

**Foreign Policy Blogs Network:**

- [Afghanistan](#)
- [Africa](#)
- [America in Transition](#)
- [Arms Control and Proliferation](#)
- [Bangladesh](#)
- [Brazil](#)
- [Caucasus](#)
- [Central Asia](#)
- [Children](#)
- [China](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [Corruption and Accountability](#)
- [Cuba](#)
- [Current Conflicts](#)
- [Cybersecurity and Internet Communications](#)
- [East Asia](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [European Union](#)
- [Foreign Policy Association](#)
- [Foreign Policy Blogs](#)
- [Global Currents](#)
- [Global Engagement](#)
- [Global Film Review](#)
- [Global Food Security](#)
- [Global Health](#)
- [Global Markets](#)
- [Global Posts](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [India](#)
- [Iran](#)
- [Iraq](#)
- [Israel](#)
- [Latin America](#)
- [Law and Security Strategy](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [Media and Foreign Policy](#)
- [Mexico](#)
- [Middle East](#)
- [Middle East Media](#)
- [Migration](#)
- [Music and Global Affairs](#)
- [Pakistan](#)
- [Philanthropy](#)
- [Private Military Contractors](#)
- [Public Diplomacy](#)
- [Religion and Politics](#)
- [Rising Powers](#)
- [Russia](#)
- [Southeast Asia](#)

- [Terrorism](#)
- [The Arctic](#)
- [Transatlantic Media](#)
- [Transitional States](#)
- [U.S. Defense](#)
- [U.S. Diplomacy](#)
- [U.S. Role in the World](#)
- [Venezuela](#)
- [War Crimes](#)
- [Women and Foreign Policy](#)



## [Children](#)

The World Affairs Blog Network

[FPB Home](#)

[About](#)

[Bloggers](#)

[Resources](#)

 

# Is Giving Genetic?

By [Cassandra Clifford](#)

Friday, March 19 10:59 pm EST



Photo: U.S. State Department

I stumbled across this piece on IRIN, [Is humanitarianism genetic?](#), looking at various creatures like ants or bees, who will give their individual lives in sacrifice of that of the rest of the ‘colony’, challenge Darwin’s theory of the survival of the fittest. The article was written in response to a [recent paper](#), *Altruism, Spite, and Greenbeards*, which looked at the genetic factors behind altruism.

IRIN asked, “Is the altruism of humanitarians a genetically programmed function to preserve our global hive?”

“By asking if humanitarianism is genetic, you assume aid work is attached to altruism, which I do not believe to be the case for all aid workers by any stretch,” commented one aid worker, who has been in the field for a decade, and asked to remain anonymous.

Personally I am going to have to agree from my no scientific, but personal and professional experiences as both a volunteer and director of a 100% volunteer led organization. While I do believe some people are just born that way, others learn by example, and many others use volunteerism simply as a step-up and a resume builder.

Genetics cannot explain all behaviours, Stuart West, co-author of the report told IRIN.

“There does seem to be some evidence that genes directly influence the level of helping in humans. However, this is relatively negligible when compared to other factors such as environmental conditions [and] learnt behaviours.”

It does seem to be true that children of humanitarian driven families are more altruistic and looking back at my own family tree, it seems selfless giving has always been an ingrained behavior that may well be inherited. However the example set may have been just as powerful as the bloodlines draw to ‘do good’. Therefore give your children the example of altruism to inherit and pass down across the generations.

## 1 Comments So Far»



[Bill Hewitt](#) on 22/03/2010 in [12:58](#)

I don't know about "genetic" but Francis Hutcheson, one of the seminal thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, regarded human goodness as "innate." This is, of course, also a core Buddhist teaching.

**Leave Comments Below»**

Username: \*required

Email Address: \*required

Homepage:

Comments: [Comment Rss](#) | [Trackback URI](#)

Post my comment

Anti-spam word: (Required)\*

To prove you're a person (not a spam script), type the security word shown in the picture.



« [Ireland Issues Final Report on Constitutional Amendment on Children News...](#) »



## Recent Articles

- [Bullying is Abuse](#)
- [News...](#)
- [Ending gender inequality through Education](#)
- [Yemen Fights to Ban Child Marriages](#)
- [News...](#)

## Pages

- [2008 Year in Review](#)
- [About the Author](#)
- [About the Children's Blog](#)
- [Books for Children](#)
- [Books for Children and Parents of Victims of Abuse](#)
- [Child Soldiers Links and Related Resources](#)
- [Children and Children's Rights: Year in Review 2007](#)
- [Children's Rights Links](#)
- [Crisis Hotlines](#)
- [Fair Trade and Slave Free Links](#)
- [Fair Trade Book List](#)
- [General Book List](#)
- [Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Reports and Publications](#)
- [Human Trafficking and Slavery Related Movies and Documentaries](#)
- [Human Trafficking Conventions and Laws](#)
- [Important Links](#)
- [Links for Abused Children and Parents](#)
- [Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Links](#)
- [Other Blogs of Interest](#)
- [Related Movies](#)
- [Resources for Children and Young Adults](#)
- [Resources Teachers and Parents](#)
- [Slavery and Trafficking Related Books](#)

## Categories

- [Children](#)
- [Uncategorized](#)
- [Great Decisions Blogs](#)
- [Foreign Policy Association](#)
- [Blogroll](#)
- [Children and War](#)
- [Child Trafficking](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Abuse](#)

## Links



## Global Jobs

- [Pharmaceuticals](#)
- [Civil/Building Engineering](#)
- [Associate, Global Recruiting Services](#)
- [Senior Director, Community Stabilization & Development](#)
- [Project Coordinator, Community Stabilization & Development](#)
- [Research Assistant](#)
- [National Security Initiative Intern](#)
- [Internship](#)
- [Global Law and Development Fellowship--SF.19.03](#)
- [Program Operations Manager](#)
- [Program Manager for Monetization](#)

 [Subscribe to the FPA Jobs Feed for instant updates](#)

## Archives

- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [January 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)

- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)

©2010 [Children](#)

[Log in](#)

Other FPA services: [FPA Home](#) | [Bookstore](#) | [Global Jobs](#) | [Events](#) | [Great Decisions](#)  
[Contact us](#) | [Become a Blogger](#) | [Advertise](#)