

ROUNDTABLE: ISG CROSSES AGETECH BORDERS

Technology & aging crossing borders: Expanding ISG membership and chapters across the world

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Participants: Y. Afacan (Turkey), J. M. Garcia-Alonso (Spain), P. C. Castro (Brazil), G. M. Gutman (Canada), S. Ishihara (Japan), W. D. Kearns (USA), S. Kwon (South Korea, Germany), F. O. Medola (Brazil), W. Moyle (Australia), W. A. Rogers (USA). **ISSUE** After the World Conference of Gerontechnology 2022 in Daegu, South Korea, and before the 14th Biannual Meeting of the International Society for Gerontechnology (ISG), 2-4 September 2024 in Frankfurt, Germany, the reach of the Society – broken down by its regional/linguistic groups – spans four continents and an additional student chapter (ISG, n.d.-a). The North American chapter comprises Canada and the USA, while South America is represented by Brazil. The Asian ones are as follows: Hong Kong Great Bay Area, Japan, Sinophone, and South Korea. ISG's fourth continent – Europe – is composed of the Austrian-German-Swiss, Dutch-Flemish, Francophone, and Iberian chapters. Since ISG hosted its first World Conference of Gerontechnology 1991 in Eindhoven, the Netherlands (Graafmans, 2016/2017), and on a more regular basis since its 3rd international meeting in Miami, FL, USA, 2002, three host countries are not part of a chapter (Finland, Italy, Norway) (ISG, n.d.-b). Further, in contrast to North America, Europe and – to a certain extent – also Asia, the geographical distribution of ISG conference participants 2002-2022 is disproportional, considering country/continent sizes as well as the overall global volume of scholarly activities in tech & aging: Africa makes up <3% of all attendees in 20 years (the highest proportion among 10 occasions), Oceania <5.5%, and South America <3%. It does not suffice that the field of technology and aging bridges a multitude of professions through inter- and multi-disciplinarity (Kwon, 2002). Regional borders must be crossed as well to create optimal effects for all providers and users/consumers of GeronTech products and services on all biopsychosocial levels (Burdick & Kwon, 2017). **CONTENT** The potentials of new ISG chapters are discussed in this highly interactive roundtable. The panel hails from a variety of different countries, representing multiple professions. The speakers share experiences in establishing current ISG chapters and science centers, as well as in running organizations (among others, the International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics/IAGG), spin-offs and research & consulting businesses. The special format of the roundtable and its unique subject matter deserve additional explanations: 1) The event's primary *goal* lies in producing tangible results for ISG, such as by defining the next concrete steps for the establishment of new chapters and by discussing individual as well as chapter membership benefits for practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, students as well as the general public. 2) The roundtable's cardinal *purpose* is the demonstration of where/how to find rarely actualized and even untapped opportunities for the creation of new chapters and the enrichment of existing ones. 3) The panel specifically addresses practical problems such as (i) the facilitation of communication across multiple countries, and (ii) appropriate consideration of sociocultural, language-related as well as economic and political barriers. Panelists and the audience alike will obtain valuable insights and hands-on know-how for the establishment and management, as well as the expansion of ISG chapters: This will be achieved by knowledge transfer from the experience of running centers/institutes & organizations/associations. The panel also zooms in on the innervation of ISG's cross-border Student Chapter. **STRUCTURE** a) Roundtable members provide historical and statistical material from the public domain on the International Society for Gerontechnology, followed by b) a collective assessment of the possibilities as well as necessities for creating new chapters with Australia and Turkey as sample cases. This discourse is nurtured by inside-ISG experiences and outside-ISG ones, e.g. science organizations, businesses and research centers. c) Input is supplied during the roundtable's flow of discussion by speakers from countries that are represented in ISG chapters (Brazil, Germany, Japan, Korea, USA) and by more nationalities from the floor. The session concludes with discussant G. M. Gutman, who – among other roles – is a past IAGG president, an ISG chapter president and founder/director of Simon Fraser University's Gerontology Research Centre and its Department of Gerontology. Dr. Gutman will add realistic and realizable insights from the roundtable results for ISG development, as well as for the global field of AgeTech. **CONCLUSION** In addition to the overall lively research and steady progress of practice in aging & technology, ISG, as the only professional organization of its kind, can and *should* expand its regional membership for the advancement of gerontechnology. This roundtable provides some vital how-to building blocks in tech & aging for the expansion to new countries, as well as ideas for the enhancement of existing linguistically, culturally or/and geographically based ISG chapters.

References

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