The title we chose for this chapter reflects our view that the issues of peace and international development are inexorably related. The concept of peace is a difficult one to define. Many definitions focus on conflict or war, with peace defined as the absence of war. We consider peace to be not simply the absence of war, but also the perception that there is minimal threat of war. When the likelihood of war is so great as to be perceived as a genuine threat, continued prevention of war is often difficult to achieve. Thus, a primary goal for establishing peace must be to create an international community in which military intervention is not seen as a likely option for resolving conflict. Furthermore, our definition of peace incorporates a number of issues broadly related to social justice. Peace will not be achieved until we address some fundamental questions dealing with equality of people, world interdependence, economic fairness, unity, and social and international justice. Peace in this sense would, then, include activities aimed at reducing the likelihood of violence, as well as activities directed at promoting, as Alger (1987) noted, economic well-being, social justice, and ecological balance (see also Christie, 1997; Dobrosielski, 1987; Kimmel, 1995; Tucker, 1977).

In recent years the world has witnessed dramatic and far-reaching changes. The political scene has changed rapidly—changes that were inconceivable only a decade ago, such as those that have taken place in eastern Europe. But these changes also force us to see that enduring peace will not be obtained only through political realignments or military victories. Civil wars and regional conflicts continue, and in some areas have dramatically escalated.

Until the late 1980s, the nuclear race dominated world debate. Wagner (1988) commented that the buildup of armaments and the peace-through-deterrence approach are representative of negative approaches to peace—all strategies related to the negative goal of avoiding war.
The changes in armament policy may finally allow the nations of the world to shift from these negative approaches to peace, which have dominated the policies of most governments, to more positive means of establishing peace (Blumberg, 1998). In this chapter, we will consider some examples of positive approaches to peace, with a particular focus on the relevance of community psychology to peace and international development.

At first blush, the applicability of community psychology to international peace and development issues may not be apparent. It is our thesis that the principles and theories of social change upon which community psychology is based can indeed be applied to the development of peaceful relations in the world. Community psychology is premised on the theory that the problems experienced by many individuals grow out of adverse conditions, such as social inequality, prejudice, economic disparity, and other societal-level problems. Community psychologists interested in affecting the plight of individuals recognize that change strategies must focus on an understanding of those conditions in order to establish the conditions needed to create a more healthful and stable community or society. We suggest that the strategies and tactics that have been developed by community psychologists at the local level can be extended to global issues. To accomplish this, the issues of peace and international development must be framed in such a way as to allow a broader definition of the problems and potential solutions. This is a familiar process to community psychologists, since the field is based in large part on a reframing of the notions of mental health and mental illness (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986). It is our intent to illustrate that if the concept of peace is reframed, there is a clear role for community psychologists to play.

THE PRESENT CHALLENGE OF PEACE

It is clear that world problems are complex and interrelated, and that solutions to these problems must take into account the interdependence of the world’s political, economic, and social structure. Because the arms race and ongoing wars compellingly attract our attention, it is easy to lose sight of the interrelated social and economic problems that affect, and are affected by, them. By failing to address these other problems, the cycles that promote war in the first place are perpetuated.

If one views peace in this broader perspective, various types of action and involvement needed to promote it become apparent. In particular, the involvement of individuals and citizen groups becomes a more promising possibility. In a review of research on reactions to nuclear war, Fiske (1987) concluded that most people do not worry much about nuclear war and, despite acknowledging that the effect of a nuclear war would be devastating, do not actively engage in activities to lessen the possibility of a nuclear war (see also Boehnke & Schwartz, 1997; Frydenberg & Lewis, 1996). While this may, in part, be attributed to apathy, it is also likely that many people do not believe a nuclear war is a likely event. Fiske argues that the apparent apathy is also due to a sense of powerlessness, a belief that there really is little one can do to influence policies regarding nuclear armament. Whether this belief is true is of course arguable, but the relevance of this for the purpose of this chapter is that community psychologists interested in getting involved in peace activities must take this belief into account. We believe that it is possible to mobilize citizens into action if they believe that there is something potentially important that they can contribute. Citizen involvement in promoting peace will increase if the focus of attention is expanded to social issues other than nuclear disarmament that can also advance peace. If the peace issues were framed in other ways, the average citizen might feel more instrumental in affecting change. As Fiske (1987) concludes, “one must find a