



shaping healthy communities

Canberra, AUSTRALIA, February 7th, 2018

The international 'Think and Do' Tank **Urban Synergies Group** is holding a side networking event on the 11th February 2018 at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This event is a call for action at the highest level with UN-Habitat, where the common future of our cities is determined. With our partners we aim not just to raise awareness but urge for a paradigm shift and new global alliances for children health & well-being in cities.

The world is starting to pay attention and with the collaborative efforts resulting the international Urban Thinker Campus in Canberra, Australia "Shaping Spaces for GenZ" in 2017, we were able to successfully establish tangible actions that can function as a foundation to improve children health and well-being in cities.

With our partners from the University of Canberra, Health Research Institute and the ACT Government, we reached an agreement- if we want to succeed to create safe, inclusive, accessible, green and public spaces for all, we urgently need address the importance of children health and well-being in cities.

Our Founder and Director Gregor Mews will address the international audience during his keynote at the event. He will also share some of the latest research findings on children health and well-being, and outcomes of his PhD thesis relating to play and qualities of public spaces which he is currently completing at the University of Canberra.

We take this agreement serious and are committed to be active drivers for change, carrying the passionate messages of concerned children and young people in Canberra on grass-roots level to the international domain. Urban Synergies Group members are available for interview.

Shaping healthy cities with and for children

When: 11th February 2018

Time: 9am-11am

Meeting Point: Room 406, Kuala Lumpur Conference Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Cost: Free

Why is this event important?

"Children today walk less than ever before in the history of humanity"

(Roberts and Edwards, 2010, p. 39).

Australia is one of the most urbanised nations in the world. More than 80 percent of its people live in urban or suburban areas. These are the places where most Australians spend their everyday life working, learning, living and playing. The way that these environments are built shapes our lives. They determine **the way we move around**, the way and what we eat or drink, they contribute to **the way we socially connect** and create a sense of belonging as a vital part of community life.

Childhood obesity has risen from around 7.5% in the 1960s to the current level of about 25%, and is considered one of the most pressing public health issues facing Australian children. Mental

health, social and metabolic problems have also been on the rise. Children are being increasingly diagnosed with mental ‘illnesses’, ranging from attention- deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to anxiety and depression-related disorder.

Child-friendliness can be described as “the physical and social environment that allow children to feel a sense of belonging, to be respected and valued, and to have opportunities to become increasingly independent” (Malone, Gleeson et al. 2006). Walking friendly cities allow people from all ages to have the freedom to move around and connect with the natural and built environment.

Boilerplate message:

Urban Synergies Group is a ‘Think and Do’ tank passionate about improving urban systems without borders by creating effective synergies in a complex global environment that enables better health and well-being outcomes for all. Since 2013, USG has been working on creating effective bridges between cutting edge academic research, non-government organisations, governments and practices. USG is a strong network of key people that share critical thoughts and have very curious minds around sustainable urbanism that can truly benefit all people.

Best wishes,

Urban Synergies Group

Contact Gregor Mews

Mobile +61 (0)4 22 183 747

Email Gregor@urbansynergiesgroup.org

Website www.urbansynergiesgroup.org