



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CARING COMMUNITIES

Better Living ... Adding Life to Years

**“Age of Hyperconnectivity: Imagining the Possible in Cities...
Better Living...Adding Life to Years”
Virtual Session
In support of *International World Cities Day and
76th United Nations Anniversary***

Concept Note

“Urban growth, if not properly guided, can destroy communities” - Dr. Albert Bush-Brown, Co-founder of ICCC

This session will harness creative practical solutions towards “A Better City, Better Life”. It will consider perspectives from a multi-strategic group of international experts addressing the impact of hyperconnectivity; stimulation of sustainable, climate-resilient societies; and the important involvement and catalytic role of the private and public sectors. Successful innovations include: redevelopment in Suzhou, rehabilitation in rural China, environmental children’s education tools using music related books, “smart cities” unique for today’s emerging markets, new life for St Francis convent mountain in Germany, media outreach in rural Philippine cities and resilience in action in Qatar. Emphasis will be placed on how ICT is a catalyst for engaging diverse populations in addressing the complex issues such as social justice, gender empowerment, youth resilience, poverty alleviation and stimulating innovation creating new mindsets and stimulate social change and a *Society for all Ages and Abilities*.

Within the framework of support for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC) has organized this international virtual session composed of a non-traditional gathering of renown experts from Brazil, China, Germany, Kenya, Philippines, Switzerland, the United States and the United Nations. The focus is to leverage their insights and wisdom to address enhancing “*Better Living, Adding Life to Years.*” Against a backdrop of environmental change in a fragmented complex developed and developing world.

This session is part of the ICCC “Age of Connectivity: Cities, Magnet of Hope, Imagining the Possible” Dialogue Series, which has addressed the challenges facing a rapidly urbanizing and ageing world since 1994. Against a backdrop of seismic demographic and environmental shifts, this session will explore meaningful partnerships and action-oriented initiatives toward accelerating the achievements of the indivisible and inter-linked *2030 Sustainable Development Goal Agenda* particularly as they relate to cities in the digital economy and society.

Within 30 years, two-thirds of the world’s population will live in urban areas and 90 per cent of urban growth will occur in less-developed regions. Using cutting edge technologies in new ways can enhance building sustainable cities and communities towards how to best narrow the rural and urban divide and connect their future for the decades ahead. Actions will be identified to delineate, develop, scale-up and implement programs related to local cultures. The Session includes exploring how a holistic approach, enhanced by technology and innovation, can help to facilitate the improvement with all levels of government.



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Recommendations will be reviewed by the relevant organizations including government decision-makers, and United Nations bodies and presented to related venues by enhancing related international hubs and highlighting contributions from industry leaders and entrepreneurs who are stimulating new mindsets and intergenerational empowerment.

Rather than a conventional Concept Note, The following attempts to capture the rich and random musings of the experts assembled today who have generously contributed their thoughts prior to this session for the purposes of stimulating the debate.

Speakers comments:

Redesign the World

Hyperconnectivity is rapidly changing our world. For the first time in human history, we are all connected where distance is dead and time is instant. What does this mean to human civilization going forward? How would it affect our social, political, and economic activities? How would it change our cities, climate, and the world?

The world was last designed about 80 years ago that gave birth to the UN, World Bank, IMF, NATO, WTO, WHO, GDP, etc. This design worked well for several decades to enhance peace, reduce poverty, increase longevity, etc., but it did not eliminate hunger, and violence. It created significant environmental blunders and increased inequality. This design does not work well anymore in a hyperconnected environment. We need to “Redesign the World” focusing on Inclusion, Basic Human needs, New Economy, Sustainability, and Nonviolence.

Resilience in Action: Msheircb Downtown Doha

Combining modern construction techniques with cultural and contextual precedent for sustainable design, Msheireb Downtown Doha takes a markedly different approach to downtown redevelopment – focusing on the human experience, street presence, and progressive approaches to providing human comfort in a hot climate.

Social Model for the Bottom Tier of Economic Pyramid

About two-thirds of the human economics pyramid, known as the Bottom of the pyramid (BOP) or Base of the pyramid, accounts for the underprivileged population. It has been observed that the fruits of democracy, freedom, justice, capitalism, and technology diminish until they reach the bottom. The idea is to identify the basic needs of rural society and address them within the same community using sustainable solutions and value co-creation. Together with sustainability and co-creation, they can provide service/goods in exchange for the same. This decentralized system would reduce the dependency of the bottom tier on the middle and upper class. On the other hand, the upper and middle class will eventually be dependent on the rural society for basic amenities like farming, poultry, and fishing. This dependency would also initiate the upper to lower-class cash flow resulting in a balanced economy. Hyperconnectivity and collaborative development of new values can be the essence to empower the Bottom tier of the economic pyramid.



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Regenerating Old Suzhou: Planning for Living and Tourism

The old town of Suzhou (Gusu) is at the heart of a sizeable conurbation (also somewhat confusedly called Suzhou) that includes five major cities and many peri-urban villages. The region has long been both a major economic centre and a substantial tourist attraction in China. Situated in the Lower Yangtze Delta and on the Grand Canal, the wealth of its agricultural land created not just a central marketing area for goods and services in Southern Jiangsu, but also a comfortable environment where the rich and powerful first of the region and then of the country wanted to live and have houses. Since the beginning of the Reform Era in 1978 Suzhou has developed exponentially, particularly away from the old town with new urban and industrial areas in every direction. While for some time and in some respects Gusu was protected from over-development, there have also been elements of urban decline. It is only really in the last decade that regeneration for both living and tourism has become a local government project.

New Life on the Convent Mountain in Germany

St Francis convent in Germany has been steadily decreasing in nun numbers from over 1600 to currently 276 nuns and by 2030 to 28 nuns. The St Francis convent in Reute Bad Waldsee has a total of 28 buildings. The plan is to give these buildings a new life and meaningfully fill it with life and to continue the past into the future without the nuns being around in the same numbers, hence the NGO headquarter is being moved from the city Bad Waldsee to the convent location and will be housed in two of the buildings. A new housing complex for low income families will be added with 50-75 units to revitalize the community.

Media Outreach in Rural Cities in Developing Countries - Philippines' Project

One of John Kent's roles was to tell the story of a rural community radio station in Jagna, Philippines, and a public school's financial literacy library in urban New York City. Mr. Kent was honored to be invited to the United Nations to share this story of how two supposedly disparate programs were connected in its collaborative model.

Dialogue is part of innovation, and at the UN conference in 2012 Mr. Kent was asked why a small all-volunteer radio station in rural Philippines was invited to a conference about emerging digital systems, often complex, and designed to improve service delivery in cities of the future. Mr. Kent's answer is the same answer all our programs give us to this very question: don't you want the latest and greatest solution to your problems? This question had the same answer across programs for us— the technology of the future is not always at the hands of the latest invention, and when organizations ask the very communities our programs serve not just what their needs are but also best ideas on how to deliver, collaboratively thought out solutions involve technological innovation not just looking towards the future, but also the past. Jagna's community radio station combined broadcast and digital radio, cell phone texts with on air answers, and community ownership in a way that radically improved the ability to reach, motivate, and connect individuals and their communities. On World Cities Day we are excited to learn from challenges in a rural community, and their success in using innovated technology with a community radio station in order to serve the financial, health, and education needs of all.



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Smart Cities Unique for today's Emerging Markets

When the Interconnectivity Era began, the entire world started thinking of ways to apply this new technology to all level of people's life. Technology was under the spotlight, and urban planners did not escape from this trend. Cinematographic pictures of how a 2000's city should look like and a blurry definition of the concept of Smart Cities led to large real estate developments being planned from scratch, applying the latest technology in a patchwork of the "best-practices" of existing urban cities.

After some pilot programs, planners came to the realization that when big developments are built from top-to-bottom, cities become impersonal and people mere pieces to "fulfill spots" in this pre-fixed scenario. Thenceforth, the focus of Smart Cities has shifted from technology to people and the growth direction to bottom-to-top. The definition of Smart Cities developed to the organization and application of static and dynamic data to use resources and information more efficiently, improving people's quality of life. Therefore, each city, as a living organism, has its identity respected, allowing growth to happen organically over a strong and organized foundation.

When this concept is applied to emerging markets, respecting people's level of development is paramount to establishing a uniform growth of the city and its citizens. The application of technology should follow people's know-how, allowing citizens to be actors on the development and not only users of it.

Transforming Rehabilitation in rural China

Every so often, in China you get an opportunity to help design a city of the future. I'm sure the idealists in all of us has often had dreams of building a perfect city. This is the chance to contribute. Built in the Greater Bay Area, GuangMing is a perfect candidate to show what we humankind is capable of its geographically situated in the perfect area, with It is surrounded by ecological friendly green house and organic farms. A great person once said, "Man's existence dependent the way of the land, the land exists according to nature". With great cities also come great responsibilities, with innovation we also mustn't forget the old.

This is the culmination of all 'our' dreams, a balance between being environmentally friendly as well as immersing rehabilitation medicine facilities and health into a culturally appropriate with scientifically cutting edge. Insert Center for Rehab medicine has been fortunate enough to be picked by the new five-years plan of important government official. Thank you for his support! We shall help contribute to this illustrious project through to improve the lives of all.

Climate Children's Books with Music

SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 14 Life Below Water, and SDG 15 Life On Land are the inspiration for "*Ojie, The Origami Grasshopper*" a picture book series for children ages 7 - 10. A magical, shapeshifting Ojie's takes young readers on adventures that open their eyes to the beauty and majesty of the natural world, all the while introducing them gingerly to the fragility of Planet Earth. To paraphrase the Jesuits, give Ojie a young reader and he'll give you back a conscientious 21st century citizen of Planet Earth. And, to reach our young readers through their electronic devices, each book has an accompanying song, video, and website.



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The Age of Hyper Connectivity, a more Prosperous World

With the rapid technological advancement witnessed in today's world, the more pressing and urgent question, even as the world converges to celebrate "World Cities days", is "What does the future hold for our cities?" While cities around the world have thrived on their own individual identities, it is time to examine how the age of hyperconnectivity can help in creating interdependent character and to explore what is possible in our cities.

We are constantly fed the narrative of an increasingly globalized world and connected communities. For what it is worth, the world has become a global village where the challenges experienced in one corner of the world impact another corner. On the upside, this globalization marked by hyperconnectivity spells a more prosperous world, better living and quality of life. With investment in technology, all facets of life can be revolutionized. For instance, agriculture in the cities can be optimized for increased food production, value additions made possible, urban greenhouses erected, and products bought online and delivered by drone. Even more possible in the cities, is a life that revolves around a cashless economy enabled by fintech innovation like the M-PESA in Kenya. M-PESA which sprouted in 2007, has become a reflection of how technology can wondrously transform lives both in the city and up-country. While imagining the possible in the cities, M-PESA can be a classical example of disruptive innovation in the age of hyperconnectivity that has transformed/will transform the everyday lives of most people living in the cities where transactions take place every minute.

Climate Children and Music

Climate change is one of the most defining challenges of the 21st century. Orchestrated by the increasing global warming, our children will inherit a planet with more frequent and extreme weather events than ever before. Deliberate and harmful human activities such as deforestation to clear land for agriculture and structural development are compounding these climate challenges. Reversing the effects of climate change now requires more innovative approaches than ever before.

A new approach? Since children are more likely to experience the implications of climate change than any other group, it makes sense that they are incorporated into environmental protection programs at young age. Since music helps in strengthening memory skills, climate-orientated messages can be passed down to children through musical channels. Lifelong skills on environmental conservation (taught through music), taught from as early as childhood are likely to lead to better responses to climate changes (compliance and adherence) and reverse deleterious climate action in the long run.

While exploring the concept of climate children and music, young climate advocate Greta Thunberg offers a proof of concept and validates the idea of using children and music to sustain the fight against climate change. It is inspiring as well as stimulating to listen to Greta Thunberg's speech during the UN Climate Conference in New York, where she challenged the world leaders for not doing enough. Thunberg's passion for action against climate change is a testament to the great motivation children can develop and innovation they provide towards solving complex contemporary problems such as climate change. Furthermore, since children are naturally very creative, they can help in crafting simple yet powerful messages that can be used to promote climate action across the world. These simple climate action messages can be in the form of songs, creative pieces, spoken words and poetic pieces among other forms of music.



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Background of ICCC:

The International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC), established in 1993, responds to the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly aging global population. ICCC stimulates and identifies successful strategies and creative solutions by encouraging their adaptation and/or replication in both developing and developed countries.

Mainstreaming ageing issues, especially within the areas of the built environment and information and communication technologies (ICT), is the centerpiece of ICCC's global dialogue. ICCC is a non-profit organization and has United Nations Special Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It serves not only as a leader and catalyst but also as a bridge joining universities, government agencies, the private sector, NGOs as well as United Nations agencies to promote new ways of viewing an integrated Society for all Generations.

Since its inception, one of ICCC's unique goals has been to highlight the contributions that private enterprises and individuals have made to the betterment of society. Through global dialogues, technical support and international student design competitions, ICCC promotes the mainstreaming of ageing issues through "out of the box" gatherings of non-traditional change agents and experts.