

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

The nurturing city: creating places where people thrive

2. Format:

verbal presentation

3. Author(s) Name:

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

Inclusive Design

5. Abstract (300 words):

Our ability to thrive and fulfil our potential is dependent on our ability to meet the full spectrum of our physical and emotional needs. This paper seeks to outline an approach to urban design that may help us create places rich in opportunities to accumulate the life lessons, experiences, achievements, forge the connections and get the insights necessary to meet those needs, thrive and fulfil their potential.

This paper contends that urban areas are inadvertently incrementally 'hard-wired' by choices made architects, planners, developers and the wider community which typically create an uneven landscape of opportunities and sends some on a trajectory that diminishes their lives.

This differential access to opportunities rarely comes from absolute barriers, at least in the west; rather it comes from design decisions that tip the balance of influences on people's behaviours; disheartening and dissuading people from some activities whilst encouraging others. When the activities discouraged are things like walking, indeed exercise of any sort, playing outdoors, accessing healthcare, education or rewarding

work (for example) then meeting needs becomes more difficult, even if theoretically possible. When the activities encouraged are things like travelling by car and home based computer play, when fast food is easier and cheaper than healthy food, then staying fit and healthy becomes doubly difficult and opportunities to connect with other people are diminished.

The paper explores some of the key design techniques that may help ensure interventions respond sensitively to the social landscape of the communities within which we work. These techniques relate to both the process of urban design and its product. Given the complexity of the built environment and the uniqueness of every individual's relationship to it, these ideas are not put forward to suggest they will guarantee more inclusive, equitable cities but instead they seek to ensure the places we create aren't part of the problem.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each): Jenny is the principal of Melbourne based urban design practice Inclusive Design. Her work spans the public, private and community sectors and focuses' on designing places that create the optimal chances for people to thrive and fulfil their potential. She has been appointed an International Expert in Placemaking for her work in Palestine and Kosovo. She is a panel member for the Victorian Planning Panel. She is the author of "Designing to heal: planning and urban design responses to disaster and conflict" published by the CSIRO and the forthcoming "Designing the compassionate city" to be published by Routledge. The former book is based on hers and others experience of post-disaster and post conflict projects on 5 continents. The later book explores the ways peoples constructed, shared surroundings consign them to diminished lives or help them fulfil their potential.