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Special Section: Introduction to Research on Cognitive Development Across the Life Span

Cognitive development is a dynamic and complex process that unfolds across the entire human lifespan, from infancy through old age. By examining cognitive development longitudinally and cross-sectionally, there are new insights into the fundamental nature of human growth and adaptability. In this special section, we delve into recent advancements in cognitive development research, showcasing studies that span diverse life stages and highlight the interplay of theory, empirical research, and applied practice. The contributions for this special issue emphasize the diversity of perspectives and methodologies needed to understand cognitive growth and change, from infancy through late adulthood, within varied cultural and contextual frameworks.

The featured contributions explore topics ranging from theoretical models to applied interventions, global perspectives, and policy implications. Together, they shine a light on the dynamic nature of cognitive development, providing a rich foundation for future inquiry. The first paper by Miller et al., presents the model of hierarchical complexity as a unifying framework to explain cognitive development across life stages. It highlights the advantages of the hierarchical model when compared with other models that examine how development takes place over time. The second paper by Scheidecker, on early childhood development interventions, addresses the critical importance of early life as a foundation for cognitive development and underscores the necessity of culturally responsive, evidence-based research to inform policy and practice, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

The third paper to feature in our special section of the Bulletin, by Liu et al., explores how adolescents allocate their

time across various activities in different countries and investigate how these patterns influence cognitive development. The findings provide insights into the opportunities and challenges of adolescence, emphasizing the role of time management in fostering cognitive growth. The final paper draws on a sociocultural lens and explores cognitive development within Nigerian contexts, highlighting the impact of cultural values, familial structures, and educational practices. It advocates for more context-specific research to capture the unique experiences shaping cognition in diverse global settings.

We are glad to include a message from the ISSBD President and also minutes of the past executive meetings. We also have a brief report from the Early Career Scholars representatives and are excited to learn about their upcoming activities.

The collection of papers included in this issue of the Bulletin demonstrates the breadth and depth of contemporary research on cognitive development, showcasing how theoretical models, empirical findings, and applied interventions intersect to enrich our understanding. By bringing together global perspectives and diverse methodologies, this special section aims to foster further dialogue and innovation in the field, with the ultimate goal of improving cognitive health and development across the lifespan.

As we wrap up this year and look ahead to new beginnings, we extend our heartfelt wishes for a Happy New Year 2025 and hope that the coming year will be filled with joy, health, and prosperity. We also hope the year ahead brings fresh opportunities and cherished moments for you and your loved ones.

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Hierarchical Complexity: A Central Organizing Model that Explains Developmental Change across the Lifespan

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The Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC) provides an adequate explanation for the kinds of stage changes described by researchers such as Piaget and others (e.g., Inhelder & Piaget, 1958; Piaget, 1928, 1932) and Kohlberg (e.g., 1984; Colby et al., 1983). The main purpose of this paper is to more precisely specify and describe the advantages of this model compared to other models of how development takes place over time. Before describing the model's advantages, a formal definition of the model will be provided.

A Formal Definition of The Model of Hierarchical Complexity

The three axioms of the MHC are: (1) Actions are defined in terms of two or more Lower-Order Actions; (2) they organize and transform lower-order actions; and (3) this is non-arbitrary. The actions must be combined in a specific way to successfully complete a higher-order task. As shown in Figure 1, actions at the Higher-Order reflect an emergent and qualitatively distinct structure that enables performance that cannot be undertaken by the Lower-Order structures alone.

Tasks can also increase in Horizontal Complexity, in which the number of items that can be attended to increases with development. For instance, adding 205 + 667, as opposed to 2 + 2, involves more information, but the same operation – addition – is carried out.

An accessible example that illustrates the coordination of lower-order actions to a higher-order action is distributivity. When children learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, they initially learn these operations one at a time. Once this learning is well established, somewhat older children can learn to solve distributivity problems, such as 2 * (3 - 4). The distributivity problem shown involves combining subtraction and multiplication, and

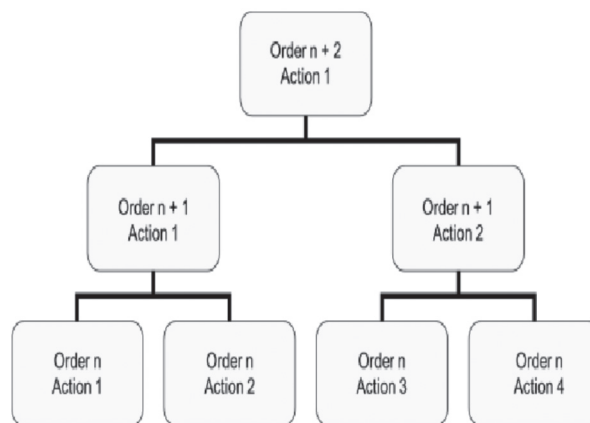


Figure 1. Representation of the axioms of the Order of Hierarchical Complexity (OHC) that shows conceptually how higher-order actions in a task (at the top of the tree) are composed of two or more lower-order actions. This diagram contains only three of the 17 Orders of Complexity that have been described.

properly coordinating them results from a more hierarchically complex action.

How is this Model Used to Study Development?

Method One: Investigators generate a set of tasks that are postulated to form a developmental sequence. The sequence is then administered to a group of participants (Commons et al., 1998, 2006, 2008; Commons & Wolfson, 2002). Based on the results, we can report whether the tasks satisfy the requirements for a developmental sequence and the stage of the tasks that each individual successfully completed.

Method Two: Investigators can use the OHC to “score” existing content (for example, sensory-motor actions, interview responses, written text, etc.). See, for example, Commons et al., 2012; Giri et al., 2014; Miller & Crone-Todd, 2016. Participants in such studies essentially construct their own orders as a natural response to open-ended questions.

Studies using the MHC generally focus on a few orders at a time rather than an entire developmental sequence. Thinking out an entire sequence can be difficult. Below are two separate examples in which the sequences have been empirically verified (see Commons & Giri, 2016; Commons & Jiang, 2014). While it is unlikely that living entities solve many tasks at order zero, in order to begin defining what “intelligence” is, you have to start by defining the most foundational elements.

**Table 1.** Reflexes and Early Learning.

Order Number and Name	Task Description	Example
Order 0: Calculatory	Follow a computer program or other pre-set actions.	A program set up by a human carries out the steps of the program.
Order 1: Automatic	Reflexes, sensitization, habituation, tropisms (but no conditioning). Entities engage in one action at a time (no coordination of actions).	Some types of paramecia reliably move away from light. A human closes their eyes when a high-speed object appears to be approaching. A human infant roots (searches for the breast with its lips) when its lips are touched.
Order 2: Sensory or Motor	Reflexes and respondent (classical) conditioning. Combines (pairs) a reflexive behavior with a new environmental stimulus.	A leech (Henderson & Strong, 1972) was classically conditioned to twitch its tail in response to light after the light was paired with shock. In humans, a reflex, rooting, begins to be elicited by other stimuli associated with breastfeeding and thus begins before the breast touches the infant's lips.
Order 3: Circular Sensory-Motor	Operant Conditioning: Pairs two or more actions or steps from Sensory or Motor Order 2; Step 1: What to do; Step 2: When to do it; Step 3: Why to do it.	For blow flies (Sokolowski et al., 2010): A) What to do was to enter a hole in an apparatus; B) When to do it is when reinforcer availability is cued; C) Why to do it: to obtain the reinforcer. Human infants will learn to kick if their legs are tied to a mobile that moves when they kick (Rovee & Rovee, 1969).
Order 4: Sensory-Motor	Learn concepts by co-ordinating two or more operantly reinforced behaviors.	Zentall and Hogan (1974) showed that pigeons learned the same versus different discrimination (that is, pigeons learn to peck a left key in response to one kind of shape and peck a right key in response to a second kind of shape). Importantly, the shape was held constant, but the objects were not otherwise identical. A child can recognize that all photos that someone labels as a "cat" are the same (and point to a "cat" photo when someone says, "Where is the cat?")

Table 2. Orders of complexity from Order 4 and continuing until Order 13. The Algebra Task.

Order Number and Name	Task Description	Example
Order 4: Sensory-Motor	A child recognizes when two entities represent the same concept by acting toward them in the same way.	If asked which is bigger, a child will look at the bigger one or point at it.
Order 5: Nominal	A child can recognize a number and correctly apply a name to it.	Seeing a "2" on a birthday card, a child says "2!"
Order 6: Sentential	Several nominal concepts (e.g., words) can be strung together in a way that makes sense (conforms with reality).	The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 may be said in order. These numbers are not accurately assigned to objects.
Order 7: Preoperational	The labels learned in Order 6 are now applied correctly to the number of objects.	Five objects can now be pointed to, and the child can correctly assign each label in the correct sequence. If someone asks how many objects, the child correctly says "five".
Order 8: Primary	Simple arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) can now be applied.	Starting with addition and with simple numbers, the child learns these operations in the order stated. There is an increase in horizontal complexity but not hierarchical.
Order 9: Concrete	Simple arithmetic operations can be combined, as in distributivity.	Individuals can now complete the following more complex tasks: $5(1+3) = 5(1) + 5(3) = 5 + 15 = 20$
Order 10: Abstract	An arbitrary symbol, such as a variable (e.g., x) can represent another entity.	If told that $x = 4$, they can search through a string of letters or other symbols and replace any "x" with the number 4.
Order 11: Formal	The abstract variable (e.g., x) can be solved for.	$X + 3 = 15$
Order 12: Systematic	In these tasks, systems of variables are related to each other.	A multivariate equation can be solved.
Order 13: Metasystematic	Characteristics of at least two systems are compared.	The systems of propositional logic and elementary set theory can be shown to be isomorphic.

Advantages of Using the MHC

There is a Clear Independent Variable that Explains Performance

The Model isolates a key independent variable (OHC) that explains changes in performance. In previous models, such as

Piaget's stage theory, there was no clear independent variable; different stages were simply shown to "occur."

In an early paper (Commons, Richards, et al., 1982), researchers constructed open-ended, story-based tasks that participants could respond to at the Formal, Systematic, or Metasystematic stages. The vast majority of participants that exhibited reasoning at the systematic stage also exhibited

Table 3. Correlations and variance accounted for by the Order of Hierarchical Complexity of the items from different problem types in Giri et al. (2014).

Problem Type	Correlation	Variance accounted for
Caregiver Dilemma	$r(42) = 0.711$	$r^2 = 0.505$
Depression Break-up	$r(21) = 0.835$	$r^2 = 0.697$
Empathy	$r(22) = 0.910$	$r^2 = 0.828$
Counselor Patient	$r(30) = 0.934$	$r^2 = 0.873$
Helper Patient	$r(40) = 0.977$	$r^2 = 0.955$
Infinity	$r(52) = 0.912$	$r^2 = 0.831$
Algebra	$r(40) = 0.966$	$r^2 = 0.933$
Balance Beam	$r(51) = 0.980$	$r^2 = 0.960$

Note: The social-cognitive problems are shown first, irrespective of the size of their correlations.

Table 4. Factor Analysis of Rasch Person Scores from Giri et al. (2014).

Instrument Name	Factor 1	Factor 2
Helper Person	0.973	0.129
Infinity	0.968	0.142
Counselor Patient	0.964	-0.060
Caregiver	0.962	-0.174
Depression Breakup	0.962	-0.181
Algebra	0.952	0.093
Empathy	0.942	-0.102
Laundry	0.934	-0.271
Balance Beam	0.873	0.455

reasoning at the formal stage. If that were not the case, it would have provided evidence that no developmental sequence of tasks existed. Individuals' reasoning at the meta-systematic stage also successfully solved systematic problems. Commons et al. (2008) constructed and tested a sequence of balance beam tasks. Six tasks, starting with the Primary order and continuing through to the Metasystematic orders, were generated (see Dawson et al., (2010)). Results were analyzed using Rasch analysis (Rasch, 1960, 1966). Rasch was used to examine two variables: how did performance compare to that of other participants (Rasch score), and how difficult did the analysis consider that item to be (OHC)? This analysis does not necessarily give you the stage directly, but items that came out as more difficult in the Rash scale were also the items that were more Hierarchically Complex.

Because the Rasch model scales the items and each participant's responses, a correlational analysis assesses the degree of their relationship. There was a strong and significant relationship between the OHC and the Rasch-scaled performance on the tasks, $r(42) = .879$, $F(1,40) = 136.22$, $p < .0005$, $r^2 = .773$. Obtaining an r^2 that is very large is the most frequent result of constructing and testing tasks in this way.

To examine whether similar relationships would be found, various instruments were constructed to reflect different domains; Giri et al. (2014) administered eight different kinds of instruments to a total of 409 participants. To obtain data without overwhelming participants, different combinations of the instruments were given to different subsets of the sample. Instruments were from two subdomains. From the Mathematics/Logic/Physical Science subdomain: the algebra instrument, the infinity instrument, the laundry instrument, and the balance

beam instrument. Researchers created versions of each at seven orders of complexity (Preoperational to Metasystematic). In the Social-Cognition subdomain: Helper Person, Counselor Patient, Empathy, Breakup Dilemma, and Caregiver. Within these, seven vignettes were created (Preoperational to Metasystematic). For example, in the Helper Person problem, a Helper gives guidance and assistance to another person. Participants select one type they saw as most effective. Efforts were made to control for the overall complexity of the language used (the metasystematic order task could not consist of more complex language than the preoperational task) and aspects of background (e.g., gender, age, and so on) of people in the vignettes.

The resulting correlations for each instrument ranged from $r(42) = 0.711$ (Caregiver) to $r = 0.98$ (Balance Beam). The Helper Person and the Balance Beam problems have been used most often and were found to have the highest correlations, likely because minor improvements were made over time. Even in the "worst" instrument (Caregiver Dilemma), complexity accounted for about 50% of the variance. See Table 3.

The authors ran a factor analysis on the person Rasch scores to determine whether and to what extent each of these instruments measured hierarchical complexity. Although each of these instruments contained different content, they were similar in terms of being based on hierarchical complexity. See Table 4.

Starting with hierarchical complexity controls for differences in terms of task difficulty. This has resulted in large effect sizes across every study done by this research group (only three studies are presented here). When this method is used in future studies, it should provide precise explanations for developmental differences between organisms of different ages (or species).

There are other ways of increasing task difficulty that are unrelated to hierarchical complexity, such as increasing memory requirements or other information processing demands. In Commons et al. (2014), we examined variables such as the number of calculations required to solve a problem, the size of the digits being asked about in a problem, and where within a problem the causal variable was presented. These additional variables, along with the hierarchical complexity, were examined. A stepwise regression was used, in which the variable to be predicted was the person stage score, and the variables listed above were tested. When the additional variables were tested without hierarchical complexity, they accounted for some amount of variance. However, it was much less than hierarchical complexity itself.

The Model of Hierarchical Complexity Predicts Real World Behaviors (External Validity)

Variability with respect to individuals' SHC relates to the variability of real-world outcomes. SHC is related to measures of academic success. Commons, Miller, et al. (1982) found that stage was related to the types of courses students were enrolled in but not to students' overall GPA. Students taking science courses were more likely to exhibit performances at formal operations than students in non-science courses. Crone-Todd and Gonsalves (2010) found that papers written by honors students were more likely to be scored as formal operational as compared to papers written by seniors who were not in the honors program. Miller and Crone-Todd (2016) found that the stage exhibited by grad students in



their admissions essays was moderately related to success in graduate study $r(12) = 0.318$. There was, however, a strong ceiling effect, as most graduate students had GPAs above 3.0.

SHC has been related to economic outcomes. Miller et al. (2015) interviewed peddlers. Peddlers were asked how they set their prices. These strategies were then scored in terms of their SHC and controlled for their country of origin. It was found that both of these variables predicted earnings, $R = 0.705$, $F(1,44) = 20.78$, $p < .0001$ (accounting for 49.7% of the variance in earnings). A second study by Goodheart et al. (2015) found individuals with higher orders (such as meta-systematic) were more likely to earn more money).

Thornton (2023) found that the reasoning skills of leaders in corporations were different depending on their level, with middle-level leaders showing significantly lower complexity reasoning skills than the most senior leaders.

In summary, it is shown that measuring tasks in terms of their hierarchical complexity predicts real-world outcomes.

This is a Lifespan Model

The Model of Hierarchical Complexity is a lifespan model explaining development across all ages. As such, it allows for researchers and practitioners to describe, explain, predict, and make sense of the manner in which behaviors that occur later in the lifespan (post-adolescence, for example) develop from earlier behaviors and to specifically characterize more complex adult task performances in ways that are a better fit for the more complex behaviors that can be observed in the real world. These models can be empirically tested so that researchers ultimately can, for example, characterize how adult performance on a task results from earlier development.

The Model has Advantages in terms of Learning, Training, and Addressing Societal and World Issues

As far as interventions that may benefit individuals, groups, societies, and so on, there are a few reasons that this model provides a decided advantage compared to other theories. First, knowledge and development of tasks that are more complex than formal operations allow many organizations to improve their teaching and training of employees. For this reason, researchers are beginning to use these ideas to – for example – assess and train executives (see the link to the work of Aiden Thornton: <https://researchportalplus.anu.edu.au/en/persons/aiden-thornton>). This also has significant implications for both the assessment and the teaching of students in college and beyond (Miller & Crone-Todd, 2016). We also suggest that if some current solutions in the political realm are at Formal Operations, additional and more effective solutions may be generated using the stages above Formal.

A More General Theory of “Smarts”: Applies to all animals and also to Computers and ‘Artificial Intelligences’

The Model’s framework allows researchers to describe, explain, predict, and make sense of the complexity of tasks of non-human

organisms and other entities, as well as to study the OHC of tasks that different non-human entities complete.

Previous models were either not at all or not easily generalizable to non-human performers. By examining existing publications on animal behaviors, Harrigan and Commons (2014) scored tasks that a range of animals were found to have successfully performed. The likely stage of each animal’s performance based on the task description was then correlated with measures of the number of neurons that have been found in the corresponding animal’s brains (see Herculano-Houzel et al., 2006, 2007). Harrigan and Commons found that the number of neurons in animals’ brains was correlated with the animal’s stage of performance with an $r = 0.874$ (Harrigan & Commons, 2014). When human performances were removed from the calculation, the correlation was essentially the same ($r = 0.871$).

Beyond that, the Model has been shown to have applications for building artificial intelligence that can potentially outperform current forms of AI (Leite et al., 2023; Leite, 2019).

Discussion and Conclusions

While it is rare in the social sciences for researchers to find such high correlation coefficients and factor loadings as we have found, we believe this is a direct consequence of having a good understanding of “hierarchical complexity” and using that understanding to construct stimuli and assessments carefully.

Based on this work, we would argue that having a much better “scaling” of tasks in various domains would surely improve the understanding of how to both assess and improve learning and performance in a wide variety of domains.

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Early Childhood Development Interventions – A Global Movement in Need of Global Research

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Introduction

In developmental science, there is a growing recognition that findings and theories about child development are significantly shaped by Western biases. Although anthropologists, indigenous psychologists, and cultural psychologists have raised this issue for decades, it has only recently gained broader attention. Several influential studies have systematically analyzed the sample distribution in behavioral science research (Henrich et al., 2010), psychology (Arnett, 2008), and developmental science (Nielsen et al., 2017). Unsurprisingly, these studies show that our understanding of human psychology and development is based to a large degree on research conducted with participants from Western middle-class settings in primarily English-speaking countries. While follow-up studies have confirmed the persistence of this sampling bias, they also highlight a growing awareness of the issue and increasing efforts to address it (Singh et al., 2024).

However, one area of developmental science has largely resisted these insights despite focusing on the very populations that are most underrepresented in mainstream research. I am referring to the science of Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions in so-called developing countries, or the Global South (Global ECD). In this paper, I will outline the core assumptions of Global ECD and examine some Eurocentric biases in the underlying research. I also urge the international community of developmental scientists to engage with ECD research to build a more globally representative and epistemically just evidence base.

What is Global ECD?

Global ECD science is an interdisciplinary field that primarily encompasses pediatrics, developmental psychology, neuroscience, and behavioral economics, with most of its findings published in medical journals. The assumptions and evidence base of Global ECD have been most authoritatively reviewed in three series published in *The Lancet* (Black et al., 2017; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2011). The fundamental assumption is that a large proportion of children in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)—250

million children under the age of 5—do not reach their full developmental potential because they are inadequately cared for in the context of poverty (Black et al., 2017). The resulting cognitive and socio-emotional deficits would lead to poor academic performance in middle childhood, low productivity, high crime and fertility, and inadequate parenting in adulthood. The *Lancet* articles thus assume an “intergenerational transmission of poverty” based on poor parenting and poor early childhood development (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007). Accordingly, they recommend behavior change interventions to improve the child-rearing practices of caregivers, particularly mothers, across the Global South. They promise that such measures, if widely applied, will produce a new, cognitively and socio-emotionally fully developed or “brainier” (“Small Investments in Nutrition Could Make the World Brainier,” 2024) generation that will bring about economic growth and sustainable development in the Global South. In the words of the UNICEF report *Early Moments Matter, Global ECD aims at “build brains, building futures”* (UNICEF 2017).

Based on the three *Lancet* series, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank jointly launched the Nurturing Care Framework in 2018, a roadmap for the systematic global implementation of ECD programs. With its adoption by the World Health Assembly, Global ECD has been officially linked to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (WHO et al., 2018). Since then, numerous NGOs, national governments, and corporate foundations have joined the Global ECD movement, making it a booming area of international development and global health.

Limitations in the evidence base of Global ECD

The evidence base of Global ECD is overwhelmingly based on research that has been conducted in Western settings (Draper et al., 2022; Morelli, Quinn, et al., 2018; Oppong, 2015; Scheidecker et al., 2023). This is particularly true for fundamental research that defines developmental pathways and outcomes as well as the allegedly best parenting practices. The eight *Lancet* articles from the three series mentioned above do not refer to any study on child development from anthropology or cultural psychology – disciplines with a long history of expanding samples in developmental science beyond Western settings (Keller, 2022; Lancy, 2022; Levine, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Thus, the Western bias in Global ECD is not merely a consequence of lacking cross-cultural research but rather results from its exclusion from its knowledge base (Scheidecker et al., 2024). This exclusion of basic research on

the Global South is particularly ironic in the case of Global ECD since it operates specifically in the Global South.

This is not to deny that the Lancet series refers to studies conducted in the Global South as well. However, this is applied research, consisting mainly of assessments of care and early childhood development and intervention trials. This kind of assessment and intervention research has been developed and conducted to a large degree in Western settings, especially in the US, and then extended to contexts of the Global South (Draper et al., 2022). More importantly, this research rests on theories, standards, and measurements that have been developed through fundamental research in Western settings. Its expansion to contexts of the Global South does not necessarily reduce Western biases in developmental research, rather, it promotes deficit views by measuring non-Western families by Western standards (Scheidecker et al., 2024). So far, only a handful of studies have examined the workings of Western biases in ECD science in detail. In the remainder of this section, we summarize these critical findings referring to the three most common types of ECD research: assessment research of early childhood care, psychometric measures of developmental outcomes, and intervention trials.

The most established tool to assess Early Childhood Development (and other family-related topics) in low and middle-income countries is UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). This survey is conducted every few years in most Global South countries with nationally representative samples of thousands of mothers (Khan & Hancioglu, 2019). In a recent correspondence (Scheidecker et al., 2022), we reexamined a study based on MICS data (McCoy et al., 2022). The study estimates that 74,6% of three to four-year-old children in LMCs, 92,1% in sub-Saharan Africa, and 99,5% of children in Chad do not even receive minimally adequate nurturing care. We looked closer into the underlying MICS measurements for one domain of nurturing care: early learning. Early learning was assessed with two indicators: "child attends an organised learning or early educational programme," and "child's household has at least one book and at least one toy." If one of the indicators was absent, children's early learning was classified as minimally adequate; if both were absent, it was inadequate.

Obviously, these two conditions are typically present in Western middle-class contexts. Families from different socio-cultural contexts must fall short when measured this way, even if their children have abundant opportunities for early learning. In fact, anthropologists and cultural psychologists have documented many forms of early learning that depend neither on attending an educational program nor on having a toy or book at home, for example, learning by observation and pitching in (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009) or by playing in mixed-age groups with worn-out tools (Lancy, 2016). The children in a rural community in Madagascar, for example, which I studied ethnographically for 15 months, may serve as an example. None of them attended an early educational program or had books and toys at home, yet they had abundant opportunities for early learning. They spent most of the day outside the home, freely exploring the village environment with other, similar-aged children, playing with a huge variety of objects they found or built by themselves (Scheidecker, 2023; 2017). Hence, the MICS measures for early learning not only impose external standards but also

ignore local forms of learning – and the vast literature that has documented them.

Another source of evidence for ECD interventions is psychometric assessments of developmental outcomes across socioeconomic gradients within a population. Such assessments typically find poorer outcomes among children with low socioeconomic status (e.g., Fernald et al., 2011). Yet, cross-cultural psychologists have demonstrated for a long time that the use of psychometric tests developed in Western middle-class settings in other socio-cultural contexts leads to biased results, even if they are somewhat adapted (e.g., Greenfield, 1997; Jahoda, 1956; Oppong, 2020; Sternberg, 2004).

These biases do not only result from cross-cultural variations in the specific cognitive skills that are valued and fostered but also from different degrees of familiarity with test procedures. A study by Robert Serpell (1979), for example, has demonstrated familiarity effects already in the 1970s regarding a pattern-reproduction task, comparing school children from the UK and Zambia. While the UK children performed better in the conventional task of reproducing the pattern through drawing, the Zambian children outperformed the UK children when the pattern was reproduced through bending wire – something that the Zambian children commonly practiced in the context of play. Also, within a Global South country, children from comparably affluent, urban middle-class families are likely much more familiar with common items and procedures of cognitive tests since their learning environment is more similar to that of Western middle-class children (Keller 2022). For instance, a study based on drawings by children in Madagascar revealed huge differences in drawing familiarity and skills between participants from rural, semi-urban, and urban contexts (Scheidecker et al., 2019). While the issue of psychometric biases has been pointed out for Global ECD in general (Oppong, 2015; Serpell, 2023), much more effort is necessary to analyze and prevent misassessments in this field.

A third source of evidence for Global ECD is derived from intervention research with Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) as the methodological gold standard. One might argue that even if the previously discussed ECD research about widespread deficits in the Global South is invalid, intervention trials show that parenting interventions can improve child development. However, as some reexaminations indicate, the evidence base for the benefits of ECD interventions is weaker than often depicted (Scheidecker et al., 2021). First, some types of ECD interventions have hardly been studied at all. Responsive caregiving, for example, despite being promoted as a central component of the Nurturing Care Framework, has not even been operationalized for systemic trials (Black et al., 2024). Other types have been studied more broadly, such as responsive feeding interventions. However, as our review of responsive feeding intervention trials shows, they yielded mixed results – and continue to be promoted as evidence-based interventions (Scheidecker et al. in press). Finally, 'successful' intervention trials often do not show effects on early child development, let alone increased educational achievement and adult income. For example, a language-based intervention study in Senegal was found to be effective, although it only showed significant effects on parents'



behavior and reports as well as on parent-child play sessions, but not on children themselves (Morelli, Bard, et al., 2018; Weber et al., 2017). From changing parental behavior in rural Senegal (in the presence of researchers), it is obviously a long road with many unknowns to children's language ability (which after infancy is mainly practiced in interactions among children, as the authors mention), school performance (with a different language of instruction), and adult productivity.

Most importantly, perhaps, ECD intervention trials measure only intended effects, leaving potential harmful consequences unconsidered (Morelli, Bard, et al., 2018; Shaw & da Silva, 2021). Although such adverse effects are not known for global ECD interventions—precisely because they have not been studied—we must expect them with such intrusive interventions, just as with any medical treatment. Based on ethnographic research, side effects can be expected on several levels: The deficit model of Global ECD that attributes poor parenting skills and mental deficits to disadvantaged populations may feed into existing stereotypes and promote discrimination, racism, and exclusion, as has been widely discussed for the US (Brady, 2023). Targeted parents may neither have the time nor the resources to follow parenting advice that is typically inspired by well-resourced upper-middle-class life (Ellwood-Lowe et al., 2024), or they may have to reduce their income-generating activities, which would conflict with the overall goal of ECD interventions to boost adult productivity and economic development. Children of targeted parents may not only acquire new skills but also miss out on learning some of the abilities necessary to thrive in their community (Morelli, Quinn, et al., 2018). Such potential side effects need to be carefully examined to prevent harm and ensure that support is aligned with the specific conditions and needs of families in the Global South.

Conclusion

This critical review of Global ECD and its evidence base has shown that Western biases do not just represent scientific issues around generalizability, but also have ethical implications in terms of potentially misguided interventions that may cause more harm than good. Furthermore, I have argued that the Western bias in Global ECD does not simply result from a sampling bias in developmental science but rather from biased applied research in the Global South and the exclusion of context-sensitive research on child development. Therefore, I call on researchers with expertise in the diversity of childrearing and behavioral development around the world to critically engage with the science of Global ECD. Such an exchange across disciplinary boundaries, basic and applied science is crucial to contribute to a less biased, more balanced, and locally pertinent knowledge base that is needed to create truly meaningful support for families and children around the world.

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Adolescents' Time Use and Cognitive Development

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Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial period for cognitive development (Baum et al., 2020), which underlines its importance in shaping an individual's correct view of the world, life, and values. Adolescent cognitive development includes a range of abilities, such as attention, memory, creativity, and problem-solving. The level of cognitive development is often closely related to how adolescents use their time. Proper and efficient time use helps adolescents build appropriate cognitive skills and develop logical thinking patterns (Cao & Liu, 2023; Paulich et al., 2021). However, owing to the incomplete maturation of the prefrontal cortex during adolescence, their ability to independently use time is typically weak. As a result, adolescents are more likely to spend their time on short-term, immediately rewarding, and less demanding leisure activities (Biolcati et al., 2018; Lamberti et al., 2023). Under the influence of social and cultural factors, educational reforms, and technological advancements, differences in time allocation among adolescents across various countries and regions have become increasingly evident. Adolescents' time use patterns across different categories have also become increasingly diverse. Current research on adolescents' time use and cognitive development tends to focus on singular aspects of time use, often lacking a comprehensive analysis that takes into account the diversity of time use across different countries. Most studies fail to incorporate a comparative perspective that examines the influence of social, cultural, and educational systems on how adolescents in various nations use their time. Research on how adolescents allocate time across different types of activities and how these shifts affect cognitive development is lacking.

Given that adolescents' time use plays a decisive role in their cognitive development, this study analyzes the differences in time use among adolescents across various countries and examines the impact of different types of time use on their cognitive development. This will help optimize the effectiveness of adolescents' time use from an international perspective, thereby promoting cognitive development and supporting their psychological and emotional well-being.

Analysis of Differences in Time Use and Cognitive Development among Adolescents in Different Countries

Owing to differences in social culture and educational systems, significant variations in time use exist among adolescents in Eastern and Western countries (Cha & Yoo, 2024; Gracia et al., 2020). These differences are reflected primarily in the allocation of time to study, leisure, social, and health time. The varying patterns of time use in these areas lead to divergent trajectories in cognitive development among adolescents in different countries.

In East Asian countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea, social culture places a high value on academic achievement and features a highly hierarchical and competitive educational system, leading adolescents to spend more time studying in East Asian countries than in other countries. Under the exam-oriented education system, East Asian students may spend up to 12 hours a day studying (Byun & Park, 2012; Sun et al., 2013). Additionally, the widespread prevalence of shadow education further extends their study time (Gupta, 2023). East Asian students not only need to study during school hours but also spend considerable time on extracurricular tutoring to excel in intense academic competition. International assessment programs show that adolescents in East Asian countries rank relatively high in science, reading, and mathematics. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and most European countries, the educational system places greater emphasis on developing students' creativity and innovation. Adolescents in Western countries generally have a more moderate allocation of study time. American adolescents spend nearly 50% of their time on discretionary activities, whereas East Asian adolescents allocate only 25% to 35% of their time to such activities (Knifsend & Graham, 2012). This high degree of flexibility in time use significantly enhances the cognitive development of individuality and creativity among Western adolescents. However, owing to relatively less time devoted to studying, their academic performance is often not as pronounced as that of their peers in East Asia (Zheng et al., 2024).

There are significant differences in the allocation of leisure time between Eastern and Western countries. In East Asian cultures, academic pressure results in less leisure time for adolescents (Li et al., 2023), which is often strictly regulated by family and school authorities (Lee et al., 2017). Given the limited leisure time available, East Asian adolescents tend to engage in low-intensity and relatively passive activities rather than more creative forms of entertainment, which may hinder their innovative cognitive abilities. In contrast, adolescents in Western countries typically have more free time for leisure activities, allowing them to develop personal interests and hobbies. The freedom and diversity of leisure activities help stimulate intrinsic motivation, thereby

enhancing cognitive development in creative thinking and social adaptability (Cosma et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2023).

Adolescents' social time includes interactions with family, friends, and the community. In East Asian countries, which are heavily influenced by Confucian values, there is a strong emphasis on family education (Marginson, 2011). This results in adolescents spending more social time interacting with family members, who provide substantial emotional support. The time spent interacting with family helps adolescents explore their self-identity and supports their cognitive development (Grotevant & Cooper, 2013). Western countries place importance not only on family social time but also on adolescents' engagement in community interactions (Stanley & Gilzene, 2023). In these countries, adolescents are encouraged to actively participate in community service and volunteer activities, which helps them develop a sense of social responsibility and adaptability to social roles, thereby enhancing their cognitive development through practical experience.

Different countries vary in their emphasis on adolescents' health. For adolescents, health time can be specifically divided into time spent on physical exercise and time spent sleeping. In East Asian countries, adolescents have limited time for physical exercise and exhibit lower levels of physical activity (Cao & Liu, 2023; Müller et al., 2013). In Thailand, only 27% of adolescents meet the daily threshold of 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical exercise, whereas in China, only 16.7% reach this goal (Guthold et al., 2020). Their time spent on physical exercise is less than half that of adolescents in North America and Europe (Sigmundová et al., 2019). At the same time, under significant academic pressure, adolescents in East Asia often experience insufficient sleep, with higher rates of sleep deprivation. Chinese adolescents, in particular, get considerably less sleep than their American counterparts (Garipey et al., 2020). Overall, inadequate health not only impacts adolescents' physical health but also hinders their cognitive development. In contrast, owing to the emphasis on physical training and a robust social culture in Western countries, sports participation is considered an important pathway to prestigious educational institutions. As a result, adolescents in Western countries allocate a significant amount of their health time to physical activities (Larson & Seepersad, 2003). This contributes to their physical well-being and provides a solid foundation for balanced cognitive development.

Overall, adolescents in East Asian countries tend to spend more time studying, followed by social time, which often sacrifices leisure and health time under academic pressure. In contrast, adolescents in Western countries place greater emphasis on balancing leisure, social, and health time, with a focus on fostering student autonomy and interest development in their study time.

Analysis of the Impact of Different Types of Time Use on Cognitive Development in Adolescents

Study time is a critical factor influencing adolescents' cognitive development. Effective study time can enhance students' concentration, problem-solving skills, and logical thinking abilities (Barana et al., 2022; Deater-Deckard et al., 2013). There is a significant positive correlation between the amount of time adolescents invest in school and extracurricular

learning and their cognitive abilities. However, excessive learning pressure can place adolescents in a negative psychological state. Prolonging study time under high pressure may lead to cognitive overload, impacting individuals' information processing capabilities and potentially causing school aversion and severe mental health issues (Hu & Mu, 2020). The development of digital education has optimized the allocation of students' learning time. In online learning environments, students can flexibly arrange their study time according to personalized needs, enhancing their ability for autonomous learning, fostering creative thinking, and improving problem-solving skills and cognitive efficiency. However, changes in learning environments have also blurred the boundaries between learning and leisure, affecting adolescents' perceptions and allocation of their time use.

The positive impact of leisure time on adolescents' cognitive development is often overlooked. Moderate leisure time and high-quality entertainment content not only alleviate academic stress but also foster the development of new cognitive skills through informal learning environments, enhancing creativity, emotional regulation, and social ability. In the era of widespread internet use, adolescents have become the most active users of emerging communication technologies. Globally, the increase in screen time for entertainment among adolescents has a dual-edged effect on cognitive development. The time spent by adolescents on computer games and entertainment videos can positively influence their problem-solving ability but negatively affect their vocabulary and reading scores (Suziedelyte, 2015) and may even lead to academic procrastination. The frequency and amount of screen time used for entertainment, along with internet addiction, are associated with the reduced development of cognitive control structures. Managing screen time use during early adolescence is beneficial for cognitive development (Guerrero et al., 2019).

Social time is crucial for the development of adolescents' language skills, critical thinking, and emotional cognition. Interactions with family, friends, and peers enhance language abilities, interactive skills, and cooperation in cognitive development. The widespread adoption of digital technology and the rise of social media have significantly altered the landscape of adolescents' social time, breaking traditional patterns of social space use and, to some extent, increasing their social time (Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2019). However, face-to-face social interactions among adolescents have decreased, with digital platforms becoming the primary means of social engagement. Frequent use of digital devices for social interactions can lead to decreased attention and memory, negatively impacting the development of deep-thinking skills and sustained focus (Riehm et al., 2019).

Health time is a cornerstone of cognitive development in adolescents. Health time primarily includes rest and exercise. Adolescents are in a critical phase of physical and mental development, and adequate rest can enhance memory consolidation and information-processing abilities (Cao & Liu, 2023). Repeated exposure to insufficient sleep can lead to cumulative cognitive deficits, such as decreased attention and significantly reduced problem-solving speed (Yeo et al., 2019). Similarly, regular exercise not only helps adolescents improve their physical health but also promotes neural plasticity in the brain, accelerating the development of executive functions and learning abilities (Belcher et al., 2021).



Furthermore, increased health time can mitigate sedentary behavior caused by excessive media use and academic pressure (Drenowatz & Greier, 2019), enhancing physical fitness and maintaining overall well-being.

While the digital age has brought convenience to adolescents' time use, it has also introduced new challenges to adolescents' cognitive development. The ways in which different types of time are used have significantly changed in terms of duration, locations, and methods. It is crucial to provide appropriate guidance and interventions for adolescents' time use to ensure a balanced approach to studying social, leisure, and health activities in the digital age, thereby promoting balanced cognitive development.

Discussion and Future Prospects

On the basis of previous research, we draw two conclusions. First, adolescents in Eastern and Western countries exhibit distinct trends in time use. Second, providing appropriate guidance and interventions for the impact of digitalization on study, leisure, social, and health time is crucial for adolescents' cognitive development in the digital age.

Specifically, variations in social culture and educational systems lead to country-specific differences in adolescent time use trends. In East Asian countries, adolescents' time is more concentrated on study, whereas in Western countries, adolescents focus more on balancing leisure, social, and health activities. These differences in time use provide valuable insights for mutual learning and adaptation. In East Asian countries, which face significant academic pressure, it is important to focus on balancing academic and personal life. Drawing from Western educational philosophies, there should be an increase in personalized learning time and opportunities for independent study, as well as a reasonable increase in leisure, social, and health time to comprehensively enhance adolescents' cognitive development. Adolescents in Western countries, while benefiting from diverse types of cognitive development, should continuously optimize their educational systems and increase investment in study time to address global educational challenges.

The widespread use of the internet has permeated adolescents' daily lives, making "media multitasking" a dominant approach to time use. This shift is evident not only in the increased time adolescents spend on study but also in the substantial rise in their leisure time and changes in their primary social activities. Consequently, the overall proportion of time dedicated to health-related activities has decreased. Given that adolescents' cognitive development is still maturing and that they often lack sufficient discernment and self-control, they are more susceptible to online influences and may even develop tendencies toward internet addiction. Therefore, parents, schools, and media platforms should collaboratively intervene in adolescents' use of electronic devices. They should guide adolescents in the effective use of technology, ensure proper time use, and support balanced cognitive development.

In summary, existing research lacks authoritative survey data from different countries, especially long-term tracking studies on adolescents' time use and cognitive development on a global scale. Many studies have not adequately considered the complex context of the digital age and its comprehensive impact on adolescents' time use. Future research should implement large-scale cross-national surveys on

adolescents' time use to clarify time use patterns in different sociocultural contexts. Furthermore, in the context of digital transformation, using wearable devices, artificial intelligence, and big data technology to further monitor and analyze adolescents' time use will help construct a theoretical framework for time use. This study provides effective data support for optimizing interventions and positively contributes to adolescents' cognitive development.

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Understanding Cognitive Development in Nigeria from a Sociocultural Perspective

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Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, presents a unique context for understanding cognitive development in children. With an estimated population of over 213 million people, approximately 43% of whom are under the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2024), Nigeria's child population is significant. However, despite this demographic, Nigeria faces considerable challenges in providing the necessary resources and support to foster optimal cognitive development in its children.

In the context of Nigeria, the importance of cognitive development is underscored by the country's socio-economic challenges. With high levels of poverty and limited access to quality education in many areas, children's cognitive development can directly impact the nation's future workforce and economic stability (Obanya, 2004). One key factor influencing cognitive development in Nigeria is socio-economic disparity. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2020), over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Poverty has been shown to impact cognitive development in children negatively, as it is often associated with inadequate access to nutrition, healthcare, and educational resources (Engle et al., 2007). In Nigeria, malnutrition is a major issue, with many children suffering from stunted growth due to insufficient diets. This malnutrition not only affects physical growth but also hinders brain development, leading to cognitive delays and difficulties in learning (UNICEF, 2020).

Education is another significant factor in the cognitive development of Nigerian children. While Nigeria has made strides in improving access to primary education, challenges remain in the quality and consistency of educational delivery. According to UNICEF (2023), more than 10.5 million children are out of school in Nigeria, the highest number in the world. For those who attend school, many face overcrowded classrooms, underqualified teachers, and insufficient learning materials, all of which impede cognitive development. The cognitive development of children in rural areas is often more severely affected than that of children in urban centres, where access to educational resources tends to be better.

In addition to socio-economic and educational challenges, cultural factors also play a critical role in shaping cognitive development in Nigeria. The country is ethnically and

linguistically diverse, with over 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages spoken across its regions (Edewor et al., 2014). This diversity can influence how children learn and the kinds of cognitive skills that are emphasized. For example, in some Nigerian cultures, oral traditions and storytelling play a central role in transmitting knowledge and cultural values, which may enhance verbal memory and narrative skills in children. On the other hand, some cultural practices, such as early child labour or the expectation for children to contribute to household income, can limit the time and energy available for formal education and cognitive development (Nsamenang, 2006).

Additionally, Nigeria's infrastructural deficits, such as poor healthcare systems, limited access to clean water, and inadequate sanitation, further exacerbate the challenges to cognitive development. Frequent exposure to disease and infection can weaken children's overall health, limiting their ability to attend school and fully engage in cognitive tasks (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007).

Cognitive development in Nigerian children is therefore influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and socio-cultural factors. While genetics provides the biological framework for brain development, the environment comprising access to education, nutrition, healthcare, and parental support plays a critical role in determining cognitive outcomes. Moreover, Nigeria's rich cultural diversity, socio-economic challenges, and educational system create a unique context for cognitive development. To fully understand how Nigerian children's cognitive abilities are shaped, it is essential to consider how these factors interact and influence each other.

Understanding Cognitive Development in Nigeria Through Two Major Theoretical Approaches of Cognitive Development

There is an array of perspectives that can help our understanding of the cognitive development of children. However, we shall look into two major approaches in literature, which include Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1954) and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1981). Piaget's theory is one of the most well-known frameworks for understanding cognitive development. Piaget believed that children move through four stages of development – the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), the preoperational stage (2 to 7 years), the concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years), and the formal operational stage (11 years and older). Each of the cognitive stages is characterized by different cognitive abilities.

Piaget emphasized that cognitive development is a universal process; however, cultural and environmental factors may

influence the pace at which children progress through these stages. In the Nigerian context, Piaget's stages can be observed in various settings, from urban to rural environments. For example, children in Nigeria's urban areas may have earlier exposure to technology and formal education, which could accelerate certain aspects of cognitive development, particularly in the preoperational and concrete operational stages.

In rural areas, where children may engage more in traditional learning activities such as storytelling, oral history, and communal interaction, cognitive development may take a different path. These cultural activities, while not formalized as classroom learning, still support children's progression through Piaget's stages. For instance, storytelling fosters language development and symbolic thinking in the preoperational stage, while participation in agricultural activities may enhance logical thinking and problem-solving skills typical of the concrete operational stage (Nsamenang, 2006).

However, certain socio-economic factors, such as poverty and limited access to quality education, can delay children's cognitive development. In regions of Nigeria where children face malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, and limited schooling opportunities, they may not reach the formal operational stage as quickly as their counterparts in more developed areas. Piaget's theory implies that while children universally progress through these stages, the environmental context whether supportive or challenging—plays a crucial role in shaping the pace and extent of their cognitive development.

The second important approach to cognitive development was offered by Vygotsky and is called Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. In this approach, the role of language, culture, and social interaction are heavily emphasized: the theory contrasts with Piaget's more individualistic approach by emphasizing the critical role of social interaction, language, and culture in cognitive development. Vygotsky (1981) believed that cognitive development is inherently a social process and that children learn through interactions with more knowledgeable others, including parents, teachers, and peers. One of Vygotsky's key concepts is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the range of tasks that a child can perform with the guidance and support of others but cannot yet perform independently. Through social interaction and scaffolding (support provided by others), children gradually learn to complete tasks on their own.

Language is central to Vygotsky's theory, as it is both a tool for communication and a medium through which children internalize knowledge. Language development enables children to organize their thoughts, solve problems, and communicate their ideas to others. In Nigeria, where over 500 languages are spoken, language plays a particularly important role in shaping cognitive development. Children raised in multilingual environments often develop sophisticated language skills early on, which may enhance their cognitive flexibility and problem-solving abilities (Bialystok, 2001).

Culture also shapes the types of cognitive skills that are emphasized and nurtured. For example, in many Nigerian communities, oral traditions, such as storytelling and proverbs, are important cultural practices that support language development, memory, and moral reasoning. These activities align with Vygotsky's notion that cognitive development is rooted in culturally specific practices. In Nigeria, children's learning experiences are often embedded in their

participation in daily communal activities, such as farming, cooking, or caregiving, which provide opportunities for practical problem-solving and social collaboration (Rogoff, 2003).

Vygotsky's theory also highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. In Nigeria, children's upbringing is often a communal affair, where extended family members and community elders play a significant role in teaching and guiding the younger generation. This collective responsibility for child-rearing provides a rich social environment for cognitive development, as children engage with multiple adults and peers who contribute to their learning. The communal nature of Nigerian society aligns with Vygotsky's view that learning is inherently social and context-dependent. Furthermore, in educational settings, teachers in Nigeria can apply Vygotsky's theory by providing scaffolding to students. For example, teachers can break down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps, provide hints or cues, and gradually reduce support as students gain confidence and competence in completing the tasks independently. This method is particularly effective in helping Children Bridge the gap between what they already know and what they are capable of learning with assistance.

Conclusion

Cognitive development is crucial for the general wellbeing of a child; therefore, supporting a child through the developmental process is not only in the best interest of the child but also for the family and society at large. This is particularly true in a society like Nigeria, where there are many social issues competing for the priority attention of the government and other relevant stakeholders who need to prioritize the cognitive development of children in the country because healthy cognitive development is a catalyst for other developments such as technological, economic, and social developments.

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Note from the ISSBD President

Dear ISSBD Members,

Thank you for your continued engagement in the ISSBD and for your contributions to a developmental science that cares. I hope you continue to be well and safe amid the ongoing conflicts and instability around the world that remain to challenge the wellbeing and fundamental rights of children and families.

Today, I write to update you on significant news from the ISSBD regarding its goals of advancing knowledge, uniting developmentalists, creating research-practice networks, and informing local and global policies for positive human development, caring, and thriving across the lifespan.

For the ISSBD, one highlight in 2024 was our 27th Biennial Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal.

Thanks to the local and international organizing teams, the Biennial Meeting was extremely successful. Over 1,600 participants from around the world came together to present their work and discuss key topics and timely issues, such as culture, diversity, equity and social justice, or climate change and youth development. It was a wonderful and unique opportunity to exchange ideas, create and extend networks, and connect with like-minded scholars. Thank you to the local and international organizing teams for creating a stellar environment for our Biennial!

The ISSBD also held its elections, and we are delighted to appoint a new president-elect, three new executive committee members, and two early career scholar representatives. Please join me in welcoming Professor Frosso Motti, our President-Elect, Professors Pamela Wadende, René Veenstra, and Cinzia Di Dio as new Executive Committee Members, as well as Tripti Kathuria and Marvin Kapenda, our Early Career Scholar Representatives. It is also my pleasure to welcome new committee chairs, i.e., Dawn E. England as chair of the ISSBD Communications Committee, Ingrid Schoon as chair of the Global Policy Committee, Marcel van Aken as the chair of the Awards Committee, Julie Bowker as chair of the Membership Committee, and Muthanna Samara as co-chair of the Developing Country Fellowship Committee, who joins Peter Smith. On behalf of the ISSBD, I also wish to thank our former committee chairs, Silvia Koller, Astrid Poorthuis, Pamela Wadende, Josafá Cunha, and Suman Verma, for their long-standing service and commitment to the ISSBD, as well as all ISSBD committee members who are now rotating off. Thank you! We are also delighted to welcome our newest additions to our growing team of regional representatives. Please join me in welcoming Berna Güroglu (representative for The Netherlands), Maite Liz (representative for Uruguay), and Carolina Greco (representative for Argentina).

Over the past couple of months, the ISSBD Executive Committee has reached several organizational milestones and significantly contributed to the organizational growth. Importantly, we have made great advancements in streamlining our new membership registration process and maintaining and updating our new website. We have also established the *ISSBD 2 x 2 Grant*, an opportunity for early career developmental scholars of all backgrounds to conduct collaborative research across different countries or regions. A selection

committee has identified the first awardees, and I invite you to read more about them here.

It is also my great pleasure to announce that the ISSBD has a new funding opportunity entitled *CARE EVERYWHERE: Understanding and Nourishing the Development of Character Strengths Globally*, which has been generously provided to the ISSBD by the Templeton World Charity Foundation. This funding opportunity supports research conducted by ISSBD members and aims to understand and/or nourish character strengths across the lifespan. Examples of research questions are: How do young children acquire empathy and caring? What does courage look like in different contexts? How can we conceptualize and measure the development of shared humanity across contexts? How can we nurture kindness and caring among adolescents? The award reflects ISSBD's commitment to a multidisciplinary global developmental science that cares, specifically by uniting developmental scientists from different career stages, disciplines, and countries who share the common goal of understanding and promoting character strengths and the human capacity to care. Please visit our website soon to find out more about this funding opportunity, and I encourage you to apply for it.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly wish to thank our members, staff, and leadership. Your work, dedication, and achievements are wonderful, and I continue to be grateful for all you do.

We have much to look forward to at next year's activities, including regional workshops, webinars, and networking opportunities, and I am enthusiastic to continue our joint journey of advancing an international developmental science that cares. We also are excited about the venue for our 2026 Biennial Meeting, i.e., Songdo, South Korea.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback and encourage you to communicate with me directly by email (tina.malti@utoronto.ca) or request an office hours appointment. I promise to respond to all messages, and I look forward to hearing your input and cooperating as an ISSBD community.

Thank you to all of you for remaining committed to our vision and mission. I look forward to seeing and hearing from you soon.

Warmest wishes,



Tina Malti
ISSBD President



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

**January 19, 2023, 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM EST
(Eastern Standard Time) (online)**

Present at the Meeting:

Tina Malti	President
Luc Goossens	Secretary General
Toni Antonucci	Past President
Julie Bowker	Membership Secretary
Antonella Marchetti	EC member
Frosso Motti	EC member
Liqi Zhu	EC member
Marc Bornstein	EC member
Rita Zukauskiene	EC member
Silvia Koller	EC member
Manuela Verissimo	EC member and 2024 conference organizer
Cinzia di Dio	Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative

Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the EC Meeting of October 28, 2022

President Tina Malti welcomes everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the online Executive Committee (EC) meetings held on October 28, 2022, are approved unanimously.

Elections

Secretary General Luc Goossens briefly overviews the election procedure and points out that he has received few nominations so far. A call for nominations will be sent out to the membership through the new website to increase the pool of candidates. The chairs of the committees will be contacted to check out the updated version of the website and encourage colleagues on the committees to run for the elections or nominate others to do so. Executive Committee (EC) members appointed by the President do not have a mandate for six years like the elected members have.

President's Update

Renegotiating contract with SAGE

With the assistance of an advisory committee composed of the Publications Committee and senior members of

the Society, President Tina Malti has negotiated a new draft contract with our publisher. This contract, which has many positive aspects for our Society, is awaiting approval from the Vice President of SAGE. During the negotiations, there has been a general agreement that we will continue to enjoy a very positive working relationship with our publisher, SAGE.

Staff hires

The Steering Committee has decided to go for contract hires for a year for the two new staff positions. For the Membership and Network Manager position, we have several candidates in mind. The advertisement for the Communications Specialist position will be shared, and the EC members are encouraged to distribute this ad widely.

Website migration

The move from the old website hosted by SAGE to our new website has been completed. The next step is membership migration, which will be redirected to the SAGE subscription part of our flagship journal, the *International Journal of Behavioral Development* (IJBD). All EC members are asked to visit the new website and send comments, updates, and suggestions for improvement.

New initiatives

Two existing committees have been dissolved, and the President has created two new committees: the Optimizing Capacity Committee and the Global Social Policy Committee. Recommendations can be made for additional members of these new committees. EC members can join the existing committees as ex-officio members to increase communication across committees. We can start the selection of the first cohort of the new 2 x 2 Fellowships (or grants). Julie Bowker and Frosso Motti volunteer at the meeting to serve on the selection committee for those new grants. The Executive Committee thanks President Tina Malti for her great leadership with all her new initiatives, but she emphasizes that it is all a team effort.

Membership Migration

Jan Boom, manager of the new membership section on the website, joins the online meeting to discuss this particular point of the agenda.

Current status of the new website

ISSBD has taken back control of the digital structure of the Society, and we no longer work with intermediaries such as SAGE. A new website has been commissioned by Josafa da Cunha, Chair of the Communications Committee, in collaboration with a Brazilian design company. The website is backed up regularly and is protected.

Membership section on the new website

The integration of the membership section into the new website is still ongoing (the projected opening date is February 12th, 2023). Jan Boom provides a brief overview of the numerous benefits of the new membership section compared to the old SAGE system. Payment is in US dollars and handled by Stripe through a 24/7 online service (so there will be no more delays as has been the case with the SAGE system). ISSBD officers can now track membership fee payments and conference registrations, providing valuable insights for the efficient management of biennial meetings. Jan also created a manual for the new membership section of the website that can be shared with President Tina Malti and the Communications Specialist who will be hired soon.

All members will have to create a new account with a new password. An e-mail message will be sent to all members to invite them to take that action. A specific challenge within our Society is that regional coordinators collect the membership fees within their region. Jan will send a proposal to handle that specific issue within the new membership system. The EC is thankful for the support provided by Jan Boom and President Tina Malti thanks him for his incredible work.

2024 Biennial Meeting Update

Manuela Verissimo, Conference Organizer and EC member, announces that a link to the conference website will be created on the new ISSBD website. The Conference Planning Committee will visit the conference venue in Lisbon (Portugal) at the beginning of October. Several meetings of this committee are planned for the near future to work out the invited program of the conference. Manuela appreciates all help in this regard. **All EC members are therefore invited to send suggestions for invited speakers and, more broadly, the invited program for the 2024 biennial meeting to conference organizer Manuela Verissimo.**

2026 Biennial Meeting and Regional Meetings

2026 biennial meeting

The EC members briefly go through the list of potential countries discussed at the previous committee meeting (in October 2022), that is, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Chile, New Zealand, and Canada. In the past, conference proposals were submitted to the EC or invited from

experienced conference organizers. However, we can also proactively solicit proposals and pick the best one. The search for the 2026 site has to become more precise or focused because organizing the conference is a long process that takes several years. **All EC members are invited to suggest places where our conference could be held and to approach senior people who might be interested in organizing our biennial conference. An e-mail message will also be sent out to the membership to submit proposals for the 2026 Biennial Meeting.** Julie Bowker will contact the regional coordinators (e.g., those in Malaysia and Singapore). We will also have to understand who is willing to go where and where we can recruit a sufficient number of local participants.

Regional workshops

A regional workshop was planned in Ethiopia, but that is no longer possible due to the very complicated and unsafe situation in that country. A regional workshop in Uganda could be an alternative. Cuba possibly is too challenging as a site for such a workshop.

International workshop in Italy

EC member Antonella Marchetti asks for a financial contribution from ISSBD for the workshop “Child well-being in formal and informal care and education: New perspectives on intervention” in Milan (Italy) in October 2023. This is a joint meeting organized, among others, by the Italian Psychology Association (Associazione Italiana di Psicologia; AIP) and the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations (EFPA). President Tina Malti is an invited speaker at this event. Membership Secretary Julie Bowker strongly supports this initiative, as Italy is one of the countries with the fastest-growing membership. The EC invites Antonella Marchetti to submit a provisional budget for this workshop (which includes support for early career scholars (ECS)). The EC can vote on this proposal over e-mail.

Next EC Meeting

Originally, a day-long in-person EC meeting has been planned in the off-year 2023 (i.e., in between our biennial meetings) at a conference in the United States, that is, either at the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) conference in Salt Lake City (UT; March 2023) or at the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) conference in San Diego (CA; April 2023). There is a clear preference for the SRA meeting. However, only a limited number of EC members can effectively attend these conferences (i.e., five at SRA and three at SRCD). The EC, therefore, decides to organize two briefer (two-hour) online meetings around the time of the SRA meeting. Doodle polls will be sent out to coordinate meeting times. This alternative arrangement implies that our next in-person EC meeting will be held at our biennial conference in Lisbon in June 2023.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General
Email: luc.goossens@kuleuven.be



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

**April 5, 2023, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM EDT
(Eastern Daylight Time) (online)**

Present at the Meeting:

Tina Malti	President
Luc Goossens	Secretary General
Toni Antonucci	Past President
Julie Bowker	Membership Secretary
Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck	Treasurer
Frosso Motti	EC member
Kristin Ajrouch	EC member
Liqi Zhu	EC member
Rita Zukauskiene	EC member
Silvia Koller	EC member
Manuela Verissimo	EC member and 2024 conference organizer
Cinzia do Dio	Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative
Given Hapunda	Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative

Welcome and Approval of the minutes of the EC meeting of January 19, 2023

President Tina Malti welcomes everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the online Executive Committee (EC) meeting held on January 19, 2023, are approved unanimously.

Elections

The EC discusses the list of nominees compiled by Secretary General Luc Goossens. All of the current EC members who appear on that list state that they are honored by the fact that they are nominated. They briefly describe their involvement with ISSBD and similar learned societies over the years, and they express their willingness to stand for election. These nominees then leave the online meeting. All of the remaining EC members agree that there are four strong candidates for the Presidency, and they decide by majority vote that all four of them can run for the position. Secretary General Luc Goossens will contact all other nominees and ask them to confirm whether they are willing to stand for election. He will also invite them to send in a brief bio-sketch or blurb if they are willing to do so.

President's Update

President Tina Malti gives a brief update on her work and the activities of the Society. The new website is up and running, and the Society has started using Mailchimp to send e-mail messages to its members. The Society will go for two staff hires. (There are six candidates for the Communication Specialist position and two candidates for the Membership and Network position). The negotiations for the new contract with SAGE are moving toward a very positive end. The final version of that contract will be discussed at the next EC meeting. A full version of the President's report will also be discussed at that EC meeting.

Membership Report

Membership Secretary Julie Bowker is assisted by 30 Regional Representatives who are doing a wonderful job. She suggests that all representatives receive a plaque or are offered a dinner or a reception at our next biennial meeting in Lisbon as some form of formal recognition of their important work for the Society. All EC members are in favor of these initiatives. The Membership Secretary also explains that it is her job to foster a community among the regional representatives and invites discussion on the platform that would be most suitable to engage these reps (given that some platforms are not available in certain countries). She also points out that regional representatives collect the membership fees for members in their region. We will have to find a way to handle such memberships and membership fees in the new membership section (as incorporated into the new website) and take into account that some regional representatives have requested to retain a portion of the fees to support local initiatives and cover related expenses. The Membership Secretary encourages all EC members to create a new membership account on the new website. The EC thanks the Membership Secretary for her great work for the Society.

2022 Financial Report

Treasurer Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck has sent in her report on the financial situation of the Society for the year 2022. Due to the volatility of the international financial markets, our income from our investment funds has decreased somewhat, leading to a small overspending (in the amount of 30,000 US \$). An important appendix to the 2022 report, which contains a projection for the years 2023-2024, indicates that the Society can spend 150,000 US \$ on its activities

per year (or 300,000 for the two years combined). As we spend 60,000 US \$ per regional workshop and plan to organize two such workshops per year, we will have to be creative as a Society to find matching funds for our activities whenever possible. The actual financing format adopted can, of course, take on a different form in different regions. The EC thanks the Treasurer for her 2022 report and, more broadly, for her great work for the Society.

2024 Biennial Meeting Update

Conference organizer Manuela Verissimo presents a brief overview of the preparations for the Lisbon conference. She has applied for financial support for the conference and the keynote speakers and chairs of the invited symposia are being invited. The Conference Planning Committee has held several online meetings to discuss registration and has determined that checks on ISSBD membership status will need to be integrated into the process. This issue will be discussed with Jan Boom (coordinator of the membership section of the new website), and solutions will be proposed for the next EC meeting. Manuela gives a brief overview of the Invited Program regarding content and regional representation. Finally, the EC discusses ways to ensure input into the program from the Middle East through a keynote speaker or a symposium.

2026 Biennial Meeting Proposal Elicitation

In the interest of time, this issue will be discussed in greater detail at the next EC meeting. All EC members are urged to reach out to people or teams of people who can organize the 2026 Biennial Meeting and send proposals for the location of that meeting to President Tina Malti and Secretary General Luc Goossens. These proposals will then be discussed at the next EC meeting.

Proposal ISSBD Regional Workshop Uganda (August 2023)

The EC discusses a proposal for an ISSBD Regional Workshop in Uganda, which has been approved by the

Regional Workshops Committee. The workshop will be held at Kyambogo University from 10-12 August 2023. The theme is “Positive parenting for contextually relevant childhoods in emerging contexts: The role of intervention research.” As all EC members are in favor, this proposed workshop is formally approved.

Formal approval International Workshop Italy (October 2023)

EC member Antonella Marchetti has submitted a budget for an international workshop in Italy in October 2023 to be co-financed by ISSBD. President Tina Malti will act as invited speaker at this workshop. When asked for formal approval of this budget by e-mail, several EC members have raised questions about specific items on the budget and asked for a more detailed budget. Secretary General Luc Goossens will contact organizer Antonella Marchetti to clarify these issues and revise the budget as needed. President Tina Malti and Past President Toni Antonucci will not participate in this round of consultation. (Note: Meanwhile, EC member Antonella Marchetti has responded to all the questions and submitted a revised version of the budget. This revised budget has been approved by most of the EC members who participated in the e-mail consultation).

Next EC meeting, Varia, and Adjournment

A doodle will be sent out to plan the next online EC meeting sometime in May. Given Hapunda, an Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative, emphasizes the need to create and expand a community of practice among African members and increase recruitment from that region of the world. He wants to be the pilot of this project. This point will be taken up at the next EC meeting. Given further encourages a focus on soft copies of our flagship journal, IJBD.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General
Email: luc.goossens@kuleuven.be



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

**May 22, 2023, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM EDT
(Eastern Daylight Time) (online)**

Present at the Meeting:

Tina Malti	President
Luc Goossens	Secretary General
Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck	Treasurer
Antonella Marchetti	EC member
Frosso Motti	EC member
Jacqueline Jere Folotiya	EC member
Kristin Ajrouch	EC member
Liqi Zhu	EC member
Rita Zukauskienė	EC member
Manuela Verissimo	EC member and 2024 conference organizer
Cinzia di Dio	Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative
Given Hapunda	Early Career Scholar (ECS) representative

Welcome and Approval of the minutes of the EC Meeting of April 5, 2023

President Tina Malti welcomes everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the online Executive Committee (EC) meeting held on April 5, 2023, are approved unanimously.

President's Report

President Tina Malti briefly summarizes the main points of the President's Report she submitted to the EC. She thanks everyone involved for their efforts during the transitional time of her first year in office. She mentions the Society has hired Prof. Jan Boom to create a new membership system that can be maintained by ISSBD (and no longer by SAGE). This new system will benefit our Society in the years to come. A new website has been created for ISSBD thanks to Josafa da Cunha, an external company, and some members of the President's team (in Toronto).

The Steering Committee has conducted job interviews for two positions and offered the position of Membership and Network Manager to Karen Castillo. The position of Communications Manager has been offered to Wan-Ting

Yeh. The Society will hire them for a one-year period. The President, assisted by an Advisory Committee, is close to renewing the Society's contract with SAGE (for five years starting on January 1st, 2024). We have re-negotiated a good contract in times of great change in the publishing world because we continue to enjoy a great deal of trust and support from SAGE. The new 2 x 2 grants for the Early Career Scholars program will start next year, with the first cohort of awardees to be announced at the Awards Ceremony at our Biennial Meeting in Lisbon.

Two new committees have been created: The Global Social Policy Committee and the Optimizing Capacity Committee. The mission of the former committee is to sharpen the Society's contribution to international social policy and to nourish linkages between our Society and international organizations with related mandates. The mission of the latter committee is to optimize capacity in the majority world. Toni Antonucci and Anne Petersen have agreed to serve on the Optimizing Capacity Committee. All EC members are encouraged to send in suggestions for additional members for both committees.

The Jacobs ISSBD Fellowship Program was completed during a workshop held from May 1 to May 5, 2023, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Finally, the 15th African Regional Workshop will be hosted from 10 to August 12th, 2023, at Kyambogo University, Uganda. The theme of this workshop will be "Positive parenting for contextually relevant childhoods in emerging contexts: The role of intervention research."

ISSBD HR Management Issues

The EC needs to decide how we run the Society internally. The President asks for input and suggestions for a few issues in this regard.

Jennifer Lansford, the new editor of the International Journal of Behavioral Development (IJBD), becomes the new President-Elect of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD). This dual-role situation has resulted in a need to create an action plan for minimizing and managing conflicts of interest. The President has discussed this issue with Jennifer Lansford, Dennis Gerstorff, and Noah Webster, the co-chairs of the Publications Committee. The atmosphere of these discussions was good and Jennifer Lansford has always been very open about this issue. The discussions have resulted in a six-point action plan that is very transparent and will be posted on the Society's website.

Josafa da Cunha has not been accessible for some months due to serious health problems. As he assumes several positions within our Society (e.g., Chair of the Communications Committee and Newsletter Editor), we need to find a temporary solution. The EC members discuss various options to solve this issue and the President asks all EC members to let her know who can fill the various positions on a temporary basis.

Other Reports

Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck, ISSBD Treasurer, has submitted an overview of the financial situation of the Society for the first quarter of 2023 (as of March 31, 2023). The Society's financial situation has significantly improved since 2022, and it appears to be on a stable path towards full recovery.

Cinzia di Dio, Chair of the Early Career Scholars (ECS) Committee, briefly summarizes her chair's report that she submitted to the EC. The committee, which has been expanded with new members, has tried to prioritize the planning of forthcoming activities. A rank order of important issues have been derived from a survey conducted among the ECS within the Society. High on this list are the need to create international collaborations and to improve statistical skills at different levels. Based on these findings, the ECS Committee has come up with two proposals. The first proposal is a workshop on meeting new collaborators through short presentations by ECS who are seeking international collaboration. The second proposal is a webinar with representatives from various funding programs who explain to ECS who is eligible and what their priorities are. As all ECS activities are always recorded and models are made available on the ISSBD website, the workshop, and the meeting will take the form of a webinar. The EC discusses various ways to satisfy the needs of ECS within the Society (e.g., writing weeks and summer schools) and finally approves the plan to organize the proposed webinars. The EC members who have links with international funding agencies will contact these funders. The President thanks Cinzia di Dio, Chair of the ECS Committee, for all her hard work.

Elections

All of the nominees for the various positions (i.e., regular EC members and ECS representatives) have confirmed by e-mail they are willing to stand for election and have sent a brief bio-sketch or 'blurb' to Secretary General Luc Goossens. The Secretary-General has sent a list of all the nominees and the 'blurbs' to all EC members. The EC thinks that the large number of candidates for each type of position is a sign of our own health as a learned society. However, there is a need to restrict the slate of candidates to a reasonable number (i.e., six candidates for the three positions as regular EC members and four candidates for the two positions as ECS representatives). All EC members will be invited by the Secretary-General through e-mail to rank order the candidates (based on the 'blurbs'). Regional representation will also be used as

a criterion when compiling the final lists of candidates for the two types of positions.

Possible Collaboration with the Child and Family Blog (Michael Lamb)

Michael Lamb has contacted the President to examine the possibilities for a collaboration with the Child and Family Blog. The website, which currently has some 400 articles, aims to explain recent scientific findings to lay people and policymakers and is visited frequently, mostly by people from the United States and the minority world. The organizers have hired staff who help with writing the articles. The collaboration of our Society with the blog could be either informal or more formal. The costs are estimated at 30,000 \$ annually. A co-funding model will be used. The President has expressed initial interest in this project, which aligns with our mission to reach out to the general public. Michael Lamb will be invited to attend the next EC meeting to discuss our potential collaboration with the Child and Family Blog.

2024 Biennial Meeting Update

EC Member Manuela Verissimo, Organizer of the 2024 Biennial Meeting, continues working on the program. The invited program is almost complete except for a keynote speech on climate change. The Conference Planning Committee will visit the venue of the 2024 Biennial Meeting in Lisbon in early October. The fees will be changed to support members from low-income countries.

2026 Biennial Meeting Proposal Elicitation

The EC discusses several locations for the 2026 Biennial Meeting. Canada is an option, and Jennifer Connolly (York University, Toronto) is thinking about it. The United States will be difficult, mainly because insurance for such an event would be too high. Seoul (South Korea) is also an option.

Next EC Meeting, Varia, and Adjournment

A doodle will be sent out to plan the next online EC meeting sometime in October. Michael Lamb will be invited to attend that meeting to discuss our potential collaboration with the Child and Family Blog. The Conference Planning Committee will visit the venue of the 2024 Biennial Meeting in Lisbon in early October.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General
Email: luc.goossens@kuleuven.be



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

November 3, 2023, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM EDT (Eastern Daylight Time) (online)

Present at the Meeting:

Tina Malti	President
Luc Goossens	Secretary General
Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck	Treasurer
Julie Bowker	Membership Secretary
Toni Antonucci	Past President
Antonella Marchetti	EC member
Frosso Motti	EC member
Jaqueline Jere Folotiya	EC member
Kristin Ajrouch	EC member
Liqi Zhu	EC member
Manuela Verissimo	EC member
Marc Bornstein	EC member
Rita Zukauskienė	EC member
Cinzia di Dio	ECS representative
Karen Castillo	Membership Manager
Patrick Njoroge	Communications Manager

Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the EC meeting of May 22, 2023

President Tina Malti welcomes everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the online Executive Committee (EC) meeting of May 22, 2023, are approved unanimously.

Introducing New Staff

Karen Castillo, our new Membership Manager, and Patrick Njoroge, our new Communications Manager, briefly introduce themselves. The President thanks them for all their amazing work (which, for the membership part, has been conducted in close collaboration with Jan Boom, who manages the membership section of our website). A new e-newsletter editor will be recruited.

Regional Workshops

The EC briefly discusses a report submitted by Suman Verma, Chair of the Regional Workshops Committee. The guidelines

for such workshops are now available on the ISSBD website. The members come up with various suggestions to further specify these guidelines, for instance, by formalizing the criteria for regional workshops, setting aside a certain amount of funding for two workshops per year, and above all, ensuring geographical representation and diversity across the globe. The Regional Workshop Committee can work out the criteria.

Two proposals have recently been submitted. One of them suggests holding a workshop in Ghana. This event is entitled “Mental Health, Positive Development, and Resilience During Adolescence: The African Perspective” (hosted by Sheriffa Madama, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana, and Karina Weichold, University of Jena, Germany). The other submission plans to hold a workshop in South Africa. This event is entitled “Cultural Influences on Child Development and Learning Within Contextual Differences: Multidisciplinary and Multicultural Approaches for Early Career Scholars in Africa” (hosted by Sakhela Bulungu, University of Fort Hare, South Africa). Both proposals, which seem to be quite well-developed, have been discussed with the committee. The decision on these two current proposals is postponed pending further specifications of the guidelines.

Collaboration Between ISSBD and Child and Family Blog

Michael Lamb joins the meeting online on behalf of the Child and Family Blog and briefly introduces himself to the EC members. He mentions the blog, funded earlier by the Jacobs Foundation, would like to work with ISSBD. He further says that the collaboration can be done at various levels of financial involvement. About 50 items per year are posted on the blog, mainly from North America and other affluent North Atlantic countries.

The EC members engage in a lively discussion about this potential partnership. They suggest ensuring greater representativeness across world regions (beyond the North Atlantic countries). Our regional representatives can play a key role in this regard. The members also point out that the main questions should be: a) How can ISSBD be more successful through this blog? b) How can we use this channel to promote our own research published in our own journal, IJBD? Some members also point out that we can start with a low level of involvement in this collaboration. President Tina Malti concludes this interesting discussion

by stating that ISSBD is open and interested in this collaboration. She will ask Michael Lamb for a concrete proposal for the Society.

2024 Biennial Meeting (Lisbon) Update

Manuela Verissimo, host of the 2024 Biennial Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, gives a brief update on the preparations for the conference. The Conference Planning Committee has visited Lisbon in early October 2023 and concludes that the venue is great and that Lisbon is a wonderful city. Manuela points out that accommodation in Lisbon is very expensive, and encourages all attendees to book their hotel rooms as soon as possible. She will send out a list of hotels. President Tina Malti thanks Manuela for all her hard work, and she concludes, on behalf of the entire EC, that the entire membership is excited to go to Lisbon.

Membership Committee Report 2023

The EC discusses a report on reduced membership fees submitted by Astrid Poorthuis, Chair of the Membership Committee. It has been a long time since the list of low- and middle-income countries for which reduced fees apply within our Society has been aligned with the World Bank categories. The Committee has come up with a fourfold scheme to realign our membership rates with these categories. (a) ISSBD's categorization for membership purposes changes to a higher one after a country's World Bank category has moved to a higher category for at least five years. (b) ISSBD's categorization for membership purposes to a lower category will be applied in the year that a country's World Bank category changes downward. (c) The new categories will be applied from 2024 onwards, and the list of countries eligible for reduced fees on the ISSBD website will be updated yearly. (d) An additional procedure will be put in place for reduced membership rates based on personal circumstances. This clear and well-documented proposal is unanimously accepted by the EC.

Venue for the 2026 Biennial Meeting

The EC briefly discusses potential venues for the 2026 biennial meeting, including Chile, Singapore, and Seoul (South Korea) (where our regional representative, Dr. Hyoun Kim, could be approached). We will have to decide on this issue as soon as possible.

Publications Committee Report

The EC discusses a report submitted by Noah Webster and Denis Gerstorf, Co-chairs of the Publications Committee. President Tina Malti gives a summary of the activities of this committee. New members have been appointed to the committee, a new membership contract has been signed with our publisher, SAGE, and an action plan has been developed for minimizing and managing conflicts of interest in Jennifer

Lansford's dual role. (Dr. Lansford is Editor-in-Chief of our flagship journal, the International Journal of Behavioral Development, IJBD, and President-Elect of the Society for Research in Child Development, SRCD). On behalf of the entire EC, President Tina Malti extends her gratitude to the Publications Committee, which has been doing an amazing job.

ISSBD Elections

Secretary General Luc Goossens gives an overview of the current state of the election process. The final slate of candidates has been decided upon, based on the rankings provided by the EC members. The election period, which will last for about three months (November 15, 2023, to January 31, 2024), is about to start. President Tina Malti thanks the Secretary-General for all his work for the elections.

ISSBD Awards

Silvia Koller, Chair of the Awards Committee, is unable to attend the EC meeting. The deadline for the Society's Awards nominations is February 27, 2024. All EC members are encouraged to submit nominations by that date, as the EC essentially constitutes the nominations committee within our Society.

Developing Countries Fellowships (DFC) Scheme

The EC discusses a report submitted by Peter Smith, Chair of the Developing Countries Fellowships (DFC) Committee. The DFC, currently in its seventh tranche, is a successful program that is clearly aligned with our broader ISSBD objectives as it seeks to assist the professional development of early career scholars. Within this program, three fellowships are awarded to early career scholars from developing countries for each two years. The chair proposes initiating the eighth tranche of the program. Having chaired this scheme from the start, he indicates that, while he is still willing to continue, he would be quite willing to hand it over to someone else. The EC suggests that a co-chair can be appointed for this program. The report and the implied move to start advertising for the eighth tranche are approved in the EC by a majority vote.

Next EC Meeting, Varia, and Adjournment

Julie Bowker announces two new regional representatives for the Middle East and the Netherlands. President Tina Malti and the entire EC thank Antonella Marchetti for organizing an amazing workshop in Italy, and Antonella thanks President Malti for her nice lecture at this workshop. The next EC meeting will be held in person on Sunday, June 16, 2024, from 9 AM to 5 PM in Lisbon, Portugal, on the opening day of the Biennial meeting.

Luc Goossens, ISSBD Secretary General
Email: luc.goossens@kuleuven.be



News from the ISSBD ECS Committee

The ISSBD Early Career Scholars Committee (ECS) continues to work in line with the vision and goal of creating cohesion and strengthening the strong network among the young scholars of the society. The ECS committee is determined to invest in planning and executing new meaningful initiatives for ECS in the upcoming year.

Following our tradition, the ECS committee is planning the following two proposals: 1) new webinars for the upcoming year, focusing on topics that interest ECS members, such as leadership among early career scholars and publications. 2) The ECS committee also plans a mentorship project for early career scholars wherein young scholars meet a mentor to discuss their research ideas, plans, and methodological support.

Biennial Meeting in Lisbon

For the ISSBD Biennial meeting in Lisbon 2024, travel grants were provided to support Early Career Scholars (ECS), facilitating their participation in both the main conferences and pre-conference sessions. A full day dedicated to specialized pre-conference workshops included varied topics, such as publishing, intervention research, open

developmental science, dyadic and network approaches to peer relationships, trans-disciplinary developmental science to address global societal challenges, and cross-cultural research in human development. Additionally, networking opportunities were enhanced through an ECS reception and organizing sessions with experts during the lunch hours in the Biennial meeting.

This year's Biennial meeting was a considerable success and highlighted the values of ISSBD professional initiatives and its commitment to supporting Early Career Scholars.

Early Career Scholars Committee (2024-2028)

We are happy to share the newly appointed Early Career Scholars Committee:

Early Career Scholar Chair

Federico Manzi, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

Early Career Scholar Representatives

Tripti Kathuria, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India.
Marvin Kapenda, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia.

On behalf of the ECS Committee

Marvin Kapenda and Tripti Kathuria

