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## Call for Chapters for Forthcoming Book entitled:

# Alleviating World Suffering: The Challenge of Negative Quality of Life

(Under contract with Springer International Publishing)

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### Abstract.

This book project will serve as a companion volume to *World Suffering and Quality of Life* (<http://www.springer.com/us/book/9789401796699>), an edited volume published by Springer in early 2015. That book, also edited by Ron Anderson, elaborated a research paradigm for quality of life from a global perspective. Since then the concept of negative quality of life has gained greater attention in research communities. This is a plan for a follow up volume of 30 to 35 chapters written by experts around the world. It would be clearly distinguished from the first volume by concentrating upon the *alleviation* of world suffering rather than world suffering itself. In addition, this new work will take on the challenge of integrating suffering and its relief into the research on negative quality of life. Importantly, alleviation will be defined to include prevention as well as relief actions and institutions. While some of the chapters will discuss the nature of suffering, most will evaluate aspects of the ways that relief, development, health, and education programs attempt ultimately to reduce suffering. The scope of these chapters encompasses analyses of social policies and delivery systems related to global health programs, relief work, economic development, environmental policies, human rights promotion, socio-emotional services, caregiving, compassion and altruism. The result will be a high quality work that will address such major sources of suffering as violence, inequity, cruelty, poverty, and climate change, focusing on how these conditions can be more effectively contained.

### Sections/Topics

1. Philosophical, Psychological and Social Perspectives on Suffering and Healing (This topic includes philosophical and practical perspectives, the meaning of suffering and the meaning of caregiving and other social roles providing alleviation of suffering, social solidarity, moral responsibility for relief of suffering, and collective action.)
2. Quality of Life (QOL) research challenges (The topic includes issues such as evaluating long term interventions, selecting measures of well being, negative versus positive QOL, level of analysis, and qualitative versus quantitative methods.)
3. Personal and social caring (This topic includes empathy, empathic altruism, compassion, interpersonal caring, caregiving, healing, and the link between these practices and social action and social solidarity.)

4. Improving global development, disaster recovery and poverty reduction (This topic includes minimizing income scarcity and eliminating extreme wealth inequality, improving global development institutions, expanding capability freedom especially among the poor, reducing hunger, improving food, water, and waste systems, reducing dysfunctional population growth and evaluating millennium development goals.)
5. Improving healthcare institutions (The topic includes epidemiology, mental healthcare, end of life care, grief, family functioning, child well-being, caregiving.)
6. Transforming violent conflict (This topic includes war, cruelty, oppression, slavery and other violence-related outcomes, peace, reparations, non-retribution, non-self-centered mindsets, nonviolent resolutions of suffering, reducing refugees and displacements, diasporas, gender inequality, insecurity, overpopulation, and social schisms based on race, religion, gender and gender identity.)
7. Institutionalizing human rights, human dignity, and justice (The topic includes improving legal systems, reducing law violations (local and international), legal empowerment of excluded groups, e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, and other dignity-deprived social groups, promoting anti-corruption, shifting values toward social responsibility and the development of human capabilities for all.)
8. Preventing future suffering (This topic includes mobilizing social support and social movements to alleviate suffering, improving global governance, promoting inter-nation coordination, international policy, ethics, morality, minimizing climate change and other environmental disasters, biodiversity, sustainability and sustainable development, exploring alternative solutions and priorities for the alleviation of world suffering, including cultural norms and political policies that justify the lack of compassion and social irresponsibility.)

## **Topical Discussion**

As outlined in the list above of major sections of the book, it will begin with philosophical and quality of life perspectives on the challenge of alleviating global suffering. Following those topics will be chapters on the broad topics of personal caring; global development; healthcare; violent conflict; human rights; and the prevention of future suffering. Authors of reports on the future of human development from a global perspective largely neglect suffering, focusing instead on economic, social, and health development. Global and regional disasters caused by climate change may be the major exceptions to this neglect of human suffering. In addition, the topic of human rights and human dignity does bring suffering to bear upon certain types of controversial policies such as torture and incarceration.

Glatzer (2015) pioneered the conceptualization of negative quality of life focusing upon worry especially counter productive worry. He also reviewed negative affect such as unhappiness, depression and fear. While he mentions pain, like other researchers in the fields of quality of life and well being, he largely neglects debilitating pain or extreme suffering. Quality of life (QOL) models of pain and suffering have treated substantial pain and suffering as an external influence on QOL and well-being rather than an integral part of a continuum. Recent research on suffering and the quality of life (Anderson 2015) has shown that viewing suffering as extremely negative points on a continuum of QOL can be very useful.

The practice of personal caring yields not only alleviation of interpersonal suffering but it provides the foundation for social capital and social solidarity. Wilkinson (2015) said that humanitarianism is the call to caring and Johnston (2015) concluded that caring is fundamental to healing. Johnston also notes how suffering raises deep questions about the meaning of our existence. Without empathy, compassion and caring, no will would exist to participate in the collective alleviation of suffering at the organizational, societal and global levels.

Both popular and scholarly literature on socio-economic development for global society, particularly with respect to the reduction of poverty, tend to take either an optimistic view in accord with Jeffrey Sachs or a pessimistic one as championed by William Easterly. Banerjee & Duflo (2011) take a more balanced view of economic development and call for clinical trials and other evidence-based research whenever possible as the major bases for deciding how to design a socio-economic interventions. Their approach stresses how success factors in development remain very complex and highly interdependent. For example, while some claim that various factors such as electricity, Internet technology or the reduction of violence (Haugen & Boutros 2014) are prerequisites to successful poverty reduction, Banerjee & Duflo argue that all of these elements and many more need to be addressed during the design and implementation of public interventions. This edited volume will help identify the crucial role of such factors in effective interventions and describe projects implemented to alleviate poverty for the purpose of the relief of suffering.

Global wealth inequality has reached the extreme where 1% of the world population owns nearly half of global wealth (Credit Suisse 2014). Meanwhile millions of the unemployed or income-poor can only afford one meal a day or one meal every two days. This disgraceful state of disparity in QOL and well-being from a humanitarian perspective demands policies that revolutionize access to resources, programs to build cultures of responsible caring, and institutions which provide education and job training. Small-scale development projects are not sufficient to keep up with the rising population in the poorest world regions.

The issues and concerns of the global health development movement parallel those of social and economic development. Farmer, Kim, Kleinman & Basilico (2013) make a strong case that “decent health” is necessary for contributions to economic growth as well as political stability. Biehl (2013) describes global health as an anarchic system driven by competing, independent organizations that fail to build the capacities of local healthcare institutions on the one hand and on the other hand, fail to address the needs of many if not most of those in deep pain or suffering. Farmer et al. argue for what they call ‘accompaniment,’ which consists of setting goals defined by the people to be served; funding local, public institutions; buying and hiring locally; building strong civil services; greater regulation of outside aid organizations; and using evidence-based standards. Andrews, Khalema, & Assié-Lumumba (2015) discuss these strategies as applied to Africa and concluded that the approaches are not always straightforward to implement. Although their primary concern is with setting priorities for different types of diseases and types of treatment they note in passing that mental disorders are woefully neglected. Farmer and his associates claim that the needs of global health in developing countries are very similar to those living in poverty in developed countries like the United States.

Although Pinker (2011) assembled a massive amount of evidence that violence has been declining globally for some time, the recent rise of global terrorism, especially by the so-called Islamic State, has led many to presume violent conflict is rising globally (Wittes & Blum 2015). Recent reports on the global future give greater attention to the possibility of major conflicts and wars, both within and between existing nations (Burrows 2012; Hajkovicz 2015). These reports indirectly give support to Haugen & Boutros’s (2014) claim that poverty cannot be adequately addressed until violent conflict has subdued. Likewise, the alleviation of world suffering is

improbable without reduction of violence, especially the violence and cruelty intended to shock and demoralize target groups.

Compared to poverty reduction and health projects, human rights projects tend to be introduced with even less planning. Hence the evidence tends to be more qualitative, perhaps making generalization more challenging. Furthermore, as noted by Lagon and Arend (2014), consensus on what constitutes a human right remains rather controversial. They argue that by emphasizing human dignity as the foundation of human rights, acceptance of these rights may become more universal. Whether their argument holds up, emphasizing the concept of human dignity reinforces the close association between the values underlying human rights and principles fundamental to the alleviation of suffering.

The future of the environmental integrity as well as the quality of life of future generations justify attention to the prevention, as well as the alleviation, of suffering. The last section of the book will focus upon minimizing suffering in future scenarios. It will address not only local or national progress in minimizing suffering but global change as well. Within this context, the topics of global governance, sustainability, and international cooperation will be explored. Gulyas's (2015) model of views of the future from the standpoint of different types and intensities will be given attention as.

While Farmer et al.'s (2013) book explicitly calls for policy makers and healthcare practitioners to reimagine global health, a major goal of the proposed book is to foster re-imagination of the alleviation of suffering as a contribution to the social development of global society. Some of the chapters may even make a case for certain types of suffering alleviation as human rights. Discussions of global development of economic or health systems sometimes hint that suffering impedes such progress. The intent of this volume will be to make such hints more specific and to begin to spell out how progress might occur.

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**Target Audience.** This work primarily targets researchers, academics, and students in the social sciences, international studies, psychology, health sciences and health professions. It is also aimed at non-academic readers with a personal interest in the relief of suffering, whether intellectual, policy-oriented, or practical.

**Vision.** The principal purpose of this work is to promote better understanding of suffering and strategies for its relief. A quality of life perspective is taken with the objective of making suffering and its relief a visible research topic with its own community of scholars and researchers. Such a community could reinvigorate global health and human welfare policy—and make them more effective—by providing new tools. Describing and framing suffering from a variety of approaches yield comprehensive understandings of suffering and the ‘reduction of suffering.’ Hopefully, a side effect of this project will be to add sufficient clarity to public understanding such that both humanitarian institutions and individuals take additional steps to relieve suffering of others.

**Submission Guidelines & Due Dates.** After you have received this personal invitation, please reply by email. If you accept the invitation, please follow up soon with an abstract and tentative title. Please send an abstract with a tentative title to the Editor, Ron Anderson at ([rea@umn.edu](mailto:rea@umn.edu)). Abstracts with tentative titles may be submitted as separate files or in the body of an email. You will receive a response within a few days. The first full draft of the paper will be due in early 2016; however, you may submit a partial or full paper anytime before then. Please note the entire schedule as well as formatting requirements and other details below.

<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
Mar. 15, 2016	First draft of paper due
June. 15, 2016	Revised draft of paper due

Aug. 15, 2016      Final draft of paper due  
Nov. 1, 2016      Complete manuscript to publisher  
April 15, 2017     Publication

**Formatting Requirements:** The length of papers should be roughly 5,000 words (3,000 to 8,000 words accepted). The target length is equivalent to 21 typed, double-spaced pages with a font size of 12. In writing your paper, you may use any font style and size you want; however, single-spaced Times Roman font size 12 is preferred. The APA Style Guide should be used for references and other formatting. Additional guides for figures and other details will be provided.

Draft papers should be sent in MS Word as an email attachment, with any tables or charts embedded or at the end of the file. Give your file(s) a file name that begins with your last name to identify the source of file. Separate files for each figure will be needed with the final draft only.

**Paper Review Process.** The fact that you received this invitation to submit a paper means that I have reviewed your work and feel confident that you would submit a quality paper for this volume. However, one other author and I will review each full paper submitted for scholarship issues and clarity. When the paper is nearly final, a copy editor will review it for language and consistency with the APA Style guidelines and Springer's requirements for figures and tables.

**Author Benefits.** The first author of each chapter will receive a complimentary copy of the full book at the time of publication. All authors will receive an eBook copy of the book. To help you now in preparing a paper for this volume on **Alleviating World Suffering**, you will find a Word file of hundreds of references on suffering and its relief (in APA format) at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/iejug9vc6d6bkby/All%20References%20on%20Suffering%20and%20Sept15.doc?dl=0>. Also, you may wish to consult a short 2014 book that I wrote on suffering: **Human Suffering and Quality of Life - Conceptualizing Stories and Statistics**. A direct link to it is:  
<http://www.soc.umn.edu/~rea/documents/Preprint%20of%20Human%20Suffering%20SpringerBrief%20v5%2013june13.pdf>

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**About the Editor,** Ronald (Ron) Anderson, Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota: I received my PhD in sociology from Stanford University in 1970, and then served on the faculty of sociology at the University of Minnesota for 37 years. Throughout that time, I consulted for many government agencies and corporations on survey research and technology-related issues. From 1990 to 2005, I coordinated several large international studies of the social and learning effects of information technology within primary and secondary education in 20 or more countries in each study. From that and earlier work, I wrote or edited seven books and over 100 articles. Since retirement, my research interests have focused primarily on suffering, compassion and the 'good society' concept. Further details on my prior work can be found at:

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