



WORLD FORUM IN ACTION

BIG IDEAS

The Ground Work of the World Forum



Children's Rights

Submitted by
Ellen Hall

The big idea that led to the initiation of the World Forum Foundation Working Group on Children's Rights came from Pam Boulton in a statement written to the World Forum community following the World Forum in Belfast in June 2009. In this statement, Pam wrote, "I believe that ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important part of being a global citizen. It is time to ask — intentionally and insistently — that our legislators ratify this convention and that we take our place among those who agree to promote and protect children's best interests." This idea caught my attention as an educator in a school that has been engaged in research surrounding the rights of children for nearly a decade, and, encouraged by Bonnie Neugebauer, Pam and I reached out to one another. The idea that we could learn about ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) from our World

Forum colleagues, whose countries have already ratified this important document, was the stimulus for the organization and facilitation of a series of panel discussions during the 2011 World Forum in Hawaii. The explosion of ideas that this opportunity created led to numerous ideas including the idea that ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is only a beginning. There is a great deal of work surrounding interpretation and implementation that we can do in collaboration with one another, as global citizens who are committed to honoring the rights of all children to provision, protection, and participation as citizens of the present and of the future.



Nature Action Collaborative for Children

Submitted by
*Toni Christie and
Caroline Hudicourt*

The idea behind the work of the NACC is that all children have a right to experience the beauty and wonder of nature every day of their lives so they can reflect on and value themselves and their place

in the environment; and that we adults have to take the actions necessary to support them in doing so. Two big ideas of the group were the creation of Wonder newsletter in each issue of the Exchange magazine and the Environmental Action Kit found on the World Forum Foundation website. Both of these are ways to share resources and ideas worldwide on successful strategies for connecting children with nature.



Curriculum

Submitted by
Larry Schweinhart

From its beginning, the World Forum on Early Care and Education has been committed to addressing early childhood curriculum. This commitment previously resulted in presentations of several widely used curriculum models or approaches. In 2011 we took a working group approach instead. We recruited early childhood curriculum developers and their representatives to participate. Throughout the year we developed a

small set of clearly stated principles that all participants agreed on. At the World Forum in Honolulu, we finalized the list and wording at working group meetings and presented the statement to a larger group of Forum participants for more feedback.

Our principles assert that a set of early childhood curriculum principles apply, with adaptation, in all countries. We define early childhood as the period of human life from birth up to 5 or 6 years of age and even 8 or 9. We say that young children should have choices that influence their curriculum, appropriate to their stage of development; that professional development experiences should be organized around a comprehensive curriculum and assessment system that has evidence of its effectiveness and is culturally sensitive; and that caregiving for infants and toddlers should meet their common needs as expressed in their own cultures. We define early childhood assessment as documented observation of children's development, especially during play, and as evaluation of curriculum and program quality. We acknowledge early childhood educators' responsibility to find ways to empower children, educators, and parents to work together as partners in education.



International Working Group on Peace Building with Young Children

*Submitted by
Kishor Shrestha*

International Working Group on Peace Building with Young Children (IWGPB) has been formed with a noble interest to make visible the role of early childhood development as a force for reconciliation and peace building in the regions experiencing or emerging from armed conflict. However, its activities are not limited to the regions experiencing

armed conflict. We firmly believe that "as war begins in the minds of the people, the peace must be cultivated in the minds of the people." In this regard, IWGPB aims to advocate for the development of supportive policy on early childhood and peace building at the national, regional, and international levels. Its activities include partnership building for addressing the needs of young children and families living in conflict-affected societies. Moreover, it focuses on the capacity building of the professionals at all levels — from local to national, regional, and global. It provides a platform for sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences among its members, and strives to inculcate hope, encouragement, and positive attitudes on children and families living in violent and disruptive environments across the globe.



Global Collaborative OnDesign for Children

*Submitted by
Paul Roberts*

The Global Collaborative OnDesign for Children is the newest Working Group of the World Forum Foundation. Our mission is to connect people who care about the quality of spaces designed for children. We aim to become a clearing-house for research, case studies, and dialogue concerned with all aspects of creating and renovating spaces for children to become places of learning, discovery, and joy. Through development of our website and holding training sessions and working forums around the globe, we will create an increased awareness of both how to create great spaces and the research of the benefits of doing so.

In 2012, just a year after forming, we

are very excited to be holding our first International Working Forum OnDesign for Children at the Clark Kerr Campus of the University of California, Berkeley. The location in the beautiful and exciting San Francisco Bay Area promises to be a dynamic and interchange of dialogue with leading experts from around the world.

After the conference and with guidance from all of the attendees, we will shift our focus to the development of the OnDesign website. By the end of 2012 we plan to have the site well developed, including places to find out about research studies and resources. The site will include case studies of successful centers. Perhaps most importantly we hope to lead the World Forum Foundation with the development of a fully configured electronic ideas exchange and blogs that will allow for open-ended opportunities to dialogue on ideas and knowledge about designing and the use of spaces for children.

Come join us as we change the world in improving spaces for children.



Voices of Hope, HIV/AIDS Action Tank

*Submitted by
Martha Vibbert and
Noreen Huni*

The biggest idea behind the work of the Voices of Hope Action Tank is that there is unique value in surfacing grassroots experience and



perspectives of early childhood caregivers for fighting HIV and AIDS and improving outcomes for children and families. We engender hope by directly linking grassroots organizations that deliver care to young children and their families who are affected by HIV and AIDS around the globe. We want to develop a collective voice that strengthens advocacy for young children, that intervenes early to reduce the stigma and isolation that so often accompanies HIV and AIDS; and that educates families and communities about how to collectively respond to the urgent health and educational needs of young children who are infected and affected by the epidemic. We want to forge new paths of learning and growing that are free of geographic boundaries and respectful of cultural differences. We want to lend others inspiration and endurance in their work with HIV-involved children across the globe.



World Play

Submitted by
Susan Linn

World Play, a working group of the World Forum, aspires to a time when every child has the time, space, opportunity, and resources to play. Our mission is to inspire and support global efforts to promote play as central to children's growth, development, and learning, and to address and eliminate societal barriers that prevent children from playing.



Rights of Children in Children's Homes

Submitted by
Laura Briley and Janet Gonzalez-Mena

Our Working Group was formed with the belief that all children should have the benefit of being raised by their birth parents. Yet, that is not always viable due to death of a parent or both parents, abandonment, illness, abuse, natural disasters, and war. It is paramount that we are ready to provide children the best care when placed in an institution or foster care.

Our big idea for change is to improve the outcomes for children reared in residential group care around the world. We base our goals on our knowledge that children can be reared in group care and foster homes in ways that result in good outcomes — children who grow up to be healthy, productive citizens — indistinguishable from the general population of the country. We know that residential group care for children around the world needs to improve. The big push in many countries is for foster care because of the idea that every child needs a family. We agree with the idea, but we understand the pitfalls of moving exclusively to foster care. Children may be placed in an institution first and then be placed in foster care. These two situations can work hand-in-hand if appropriate training and support are given. We want to help countries be successful in caring for children by providing them with information about best practices for

children. The information is based on experience and research related to long-term beneficial outcomes. Our further goal is to give support and create ongoing trainings. Our priorities are to work to create a network of children's homes; develop guidelines, and provide training and conferences for those who administer and work with children who are at risk when they have been abandoned or have to be placed in another environment other than their 'own home.'



Inclusion and Special Needs

Submitted by
Roberta J. Goldberg, Ph.D.

Children with special needs are often among the most disadvantaged and neglected individuals in society. And it is not difficult to see why. Having a disability, plus stereotypes about them, can leave children unable to speak up for themselves and families of those children marginalized in their own communities. This is especially true for those facing profound challenges. The focus of the Inclusion Working Group is to address the myriad of issues facing children with special needs and their families and advocate for their full inclusion in communities around the world. We believe in supporting teachers and families to help children develop their full potential in all areas: cognitive, motor and emotional development, behavior and social skills, arts and leisure, and self-help skills. The Inclusion Working Group targets delegates involved in child care and educational

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settings where children with special needs are already included or those that aspire to include children with special needs in their programs and are seeking information and strategies toward that goal. We aim to educate our communities about the potential and needs of children of all



abilities, so every child may experience the full



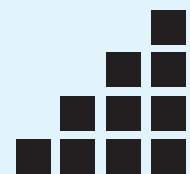
rights and joys of childhood.



The World Forum Foundation would like to take this opportunity to say “Thank You” to Rodney and Carmel Kenner of Pademelon Press, New South Wales, Australia for their World Forum support. They organized the Bookstore at each international conference and were the founders of the World Forum Networking Project.



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