



Partnership Clinic: “Innovation and Technology: Innovative Design Solutions to Address Extreme Poverty”

Wednesday, 24 April, 3:00-5:00 pm
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background

Although creativity and innovation can bolster international development goals and the achievement of the MDGs, and provide solutions to address the needs of the poor and the marginalized, their potential is still not fully explored. Industrial design for instance is still viewed as being part of the luxury industry, that addresses the needs of only 10% of the earth’s population.

However, and as Dr. Paul Polak, the visionary CEO of Windhorse International puts it: “The majority of the world’s designers focus all their efforts on developing products and services exclusively for the richest 10% of the world’s customers. Nothing less than a revolution in design is needed to reach the other 90%.”

The Clinic

Drawing on the wealth of innovative ideas and experiences that the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum developed in their project entitled “Design for the other 90%”, this clinic shall explore how innovative industrial design, that allies science and creativity, can effectively and at low cost, contribute to answering the needs of communities that live in extreme poverty under 2 dollars a day.

The clinic will draw on the necessary and resourceful alliance between creative industrial designers, artists, architects, engineers, environmental specialists, agronomists, educators, etc., and industrial design enterprises, to work together in order to address the challenges faced by communities living in poor and remote areas; it will show the potential of innovative industrial design to provide solutions for addressing a wide range of issues, in particular health, access to clean water and energy, transport, basic shelter, public safety and education.

The clinic will also showcase the rich and diverse approaches to designing for and with the other 90% of the world's population, strategies for designing, pricing, marketing and distributing such products, challenges and opportunities. It will also allow interacting with actors in the field, such as with innovative designers, visionary CEOs, researchers, and local NGOs.

As such, the Clinic will allow linking the main themes of the ECOSOC AMR, namely Science, Technology, Innovation and Culture, under one banner: addressing the needs of the poor and the marginalized.

Participants

The Clinic will bring together representatives from the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, the World Bank Development Market Place, Companies that produce and market design products for the poor and marginalized, designers, and social entrepreneurs.

Format

The Clinic will start with a presentation of the topic by the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in TED style (20 minutes), showcasing the rich range of possible action when allying creativity and innovation in addressing the needs of the poor.

4 to 5 speakers will share their experiences and approaches in a short intervention also in TED style (7 minutes): a CEO, a social entrepreneur, a member of the World Bank's Development Market Place project, one or two designer, and one or two social entrepreneurs from developing countries.

A discussion will be moderated by a representative from UNESCO and then a discussion will be opened with the public.