EA-ICN
East Asian Inclusive City Network

14th EA-ICN Conference
Call for Participation and Proposals

Weaving Urban Lives
: Care, Community, and Belonging

28-30 August 2025, Seoul

Hosted by:	**ICN Korea and Sejong university**
Organizer:	**Institute for Inclusive Urban Development, ICN Korea Committee**
Co-Organizer:	**The Seoul Institute, Seoul Housing and Communities Corporation, Seongdong-gu Office (Seongdong District Government), Urban Resilience Research Center at Osaka Metropolitan University, ICN-Korea, ICN-Japan, ICN-Taiwan.**
Venue:	**Sejong University & Seongdong Youth Centre**

Conference theme

"Weaving urban lives: Care, community, and belonging"

Across East Asia, cities are undergoing profound transformations driven by demographic shifts, economic restructuring, and the weakening of community ties. Populations are aging and birth rates continue to fall, and many localities–particularly small and mid-sized cities–are shrinking. Meanwhile, labour markets are becoming increasingly fragmented, with rising numbers of irregular and insecure jobs. Cities are also becoming more diverse through international migration, yet many newcomers struggle to access services and social networks. These overlapping changes have led to growing social disconnection, while residents– whether older adults, irregular workers, migrants, or youth–may feel isolated in the very places they call home. This challenges us to rethink how urban lives are supported, not only through policy and infrastructure but also by reweaving the social fabric of our cities. ***How can we build more caring societies and nurture communities where all residents—regardless of age, origin, or economic status—feel they truly belong?*** The **14th EA-ICN Conference** brings this question to the forefront.

Under the theme **"Weaving Urban Lives: Care, Community, and Belonging,"** the 14th EA-ICN Conference will explore how cities can remain inclusive and socially sustainable amidst these transitions. As local and national governments across the region grapple with interlinked challenges—care provision, population decline, economic insecurity, and growing social diversity including increased migration—there is a pressing need for approaches that bridge divides and foster social cohesion. From revitalizing shrinking towns and innovating community-based care to addressing irregular employment and migrant inclusion, the conference will **highlight how diverse actors are weaving the threads of urban life into stronger, more connected, and caring communities**–where no one is left feeling isolated or unseen.

We warmly invite practitioners, policymakers, researchers, activists, and students working in the area of inclusive urban development to join us in Seoul, South Korea. This gathering will not only showcase innovative practices from EA-ICN member countries–South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong–but will also offer a rare opportunity to engage directly with public and grassroot actors through field visits. At a time when cities must adapt to demographic shifts and growing social diversity, your insights and experiences are vital. Together, let us explore how to weave stronger urban fabrics of care, community, and belonging across the region.

Programme & Organizational Committee (ICN Korea)

Boram KIMHUR, Institute of Inclusive Urban Development, Seoul
Minjung OH, Institute of Inclusive Urban Development, Seoul
Yoonji KIM, Seoul Housing and Communities Corporation, Seoul
Jeong-kyu LEE, Seoul Housing Advice Center (SH), Seoul
Minkyung KIM, Seongdong-gu Office, Seoul
Wonseok NAM, The Seoul Institute, Seoul
Ran YOON, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul
Young-wook KIM, Sejong University
Hong-gyu JEON, Osaka Metropolitan University (chair), Osaka

Conference registration and fees

We kindly ask all participants to complete their registration by **15 July 2025**. Registering early will greatly support the organizing team in confirming venues, arranging transportation, and finalizing the exposure visit programme. **Please register through the following link**: 🔗 https://forms.gle/VJNwmCYvRQkDRjCU9

The registration fee is **100 USD**, which includes: lunch and coffee breaks during the conference, and Participation in exposure visits (transportation and contributions to host organizations). **Payment instruction**s will be shared with registered participants in **early July 2025**. If you have any questions, please contact the EA-ICN Korea Secretariat.

Conference programme

	Day 1 Sejong University	Day 2 Seongdong Youth Centre	Day 3 Sejong University
Morning 10:00~12:30	Welcome speech, Keynote address	Introduction of the visiting programme	[Session 3] Design for inclusion: Space, people and social connection
	[Session 1] Weaving housing and welfare for urban well-being	Seongdong district area - Smart health care centre - Social enterprise for care centre	[Session 4] From strangers to neighbors: migrants and urban belonging
Afternoon 13:30~18:30	[Session 2] Caring communities for shared Futures	Dongmyo area + lunch - Street vendors' community	[Session 5] Unsettled lives: irregular work, homelessness, and belonging
		Yeongdeungpo district area - Shelter for irregular workers - Center for foreign residents	Closing Discussion & Wrap-Up "Weaving Urban Lives, and What Comes Next" (reflection on what we've learned, and ideas for continued connection and collaboration)

Language

This workshop will be in Korean, Japanese and Chinese with simultaneous interpretation (some sessions will have consecutive interpretation).

Exposure visits

On August 29, the conference will organise exposure visits to on-the-ground practices in Seoul, offering participants a chance to learn directly from practitioners, community members, and organizations actively working on care, community building, and inclusion in urban settings. **It will feature 5 site visits.** Confirmed sites and details will be announced closer to the event. Tentative visit locations include:
- Elder care centre by local district government
- Elder care centre by a social enterprise
- Grassroots projects supporting irregular workers
- Centre for migrants and foreign residents
- Street vendors' community

Call for proposals & sub-themes

The conference welcomes contributions from practitioners, researchers, policymakers, activists, and community leaders. We particularly encourage presentations that critically address problems, and highlight practice-based solutions, community-driven initiatives, collaborative governance models, and inclusive urban strategies that are helping to shape more caring and cohesive urban environments. The conference is organized around **five interrelated sub-themes**, and **each sub-theme invites three speakers**. These themes reflect the diverse yet interconnected challenges faced by East Asian cities today—from demographic decline and changing care needs to housing insecurity, migration, and social exclusion. While the conference call is open to all types of contributions that engage with the broader theme of inclusive city, we would especially like to invite speakers that engage with one of the below six areas.

Sub-theme 1: Weaving housing and welfare for urban well-being
Housing is central to inclusive urban life. We seek presentations that address the intersection of housing policies and welfare services, and approaches to integrated service delivery systems, aiming to ensure stable, affordable, and dignified lives.

Sub-theme 2: Reimagining Shared Futures and caring communities
This sub-theme invites presentations that explore how cities and towns are responding to population decline, aging demographics, and low birth rates, in the connection with the question of 'how can care become a shared responsibility within neighborhoods and local communities?' This question involved experience of community-based care systems that support elders, children, and vulnerable populations. We invite contributions that examine practical models of co-produced care, grassroots caregiving initiatives, and partnerships between public agencies and community actors, which could serve as a model of sustaining life and community in shrinking or aging urban areas.

Sub-theme 3: Design for inclusion: Space, people and social connection
This sub-theme explores how the physical and spatial dimensions of cities can foster—or hinder—inclusive and caring urban environments. How can cities be designed to support everyday care, community interaction, and stronger social ties? We welcome presentations that address this question and showcase innovative approaches to integrating spatial design with social inclusion and community-building efforts.

Sub-theme 4: From strangers to neighbors: migrants and urban belonging
As East Asian cities become more diverse through increased migration, how can they promote social inclusion and belonging for migrants? This sub-theme invites presentations on efforts to support migrant workers, promote intercultural dialogue, provide secure housing and legal protections, or foster participation in local community life.

Sub-theme 5: Unsettled lives: irregular work, homelessness, and belonging
This sub-theme addresses the experiences of people in precarious living and working conditions—such as informal workers, the homeless, and marginalized youth. We invite presentations that critically address problems and efforts to restore stability and belonging to those often left at the edges of urban life.

How to submit your proposal

Call for presentation proposal

Rather than full papers, participants are invited to submit a presentation proposal for a **15-minute presentation**, consisting of an **extended abstract** and, later, a **presentation file**. We welcome a wide range of contributions, but especially encourage proposals that engage with the conference theme *"Weaving urban lives: Care, community, and belonging"* and its sub-themes. While not limited to these areas, presentations that highlight **practical experiences, case studies, or applied research related to the theme** are particularly appreciated.

Short papers

Participants are invited to submit a **short paper (about 4 A4 pages, font size 11) to share their work in greater depth with fellow attendees.** While not full academic papers, these submissions should offer analytical insight and clearly relate to the conference theme, *"Weaving Urban Lives: Care, Community, and Belonging."* Papers may be written **in English or the participant's native language** and **must include a short English abstract** (150–200 words). All accepted papers will be included in the conference proceedings, shared with participants, and published on the 14th EA-ICN online platform.

Submission steps and important **deadlines**:

- 11 May : Closing date for **early registration** via https://forms.gle/VJNwmCYvRQkDRjCU9

- 10 July : Closing date for submission of presentation proposals to icn.korea.14th@gmail.com
    - Please submit your **presentation proposal (approximately 1 paragraph)**, with the presentation title, and relevant sub-theme.

- 15 July : **Final deadline for conference registration** https://forms.gle/VJNwmCYvRQkDRjCU9
    Payment of the registration fee via (insert link)

- 31 July : (1) Deadline to submit **presentation summary** and **full presentation slides**
    - Final presentation summary (2 A4 Pages) should be in all three conference languages. These will be included in the digital proceedings shared with participants in advance.
    - To support accessibility and inclusiveness across our multilingual community, **we ask that proposals be submitted in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese**. Participants are welcome to use translation tools for this purpose. If using auto-translation, please include a note such as: "This version was translated using an app; the original language is [insert original language]."
    - Presenters are also asked to submit their slides in their original language for interpreter use.
    - Please use the templates – you can download them from here (click this hyperlink)
    (2) Deadline to submit a **short paper**
    - Please use the templates – you can download them from here (click this hyperlink)

Contact: ICN-Korea Secretariat

For inquiries about the conference, please contact: icn.korea.14th@gmail.com
or, your country's EA-ICN coordinator for this year
- Japan: JEON Hong-gyu (francisjeonhg@gmail.com), SON Uisub (redmarine1406@gmail.com)
- Taiwan: YU Eunyoung (Elly U) (gouda3333@gmail.com)
- Hong Kong: LAI Kin Kwok (kklai@sfu.edu.hk)