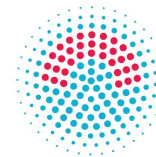


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8th Public Health Palliative Care
International Conference

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building bridges

Compassionate City in a Megacity: Lessons from Buenos Aires, Argentina



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Conflict of interest disclosure

(X) I have no, real or perceived, direct or indirect conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

Two main focus in four parts

**Recovering the
Value of
Caregiving**



Hope

**"Hope opens our eyes to
what is yet to come"**

The spirit of hope. Byung-Chul Han
(2024)

'Human suffering is only unbearable when no one cares'

What do you think, María, about this sentence? María participated in a CC initiative in a poor neighborhood in BA City.

María answered: **the abandonment of the family makes you suffer, it is important to be close to your loved ones.**

Most people don't care about giving love and quality of life, mentally and physically.

It is good for me to feel loved by my family and friends.



Part 1 The context

Buenos Aires city

Buenos Aires is a beautiful mega city



14 million people live in Buenos Aires and its surrounding areas (Argentina's total population is 47 million).

In Buenos Aires City

The poverty rate is reaching approximately 55% (of people living below the poverty line) during the first quarter of 2024 (Catholic University Report)

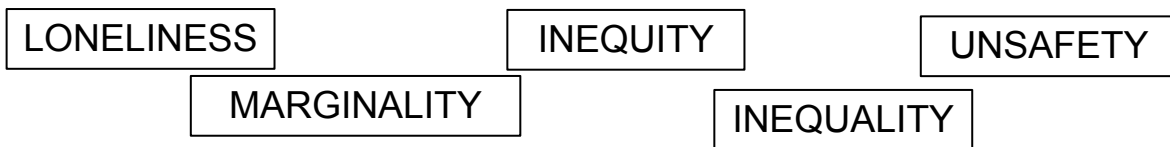


60 YEARS OLD



**1 out of 2 older
than 80
LIVES ALONE**

Almost 50% of women over 75 live alone and are increasingly socially isolated.



Argentina is an upper-middle income country

Buenos Aires is the city of contrasts



Southern neighbourhoods are five times poorer than those in the North of the city (2022)



The **‘multidimensional poor’** are those who are deprived in at least 2 of these 5 variables: **food; health and care; housing and services; household equipment and social deprivation; and education.**

Fear and uncertainty often take over the chaos.

In the context of increased inequality, growing poverty, social violence and individualism, the only answer is the struggle for survival.



https://www.eldiarioar.com/economia/nadie-quiere-paradores-problematica-personas-techo-desnudo-caso-m_1_7324967.html

How can we raise awareness, solidarity and compassion for end-of-life care in the society of this megacity?

The fear isolates people and closes them off from each other.

Hope, on the other hand, unites people and **builds communities**.

It opens a **meaningful horizon** that revives and inspires life.

It nourishes the imagination and enables us to think about **what is yet to come**.

It makes action possible by giving **purpose and meaning to our world**.

Inspired on Spirit of hope
Byung-Chul Han (2024)

Part 2



Buenos Aires, Todos con vos (all with you)
Compassionate and caring city

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2015

- ✓ Collaboration agreement with New Health Foundation in Seville (Spain)
- ✓ Declaration of principles of cities that care with compassion
- ✓ Funding: non-profit organization

2016

Launch of the first compassionate ward at “ Udaondo Hospital”

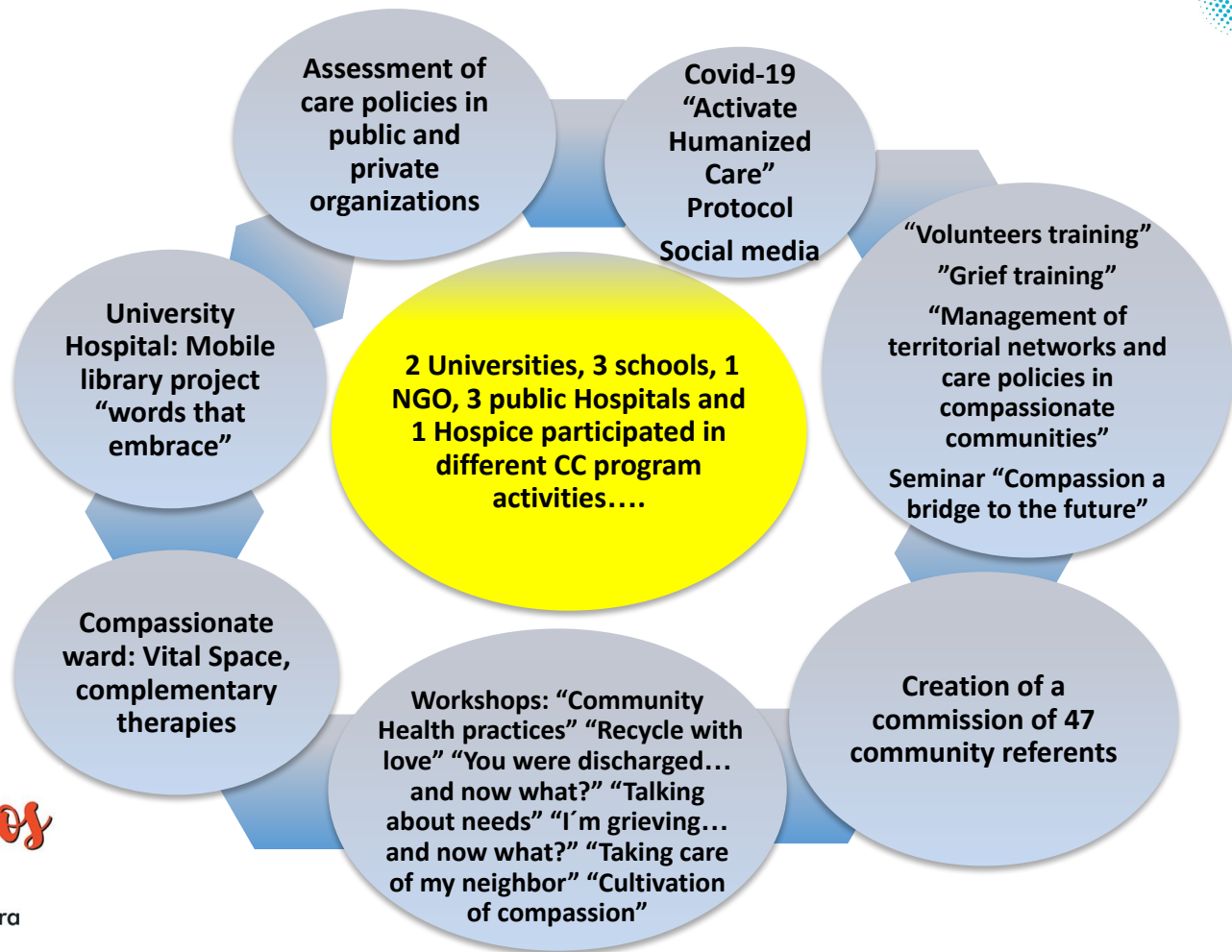


Caring for people at the end of life **has traditionally been normal and routine for families and communities, as has the care and support of people in the bereavement process.**

Moreover, they have the **experience and knowledge of how to provide this help, a value that is little recognized and integrated into our health care systems.**

Abel J, 2018

Micro initiatives in network





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“Declaration of principles of cities that care with compassion”.

“The Compassionate City Charter” Argentina



Declaración de principios de las “Ciudades que Cuidan con Compasión”

Las ciudades cuidadoras compasivas son comunidades que reconocen que todos los ciclos naturales de la vida, incluyendo la salud y la enfermedad, la alegría y el sufrimiento, el principio y el final y el amor y la pérdida, ocurren todos los días dentro de sus instituciones y actividades habituales.

Una ciudad compasiva y cuidadora reconoce que cuidarse unos a otros en momentos de crisis y pérdida no es únicamente una tarea para servicios sociales y de salud, sino una responsabilidad de todos.

Son comunidades que públicamente alientan, facilitan, apoyan y celebran el cuidado mutuo especialmente en los momentos y experiencias más difíciles, como aquellos relacionados con enfermedades que amenazan y limitan la vida, la discapacidad crónica, la fragilidad, el envejecimiento, la muerte - de un adulto o de un niño, el duelo y las dificultades y la sobrecarga del cuidado a largo plazo.

Aunque las políticas sociales y sanitarias contemplen servicios de calidad para los más frágiles, son insuficientes para dar respuesta a las múltiples necesidades. Las crisis personales ante la enfermedad y las pérdidas pueden ocurrir en cualquier momento durante el curso de nuestras vidas: una ciudad compasiva y cuidadora es una comunidad que reconoce y aborda este hecho social con compromiso y aprendizaje cooperativo.

Las ciudades compasivas y cuidadoras con el auspicio de las autoridades, y a través de la publicidad, la colaboración y cooperación en redes sociales, proponen, desarrollan y sostienen los siguientes propósitos claves para la transformación a una cultura del cuidado:

- Lograr que nuestras escuelas tengan políticas orientadoras sobre el sufrimiento, la



Part 3

Challenges in a megacity in establishing a compassionate community

Population size, urbanization, socio-economic diversity, basic needs unmet, individualism and fear undermine hope..etc, etc

The opposite of:

mega ≠ **micro**

isolation ≠ **connection**

individualism ≠ **reciprocity**

meaninglessness ≠ **hope**



Networking micro-initiatives to overcome challenges



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25 usuarios



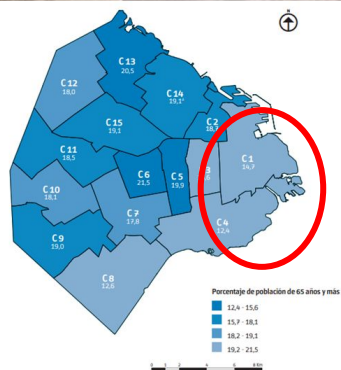
Talleres sucesivos
80 usuarios

Overcoming Challenges

1. Give importance of recovering the **value of care and caring**
2. Active community involvement and **support networks**
3. **True hope and reciprocity exist in communities.**
4. **“We Argentines are moved by solidarity”** that we activate especially in times of crisis
5. Follow examples of community initiatives and success stories
6. Put emphasis on **co-creation and action**
7. Explore **potential impact on public health and PC**



Working with neighbours at Rodrigo Bueno neighbourhood (South BA)



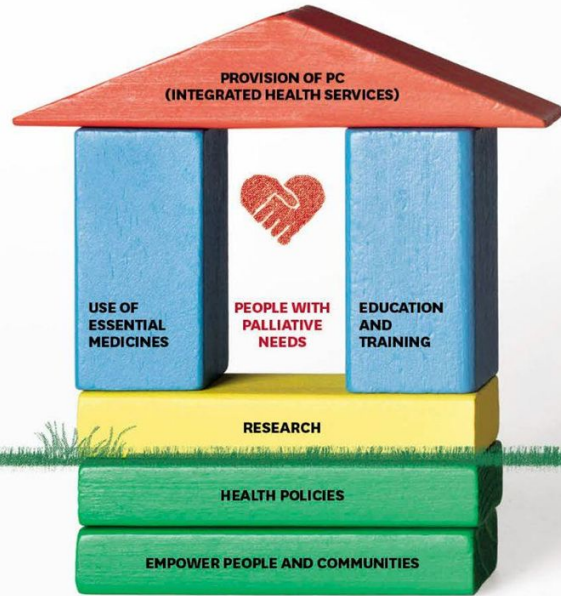
Part 4

Lessons learnt (work in progress...)

**“the subject (the person) of hope is a
“we”**

Byung-Chul Han

The house of palliative care (OMS 2021)





It is invisible,
difficult to assess,
dependent on the
cultural context,
but is **stronger
and more solid
than we think.**



In some ways, this
new approach of
**community
empowerment may
be in tension** with
traditional PC's
structures

3 Questions on Community engagement in PC

1. How to **reconnect people with the most "human" care**, getting involved and creating supportive networks in care?
2. How to understand the **empowerment as a multi-level concept** meaning a process of social action to put people in control of their lives, their organisations and the lives of their communities? (by themselves!!!)

3. How to recognise the resonance of small changes in mega cities?

1. Let's support micro initiatives and explore echos of their resonance
2. Let's move the focus from healthcare system to social and civic environments
3. Let's follow the 13 key social changes and activities proposed by PHPCI.
4. Let's explore other care networks beyond palliative care and support EoL care literacy
5. Let's talk more open about the taboo of death (like the sexual revolution did in the past?)

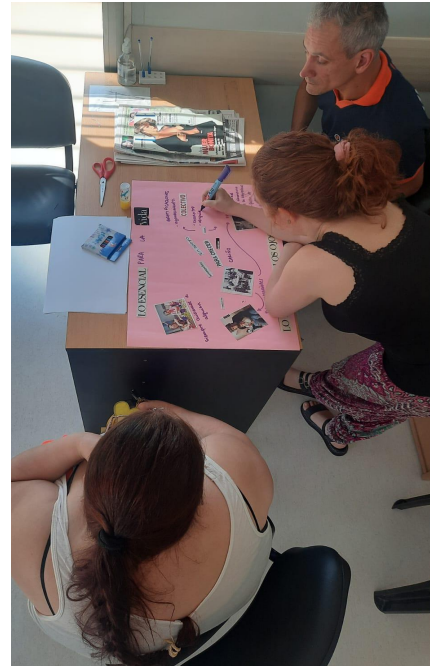


The Value of Caregiving

Compassionate cities offer an antidote to isolation.

They create “safe spaces” where empathy and support thrive.

“Safe spaces” are crucial in unsafest cities.



“In this room I have the feeling of being in the centre of attention... you are like my family”.



**"Caring
embraces
our history
of how we
have been
cared for."**



Take home messages

- In mega cities like BA, with isolation, inequalities and social violence, the **value of caregiving has disappeared.**
- It is crucial to recover **safes spaces at micro-multi level** to empower people and communities in care networks and EoL literacy.
- It is essential **to recover the meaning (the purpose) to overcome the fears**
- It **remains hope**, always



**“A lot of little people, in a lot of
little places, doing little things,
can change the world”**

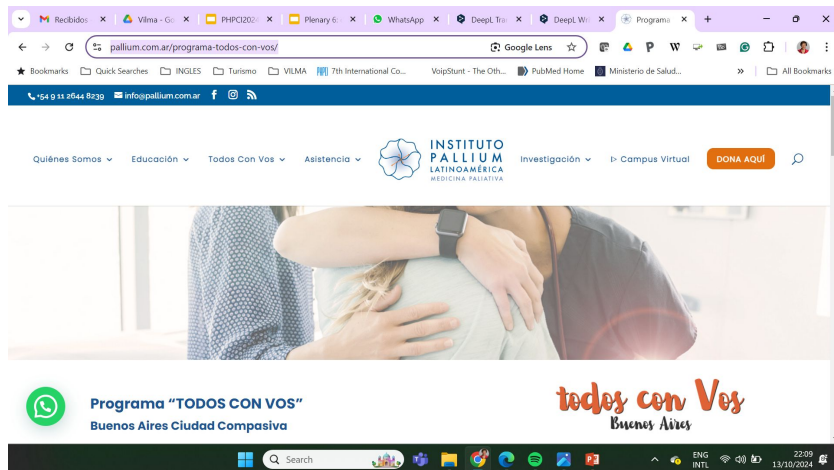
free translation of Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer

Pandora is considered the first mortal woman in Greek mythology

When Pandora opened the box containing all the evils of the world, **hope remained trapped inside.**

Even in times of adversity and suffering, hope can be a hidden lifeline, giving us the strength to carry on.





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thanks!

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