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Aging Societies: Advancing Innovation and Equity

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Collaborations for a Social Compact

To ensure a robust, sustainable framework capable of withstanding the challenges facing aging societies, collaborations will be needed that work across silos and bring together government, business and civil society.

These three sectors of society have distinct but vital roles to play in building a “social compact,” as discussed by the final panel of the Salzburg Global Seminar session on *Aging Societies: Advancing Innovation and Equity*, “What is the Future of the Social Compact?”

Currently, one panelist suggested, there is not enough emphasis on cross-sector collaboration, “Everyone sticks to their own patch,” they added. Collaboration is needed however, as all these sectors will be impacted by aging – and all can have a positive impact on aging.

All sectors and stakeholders should recognize this impact and seek collaborative action, as well as find more ways to share knowledge and resources.

Governments, it was suggested, should assume responsibility for planning and implementing strategic approaches to aging. To better do this, all countries’ governments should abolish their currently siloed approaches to aging policy, by moving the portfolio from solely within health and welfare departments, and instead identify aging as a priority portfolio across departments, with co-ordination at the highest level. National and local governments should also enable “innovation ecosystems,” encouraging start-ups to work on new technologies and solutions.

The business community, in turn, should prioritize innovation and seek solutions that can be scaled up within either the private or public sectors.

Finally, civil society and non-governmental organizations should recognize and maximize their unique role in bridging the activities of government and business.

Session materials now available online

You will find all the session’s daily newsletters, interviews, and photos on the session page: www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/540

We will also post all working group presentations and handouts, and the draft of the Salzburg Statement for you to collaborate on in the Fellows-only login area of the website early next week.

You can find photos on both our Facebook page www.facebook.com/SalzburgGlobal and our Flickr stream www.flickr.com/SalzburgGlobal. (If you require non-watermarked images for your own publication, please let Louise know.)

If you would like to contribute an op-ed article for either our website or the report, please contact Salzburg Global Editor, Louise Hallman via email: lhallman@salzburgglobal.org.

If you plan to write for your own organization’s websites or publications, please make sure to observe the **Chatham House Rule**.





Janice Chia: Aging is a social and economic opportunity – not a demographic disaster

Heather Jaber

For many, the first thing that comes to mind with aging societies is health. But aging not just about medical care, says Janice Chia, founder and managing director of Ageing Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore. “Today we all believe that we can age in place, we can live a fulfilling life, and we can be stronger as we age,” she says. “There are so many things that we could adopt as ideas that will make aging better.”

For that reason, Chia, the co-chair of the Salzburg Global session on Ageing Societies: Advancing Innovation and Equity, founded Ageing Asia with the hope of changing the future of aging in the Asian context. The organization looks at models of aging in other contexts to adapt better practices. Chia and her colleagues focus on market development, idea sharing, and media engagement in their goal to change the image and industry of aging.

The market potential of aging in the Asia-Pacific region alone is a lucrative one, says Chia. According to the Asia Pacific Silver Economy Business Opportunities Report produced by Ageing Asia, the untapped market potential for the aging market in Asia

Pacific is forecasted to be a \$3.3 trillion dollar industry by 2020.

“What are people aged over 60 likely to spend as they age?” asks Chia. “And not just on health care services, because I always believe that aging is more than just medicine. It’s everything that an older person spends on that will make their lives happy.” The ways to achieve this happiness may lie in products and services that will enhance health longevity, says Chia, but also services like leisure activities, learning opportunities, and employment opportunities.

In the workplace, explains Chia, it is important to shift the ways we think about productivity when we consider aging societies. “I think it’s about putting their roles into project roles where it’s determined by the outcomes of the KPIs [Key Performance Indicators] that you deliver rather than by how many hours a day spent,” she said. “So if the jobs are remodeled into tasks and projects, then that’s a different way in terms of measurements.”

One way that Chia has worked to re-envision aging as an opportunity rather than a problem has been through her project ASPIRE55, Asia’s first virtual retirement village. The initiative replicates the clubhouse of

a retirement village in a virtual sense. While retirement homes may provide accommodation and care, the new generation of older people are less connected to their neighbors than the generation before, explains Chia, so there is a greater need to connect to community.

“It was an initiative to keep people out of nursing homes and to enable people to age in place in their own homes. The biggest challenge of aging in place is dying in place,” she adds. What distinguishes this from other services for the elderly is its focus on the social issues that arise with aging, such as feelings of isolation, the loss of networks, and the affordability of care.

Of her experience at the session, Chia says it was useful for the opportunity to engage in intellectual thought and develop new ideas on aging.

“I think right from the start jumping into the discussions with people with different experiences from around the world showed us that it’s not so different how people want to age in one country compared another country, and everyone is facing same issues and challenges of aging...Here at Salzburg, the environment allowed a lot of interaction and open exchange of ideas.”

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Ana Alania & Heather Jaber



“How do people live connected in their community contributing in a very real way that gives meaning to people’s lives, that they are not alone, and that their families can interact with them in very positive ways, rather than always having to be the carer? How can we support families altogether in the work that they’re doing?”

It’s very important that the older person help the younger generations too. That reciprocity is a really important part of family life and we have to make sure that’s possible. And policy gets into that...

If you’re going to help individuals one at a time, you really need this policy that’s going to help you do that. And even more-so, the more you can address at the policy level, you can help more people...

[We’re doing] a lot of work with other philanthropies, other NGOs, other states, nursing schools, a lot of different groups to really think about how we can do a better job at working with family caregivers who just feel so alone, so isolated and frightened, and worried that they are going to hurt the person they’re trying to care for, but don’t seem to understand that they have a right to ask questions. So we really have to change the way professionals interact with family caregivers.”

Susan Reinhard, Senior Vice President, AARP, USA



“Most of the conversations around aging tend to focus on apocalyptic demography, saying that the number of older people are going to double, triple in our society and therefore they could bankrupt our nations – that’s one way of looking at it, but I think many of us here at Salzburg Global Seminar, we’re really thinking about aging as an enormous opportunity. If we actually change our policies to reflect the world that is aging – which is triumph and a positive thing – we can actually maintain sustainable healthcare systems, sustainable financial services and an adequate workforce as we move forward...”

I think what struck [me] was how unified we are in a lot of the issues overall, but more importantly that we were able to come up with some concrete actions that many of us were excited about taking forward... There are ten of us in particular – we’re calling ourselves Salzburg Ten – who are going to go and try to advance these issues in a comprehensive way and we actually think doing it in our own respective jurisdictions or organizations is one way to approach it, but collectively representing such a broad group of organizations, both national and local, we think we could have even more impact given that we all think this is a common agenda we can move forward.”

Samir Sinha, Director of Geriatrics, Mount Sinai and University of Health Network Hospitals, Canada



“It’s the speed, it’s the context – no longer [do] we have extended families, women are busy working...so you don’t have potential carers for an ever increasing number of older people in the family. We have now to develop the culture of care that...will force men to take more responsibility for providing care to himself, but also to provide care to the family from bottom to top, for us to be more involved in caring for the children, our children, and also to provide more care to our parents and parents-in-law. It has to change. We can no longer afford receiving all the care and not providing any.”

Alexandre Kalache, President of International Longevity Centre (ILC) and Co-President of ILC Global Alliance, Brazil



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