, the following long-term benefits were noted in young adults who had participated and/or whose mothers had participated: increased educational attainment (including university education), better cognitive performance, higher occupational status, and greater social participation (Kagitcibasi et al. 2009). Two other promising elements of this intervention should be noted: (a) interaction between parents promotes the creation of social bonds across ethnic, cultural, and religious boundaries; (b) program sustainability is reliant on the involvement of government officials at both local
and national levels, which should be cultivated from the onset. Both elements highlight the importance of partnerships to achieve jointly held goals.

One of the biggest limitations to ongoing work is the lack of any direct assessment of relevant peace promotion variables. Although we were able at the Forum to create conceptual links between outcomes of better executive function, increased empathy, better social communication skills, reduced violence, and peacebuilding, these have not been rigorously tested in diverse contexts. To do this, we must decide how to measure peace, in terms of outcomes, processes, disposition, or cultural values. Ideally, metrics should be developed for use in national surveys and early intervention programs. Some of the possibilities that have yet to be explored include measuring dyadic and triadic parent-child interactions in the home, using video recordings, before and after early intervention programs. If peace is regarded as a state of mind, then monitoring the dyadic interactions between parent and child in real time could offer a good approach. Other possibilities include the use of biomarkers, such as salivary oxytocin and hair cortisol (Feldman et al. 2013), immune competence (Panter-Brick et al. 2008), or telomere length (Mitchell et al. 2014) as well as indicators of future risk for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases (Campbell et al. 2014). A range of social science methods is also essential to gain a fuller appreciation of the effectiveness, relevance, and long-term impact of these programs on children and their families. Given the potential for transgenerational effects of interventions, it is crucial for participants of early childhood intervention programs to be evaluated when they become parents, so that the nature of parenting can be evaluated when it is their turn to raise children. In addition, the design of evaluations needs to be more robust before we can know for certain what impacts specific programs have on child development or family dynamics.

Global Citizenship

Throughout the Forum, the concept of global citizenship and the culture of peace (see the Foreword, this volume) directed discussion on efforts to strengthen families and improve the lives of children. As set forth by the United Nations, “a culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life” that “reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation” among individuals, groups and nations (UN 1999). The UN declaration resonates with Hinde’s perspective set out in his recent book, Changing How We Live: Society from the Bottom Up (Hinde 2011; see also Hinde and Stevenson-Hinde, this volume): What changes are necessary so that each of us takes responsibility for looking after each other and our planet? As an evolutionary biologist and peace activist, Hinde (2011) highlights two basic propensities of human nature: selfish assertiveness, which leads to behaviors
that primarily benefit the actor, and *prosociality*, which leads to behaviors that benefit others as well as one’s own self.

What better place to start than childhood? What needs to be done to develop and empower the next generation of Mahatma Ghandis, Martin Luther Kings, and Nelson Mandelas? To this end, Abu-Nimer and Nasser (this volume) offer a framework that links peacebuilding with child development, and Nusseibeh (this volume) reviews the potential role that the media could play in peacebuilding. Potential exemplars, such as the Panwapa initiative, exist that empower children across the globe to interact with one another and become global citizens (Lee and Cole 2009).

**Next Steps**

Assessing whether the ways we raise children holds promise for promoting a more peaceful world is an ongoing process (e.g., Panter-Brick and Leckman 2013; Sunar et al. 2013; Panter-Brick et al. 2014a) predicated on relevant knowledge, careful evaluations, strong partnerships, and fundamental interdisciplinary collaborations to bridge and assimilate expertise from academic, practitioner, and policy worlds. Our journey has now led to the specific hypothesis that early childhood development *is* relevant to peacebuilding (Sunar et al. 2013; Panter-Brick et al. 2014a). Based on the current body of interdisciplinary evidence, a clear call for action is warranted and initial steps have been taken.

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium was established “to advocate for investment in young children as a way to promote peace in homes and communities and, ultimately, as a strategy for peacebuilding.”4 At its launch in September 2013, over 140 partners from multiple sectors (e.g., civil society, the social and mass media, government officials, multi- and bi-lateral agencies, practitioners, academic researchers) took part in activities focused on “creating a legacy of sustained peace drawing on the transformative power of early child development.” Currently, the consortium is striving (a) to achieve the key goals related to the global peacebuilding agenda,5 by recognizing the transformative power of early development to promote prosociality, diminish selfish assertiveness, and reduce and prevent violence; (b) to create a platform to advocate for change, using bottom-up approaches and to inform future research, policy agendas, and programs; and (c) to strengthen established and emerging networks around children and peace.

In addition to the Early Childhood Peace Consortium, work is underway with UNICEF, AÇEV, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the Fetzer Institute, and Sesame Workshop to build global strategies that will promote pathways to peace—pathways that will involve children and their families at the community

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level. This work will involve policy makers, government officials, academic partners, and, importantly, the media (see Nusseibeh, this volume).

We also wish to direct attention to an ongoing program in South Africa: Ilifa Labantwana. This program, described in detail by Dawes and van der Merwe (this volume), operates on a large scale, is multifaceted and funded completely by donors. It is based on the recognition of the structural inequities that face the majority of South African children and those who care for them. Its main goal is to provide the evidence necessary to inform changes in government policy and provisioning for early childhood development, thus enabling scale up of essential services to ensure that children thrive, grow, and are ready to learn when they reach school.

Common to each of these examples is the clear focus on early child development. By working, first and foremost, with families (and then, by extension, with the communities and governing bodies in which they reside), important steps can be taken to promote both healthy and peaceful child development. In turn, healthy and peaceful children will provide the necessary, if not wholly sufficient, foundations for peace.

We do not advocate a one-size-fits-all view of community engagement, family structure, or child development; roles and configurations of what it means to be a family or a parent vary substantially within and across cultures. Regardless of their configuration, families are an important locus for the biological and social care of children. Consequently, families provide significant entry points to promote healthy and peaceful child development through interventions that reduce violence, vulnerabilities, or harm as well as interventions that build peace, resilience, and equity in health.

Engaging with families is not the sole option. Resilience, equity, or peace can also be promoted within schools and/or at the community level. Families, however, represent a sensible and effective place to start. Furthermore, engaging with families is not equivalent to engaging mothers alone, since other caregivers have a demonstrable impact on family dynamics and healthy child development (Cowan et al. 2009; Panter-Brick et al. 2014a).

If we are to move consciously toward peace, our ways of being must incorporate a culture and a disposition toward peace that will shape processes and outcomes for future generations. In this volume, various “pathways to peace” are explored, based on the biological and social underpinnings of child development, to promote harmonious and equitable relations in families and across generations. There are, no doubt, many others. Thus, in the spirit of the Ernst Strüngmann Forum, we wish to enlist your involvement in this discussion, in future programs, and in new research endeavors. If concrete progress is to be made, intersectorial partnerships between stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, policy makers, funders, service providers, researchers, community leaders, families, children) must be created and sustainably maintained, for the task requires the efforts of all.
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