

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PEACE CONSORTIUM



STRATEGIC
PLAN
2025-2030





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BACK COVER PHOTO

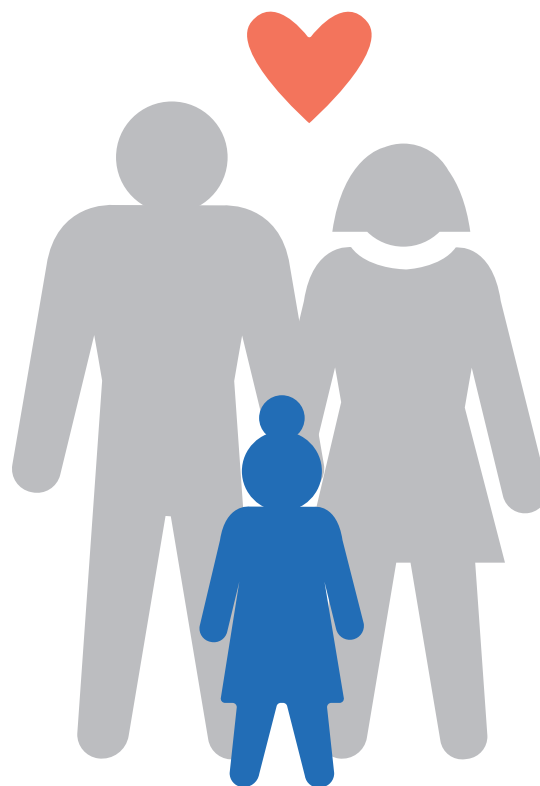
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OUR MISSION

To catalyze global action that leverages early childhood development as a pathway to sustainable peace – through evidence-based advocacy, support for families, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.



OUR VISION

A peaceful world where children grow up in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment – free from violence and supported in their development.



WHO WE ARE

The **Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC)** is a global network of civil society organizations, researchers, practitioners, and the private sector, alongside United Nations agencies, committed to embedding early childhood development (ECD) in peacebuilding strategies and healing from mass violence.

Launched at UNICEF in 2013, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium champions the evidence that investing in ECD is one of the most cost-effective pathways to reduce violence, poverty, and social exclusion—and to foster sustainable peace and cohesion.

We operate at the intersection of science and social change, translating rigorous research into practical solutions.

One of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium's core strengths derives from its diverse partnerships. Over the past 12 years, consortium membership has grown to include:

- **UN agencies and global development actors:**

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children and Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- **Research institutions:** American University, Boston College Research Program on Children and Adversity, Ernst Strüngmann Forum, Freie Universität Berlin, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, New York University Global TIES for Children, Queen's and Ulster Universities in Belfast, Sesame Workshop, UNICEF, Yale University

- **Non-governmental and practitioner organizations:** The Mother and Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD), Arab Resource Collective (ARC), the CINDE Foundation, Fondazione Child, Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, Make Mothers Matter, the Palestinian Child Institute (PCI), World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), World Vision International

- **Philanthropic partners:** The Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı Foundation, John E. Fetzer Institute, Inc., H&M Foundation, Sesame Workshop, Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (European Union), UNICEF

- **Network-based allies:** The Early Years the Organisation for Young Children, the International Network on Peace Building with Young Children (INPB), the International Step-by-Step Association (ISSA), Supporting Father Involvement

Together, we form a knowledge-to-action consortium, rooted in scientific integrity and designed for responsible global impact. Our current framework supports future expansion through regional hubs that localize implementation and knowledge generation, while maintaining a cohesive global vision.



SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Situation

Children and families in conflict-affected settings face serious and lasting threats to their health, development, and wellbeing.¹ It is now estimated that 1 in 5 children globally lives in an active conflict zone with even more children and families living in post-conflict settings still struggling to recover from mass violence. Many are exposed to trauma, displacement, attacks on schools, family separation, and other violations of their rights; these harms have intergenerational effects, undermining not only individual lives but also the foundations of peaceful societies. In the last 10 years, violations of children's rights in conflict areas have been on the rise, and conflicts are increasing, reversing a post-World War II trend.²

Despite the well-documented risks, ECD remains underprioritized in peacebuilding and humanitarian agendas. The science is clear: the early years are critical for brain development, empathy, and the formation of healthy relationships—all of which are essential to peaceful communities. Violence leaves its mark on the human genome, on children, and even grandchildren unborn at the time of conflict.³ Without urgent action, cycles of violence and marginalization will persist – and be amplified – across generations.

The Solution

Investing in ECD—especially in nurturing care, responsive parenting, and holistic support systems—is one of the most effective strategies to disrupt these cycles.⁴ Evidence from countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ireland, Lebanon, Rwanda, Palestine, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Türkiye shows that ECD programs can reduce trauma and violence, foster empathy, and strengthen families and communities. These outcomes improve not only child development, but also the social fabric of communities affected by conflict. These interventions promote social cohesion and help shift how communities address violence—laying the groundwork for sustainable peace.

¹ Guidance Note of the Secretary General (2023). [Child Rights Mainstreaming](#).

² Urgent Appeal to [Stop War Against Children Now](#).

³ A first-of-its kind study (Mulligan et al. 2025) shows that [Violence leaves its mark on the human genome across generations](#).

⁴ [Overview](#) of the the Early Childhood Peace Consortium's Research and Practice (2021). [Love and Peace Across Generations](#) (2021). [Pathways to a more peaceful and sustainable world](#) (2021). [The Economics of Human Potential](#).



What We Know from Science and Practice

Early childhood is a powerful entry point for building peaceful societies. Investments in the early years can reduce violence, support caregiving, and strengthen community resilience—especially in conflict-affected contexts.

- Early childhood is a critical window for shaping brain development, emotional wellbeing, and lifelong opportunities.
- Children exposed to conflict, poverty, and neglect face lasting harm—but nurturing care and supportive environments can buffer these effects by developing empathy, self-regulation, and resilience.
- These harms have intergenerational effects, but can be reversed.
- Supporting families—especially parents and caregivers—is essential to breaking intergenerational cycles of violence.
- Holistic ECD programs reduce trauma and violence, build empathy, and strengthen family and community relationships.
- Investment in ECD is a proven strategy to interrupt cycles of violence and promote sustainable peace.
- Early-life investments, in the first 1000 days of a child's life, are more cost-effective than later-life interventions.

Evidence across disciplines shows that ECD is foundational to individual wellbeing and societal resilience. Embedding ECD in peacebuilding efforts helps shift the focus from crisis response to long-term prevention. Yet peacebuilding efforts have often overlooked the central role of families and the early years in preventing violence. In reality, homes are where peace begins—or unravels.

To build lasting peace, we must embed ECD into the core of peacebuilding strategies—not as an add-on, but as a powerful engine of prevention and transformation.

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium's work is grounded in three core areas of evidence-based action:

- 1. Early development results:** High-quality programs in the first three years of life improve children's learning, psychosocial health, and life-long opportunities. ECD is a transformative foundation recognized in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.⁵
- 2. Family and community engagement:** Interventions that engage parents and caregivers reduce parenting stress, foster nurturing care, and strengthen families as peacebuilders.
- 3. Systems and partnerships:** Sustainable impact requires engaged stakeholders, supportive policies, reliable funding, and scalable programs. A new generation of research and innovation is needed to overcome structural and societal barriers. Countries like Colombia and Nepal have already embedded ECD into national peacebuilding strategies.

⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals addressed early childhood development specifically, for the first time, through target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium serves as a bridge between academic research and practical implementation. It is anchored by scientific leadership and works in partnership with UNICEF, other UN agencies, regional networks, and civil society.

Our desired outcomes are:

1. Evidence-to-policy translation: Strengthening evidence-to-policy translation through high-level dialogues and UN member state commitments
2. Effective implementation: Scaling up and sustaining quality in ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs are prioritized in national and international peacebuilding frameworks
3. Capacity building for next-generation leadership: Training youth and emerging leaders to champion intergenerational peacebuilding, by anchoring the Early Childhood Peace Consortium as a global knowledge hub





STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES 2025-2030

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium serves as a bridge between academic research and practical implementation. It is anchored by scientific leadership and works in partnership with UNICEF, other UN agencies, regional networks, and civil society.

Our Goal

Ensure that evidence-based early childhood development (ECD) is recognized and operationalized as a pillar of sustainable development in global governance, systems, and investment frameworks.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Research

- Embed ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs into global sustainable development knowledge systems (e.g., UN data platforms, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change-style ECD reports)
- Advance cross-sectoral and intergenerational research to evaluate outcomes and sustainability impacts

Practice

- Institutionalize ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs as core services delivered across education, health, environment, peacebuilding, and child protection systems in conflict-affected contexts
- Align ECD services with the principles of peacebuilding, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability

Advocacy

- Secure the inclusion of ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs as a stated goal in the post-2030 global development agenda
- Mobilize champions for ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs within multilateral institutions and global civil society

Policy

- Secure the inclusion of ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs as a stated goal in the post-2030 global development agenda
- Mobilize champions for ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs within multilateral institutions and global civil society





FROM VISION TO IMPLEMENTATION: OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Network development and governance evolution

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium has evolved into a global consortium of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, researchers, practitioners, and the private sector, alongside UN agencies. It shares scientific and practice-based evidence on how investment in ECD contributes to sustainable peace.

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium’s governance structure leverages strong academic foundations to build a global knowledge-to-action network. Our current framework provides the infrastructure for rigorous research, strategic advocacy, and thoughtful expansion. This enables us to maintain scientific integrity while preparing for broader geographical reach through the planned development of regional hubs.

Working Groups

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium’s Working Groups reflect our commitment to integrated knowledge and implementation:

- **Research and Programmatic Collaboration:** Partnerships like the International Network on Peace Building for Young Children (INPB) demonstrate how academic-practitioner collaboration drives both insight and practical change.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** This group translates research into action-oriented frameworks, engaging global stakeholders and influencing policy.
- **Youth Leadership:** The Youth Working Group cultivates next-generation leadership and ensures fresh perspectives across our global network.

Standing Committees

Our Standing Committees are developing the governance architecture to support expansion:

- **Governance and Finance:** Designing flexible but standardized operational procedures for future regional hubs, balancing autonomy and quality assurance
- **Global Communications:** Building technical systems—including knowledge management, virtual collaboration, and standardized reporting tools—to connect current and future hubs while preserving local ownership

With adequate multi-year funding, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium aims to establish regional hubs as centers of excellence by 2030. These hubs will adapt global knowledge to local contexts and contribute field insights back into the research ecosystem—ensuring a two-way flow that strengthens both programming and policy influence.

The Executive Committee devises the long-term strategy, focusing on building durable funding partnerships and strengthening engagement with global and regional actors. The Early Childhood Peace Consortium’s identity remains that of an enabling consortium—not a competing implementer—focused on convening, knowledge exchange, and systems-level transformation.





As we scale our impact, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium will strive to:

1. Deploy a diversified funding model that blends institutional, programmatic, and innovative financing sources to pursue our goals
2. Strengthen integrated knowledge systems to render our evidence base accessible and actionable
3. Expand our communications capacity to engage stakeholders from community partners to global policymakers

Since 2013, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium has been financially supported by three organisational members:

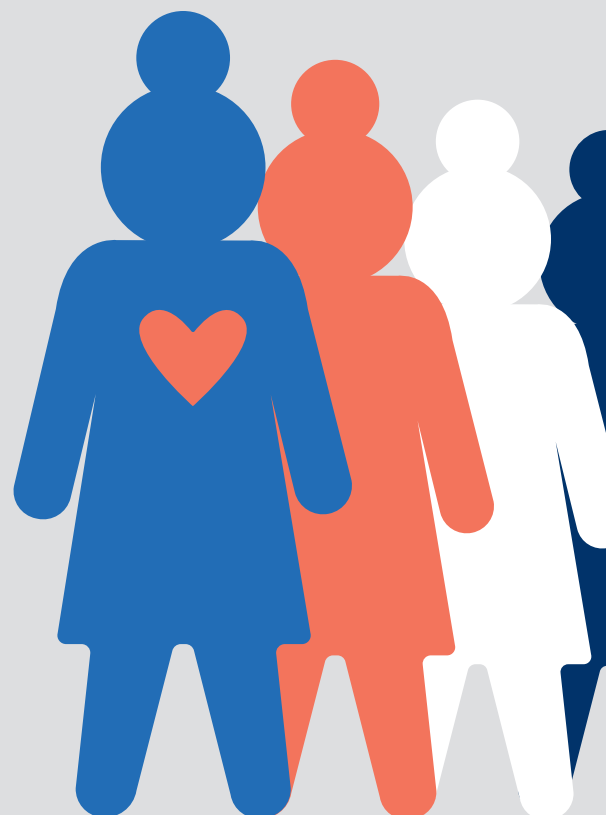
- **Yale faculty** providing financial support for the coordination and communications function (full-time staff post), including essential non-personnel expenses
- **UNICEF** providing the Secretariat support (part-time staff post)
- **Early Years** supporting the Treasurer role and Chair of the Programmatic Working Group/International Network on Peace Building (part-time)

Transitional short-term strategy

During this transitional period, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium Executive Committee will host several events with potential funders and donors to share and gain support for the Early Childhood Peace Consortium Strategic Plan 2025-2030, commencing with the launch of the Strategic Plan at UNGA 80 in September 2025 followed by technical events in Mexico in November, and in Qatar and at Yale in early 2026. These meetings with potential funders will aim to gain financial support to allow the Early Childhood Peace Consortium to deliver an ambitious programme of work over the period 2025-2030.

During this period, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium Executive and Working Groups will develop detailed, cross-coordinated Operational Plans for 2025, 2026, and 2027 with detailed budgets, based on the consortium's pre-established annual goals.

To operationalize its strategic vision, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium will prioritise five interconnected pillars that guide implementation over the next decade. These pillars translate our core goals into actionable objectives—linking research, practical program delivery, policy influence and advocacy, and accountability, into a unified framework for sustainable peacebuilding through early childhood development.





MEASURING SUCCESS

To evaluate the effectiveness, scale, and sustainability of our strategy, the Early Childhood Peace Consortium will monitor progress across **5 Domains**. These domains reflect the full spectrum of our work—from direct program impact to systemic policy shifts and organizational resilience. Each domain includes targeted indicators to guide continuous learning, inform strategic adjustments, and ensure transparency with donors, partners, and communities.

PROGRAMMATIC REACH > **Track** direct beneficiary counts in conflict-affected contexts and monitor ripple effects through policy and systems change. Ensure capture of both immediate outcomes and long-term transformation.

POLICY ADVANCEMENT > **Monitor** global advocacy impact through the adoption and implementation of a UN Resolution on ECD and Peacebuilding. Track integration of peacebuilding into ECD policies, with attention to domestic resource allocation as a sustainability marker.

EVIDENCE GENERATION > **Build** a body of evidence linking ECD and trauma-informed parenting programs to peace outcomes through evaluations, peer-reviewed research, and case studies. Monitor child development progress and improvements in social cohesion at the community level.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT > **Measure** growth and effectiveness of the practitioner network via training, regional hubs, and youth leadership. Evaluate the sustainability of an ecosystem of skilled implementers and advocates.

FINANCIAL & PARTNERSHIP > **Track** funding secured, diversity of funding sources, value of in-kind partner contributions, and long-term donor engagement. Assess indicators of organizational sustainability and stakeholder confidence.

HEALTH



CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

The evidence is clear. Investing in ECD is one of the most powerful and cost-effective strategies to build more peaceful societies. The Early Childhood Peace Consortium stands ready to scale this impact—through evidence-based programming, regional partnerships, and sustained global advocacy.

We call on governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, and donors to join us in advancing this agenda.

- The United Nations to secure UN member state commitments to integrate early childhood development into peacebuilding agendas
- National governments to prioritize scaling up early childhood development in systems of care
- Researchers and practitioners to train youth and emerging leaders to champion inter-generational peacebuilding
- United Nations agencies (e.g., UNICEF, UN Women, International Labor Organization, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, other international NGOs (e.g., International Alert, International Crisis Group, Action Aid International)
- Donors to support the Early Childhood Peace Consortium

Together, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow up safe, supported, and prepared to help build a more peaceful world. ■



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