

Agenda for Change – An ICA Discussion Paper  
for  
The International CPTED Association

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Gregory Saville, <sup>MES, MCIP</sup>  
Founding Chair and Founding Member, ICA



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

What follows are some ideas for moving forward in the International CPTED Association. I based these ideas on my own professional and personal experience as a founding member of the ICA, as well as a CPTED practitioner and scholar for the past 25 years. I make no assumptions that these ideas, which I have consolidated into 6 basic principles, are better than other ideas for moving forward. I only offer them as discussion points for the board of the ICA.

I also begin with two assertions:

1. That the ICA has accomplished many goals in the past decade. However, it cannot rest on its laurels. It is time to move forward;
2. That the ICA should continue to flourish as an organization for progress and change. I am convinced that working in isolation, within disconnected regional organizations, is not a recipe that best suits a world interconnected by ideas and needs. Indeed, I believe the opposite to be true. I do believe, given the increasing globalization and connectedness of events and people around the world, it is important to work together. In regards to CPTED, I believe the ICA is the way to do that.

## **PRINCIPLE #1**

*The ICA should commit itself to an umbrella role as a facilitator of new CPTED practices and theories. That role should include assisting regional CPTED groups, where possible, in disseminating event and program information across boundaries to a global audience.*

*The role should also include: participating, where possible, in regional events; coordinating, as needed, an international conference; offering the certification program on a revenue sharing basis to regional organizations; promoting, as they come available, high quality regional publications to an international audience; and establishing and expanding a CPTED Futures Program to regional organizations around the world.*

There is no doubt that since the mid-1990s when the ICA was formed, there has been a profusion of new regional CPTED chapters. The ICA has had a major role in helping that to occur. It is also true that not all the regional organizations actively collaborate with the ICA, or indeed with each other. That is not surprising; it is often what happens with international non-profit, volunteer organizations everywhere around the world. In some cases the cause is political, some personal, and others logistical. I suspect all those causes apply in this case.

The more important issue is to learn from past mistakes and look forward. What does the ICA offer? Here are some answers to that question:

1. There is also no doubt that, while there are some excellent regional projects and outstanding chapters, many of the unaffiliated regional organizations have not advanced the theory or practice in CPTED in any substantial way. In fact, I have been hearing arguments in recent years that the opposite has occurred. Consequently, the role of the

ICA as an umbrella has never been more important. It has been the only international voice that can consistently promote around the world such regional innovations as the new CPTED educational website in South America or the Secure Labeling Program in Europe. The ICA needs to improve and expand this service to its membership.

2. The ICA was the first to create certification, the first to establish an international CPTED website, the first to conduct annual international CPTED conferences, and the first to create an annual journal dedicated to the advancement of theory and practice. We may argue whether these activities are being maintained as we would like, however there is no doubt that ICA has been at the forefront. Each of these items represents a deliverable product, from the point of view of happenings around the world, to members who pay dues. No other regional organization does that in any substantial way.

3. The regional chapters that have evolved represent an invaluable resource to the ICA. But, more importantly, the ICA needs to provide these regional organizations with access to an international market they do not currently utilize. True, any regional organization can publish its events on the website and solicit an international audience. After all, that is what the ICA does. However, The ICA can focus *specifically* on this task: it can offer to promote DOCA's journal worldwide; it can offer to co-host the South American chapter's educational CPTED e-learning product; it can offer the certification program, on a revenue-sharing basis, to regional organizations who want to participate; and so on. There are endless prospects limited only by our imagination and commitment. There truly is no other organization better suited to those tasks in the future.

## **PRINCIPLE #2**

*One primary purpose of the ICA is to significantly advance the theory and practice of CPTED. While the ICA will never become an academic institution for research, it should be a clearinghouse of CPTED related research activities, possibly by establishing partnerships with a variety of research, academic, government, and non-government institutions.*

*Funding agencies are more likely to fund an organization dedicated to the development of new, and practical, methods for making safer places. In addition, this principle already aligns with the third mission statement of the ICA found in Article 2.1 of the ICA by-laws. However I believe it is worth restating. I also believe ICA should recommit itself to this principle.*

In the past this has been advanced through our conference content, through the certification process, and through the journal. We may argue (validly in my view) how much real theoretical CPTED advancement has actually occurred at presentations in ICA annual conferences. But to be fair, we could argue that for CPTED theory everywhere. In my personal view, many of the presentations are little more than restatements of Newman's defensible space principles from 1971, with all its benefits and flaws.

For this reason, our board discussions in the early years led to the creation of two sub-committees: one on the certification process (the fourth mission statement in Article #2); the other on the advancement of practice and theory in CPTED.

The first subcommittee resulted in the most comprehensive and widely reviewed CPTED certification system in the world. Indeed, to my knowledge it is the first certification system to be developed. This is to the credit of the ICA and this needs to be expanded.

The second subcommittee resulted in the development of what became known as the CPTED Journal. With no current journal, no journal in the immediate future, this remains an unfulfilled mission of this organization.

That needs to be re-established as our goal and it needs to be expanded.

### **PRINCIPLE #3**

*In order to advance CPTED theory and practice, the ICA should direct itself to creating a CPTED Futures Program. The program can take many forms: standalone publications; publications in partnership with regional groups; sponsored research and practice programs; award programs that honor best practices around the world; and so forth.*

I recommend that one version of this CPTED Futures Program can unfold in the following way:

First, ICA membership includes a wide range of professions around the world. The ICA should make itself known, and available, to graduate students from criminology, criminal justice, law enforcement, sociology, urban planning, architecture, and landscape programs around the world.

Second, the ICA can provide research contacts, internship positions, and other cooperative learning experiences resulting in active research programs on and publications regarding advanced theories and methods in CPTED. These contacts can come from our own membership. We can solicit for volunteers who will offer their own

arrangements to grad student researchers on their own terms. ICA would serve as a contact point.

Third, in return for this service ICA will ask for an Article, newsletter or journal Article, or conference presentation, about the research findings. The logistics of this program, how it appears on the website, and canvassing both graduate programs around the world, and canvassing the membership for volunteer participants can be assigned to an ICA officer as a specific task to achieve within a specified deadline (say, 6 months).

#### **PRINCIPLE #4**

*The ICA needs to establish itself as the premier venue for CPTED certification around the world. Certification should be offered to regional groups on a cost-sharing basis – they obtain the registrant applications for certification and receive a percentage of the application fee in return.*

The ICA has already completed the necessary background research. It already has established the basic logistics and has a viable program up and running. The program needs to be much better promoted and advertised.

The program also needs to reach out to professional groups and accredited post-secondary universities and colleges for collaboration. We already have members with affiliations to universities and colleges. They can participate in canvassing their own administrations to participate in the program. There are many other ways this program can be expanded.

## **PRINCIPLE #5**

*The ICA needs an aggressive outreach policy to professional organizations, regional groups, and academic institutions. In the past this has occurred in haphazard fashion. That cannot continue. There needs to be a regular program in which all board members participate as part of Article 7.54 in the ICA bylaws, a requirement they already commit to upon acceptance of election to the board. If they are unwilling to accept this commitment they should step down, or be asked to step down, from board membership.*

In this context, outreach means more than simply contacting others. It means the Executive Director must ensure this program is underway. It means also that each ICA board member must complete at least four specific tasks:

1. **Educating others** and distributing information about the Certification program and finding opportunities for others to participate in it
2. **Soliciting outside partnerships** in ICA activities, such as the CPTED Futures Program mentioned above
3. **Inquiring to other government and non-government organizations** whether opportunities exist for ICA to conduct joint events, such as already happened over with the 2005 IEEE conference in Los Angeles and the 2006 Safer Cities global conference in Calgary
4. **Providing a detailed list of these activities** at ICA board meetings as one of the required tasks outlined in Article 7.54 of the current ICA bylaws

## **PRINCIPLE #6**

*The procedures of the ICA need to be dedicated to modern professional management. This includes regular contact between board meetings, hiring a full-time Executive Director, prompt responses to inquiries and communications, and transparency in decision-making.*

**Regular Contact:** The need for regular communication is paramount in any organization.

Matters are complicated by the fact that board members are voluntary, have full-time jobs, and as well have committed to participate in an international CPTED organization.

The matter is more complicated for those on the board who already run regional CPTED organizations where they have newsletters and conferences. The dedication of these members cannot be understated. They have done tremendous work to keep the ICA moving and alive. However, there are limits to what can be achieved with a voluntary, non-profit organization such as the ICA.

**Full-time Executive Director:** It is now time to move forward. I believe it is now time to amend Article 7.68 of the ICA by-laws that prohibits remuneration to board members.

The ICA should then enter into a non-employee contract with a “full-time” executive director to take on the job of regularly maintaining and administering ICA activities. I have no major quibbles with the recent email recommendations of ICA Executive Director Barry Davidson to this effect. I do expect there will, and should be, on-going discussion about the costs for services as well as quality of services. The advantage of a paid position is that service can be terminated for non-compliance.

To that end, I think Barry should be tasked with writing a specific set of job tasks and construct a business plan for approval. That business plan should outline specific strategies for obtaining funds (with the input of board members), as well as a timeline to achieve those goals (I suggest a year).

**Prompt Response to Communications:** I have heard many complaints regarding the lack of reply to emails within the organization. This needs to stop. There should be a policy of email responses within a day or two. With a paid Executive Director, that should become part of the job task requirements.

The catchword to this issue is professionalism. Even in non-profit, volunteer organizations, professional behavior is critical. If board members are emailed from ICA members, they should reply promptly as a matter of professional conduct. Promptly responding to emails (perhaps within a day or two) should be considered a condition of accepting a board position. Of course we are all busy, and occasional mistakes are part of life. However, neglecting to response to emails for months on end, or not at all, is unprofessional and should not be tolerated.

**Transparency:** This issue deals with the contemporary legal principle of “sunshine laws”, where an organization works to make itself accessible and transparent to its public or customers. The Alberta legal system, like many others around the world, accepts this principle. As the ICA is legally registered in Alberta, it should follow that principle.

What this means is that the ICA policies, the ICA board meetings, the bylaws, accounting books, and all other official activities of the ICA should be public and easily available to the membership. Of course the ICA has for a long while indicated that the by-laws will be on the ICA website (but to be honest, I cannot actually recall seeing them there). In future, the ICA website should have a clear and simple link that consolidates all these items and allows members access to these items.

I believe the transparency principle must be significantly expanded. No ICA board meeting should be closed to the membership, and all board meeting minutes should be posted on the website. With the rare exception of confidential matters involving personnel issues (eg: a board member must take a leave due to a family crisis), no board discussions should be closed.

I submit this with considerable respect for the hard work that goes on in the ICA and in the board. I want to personally thank the board for allowing me to offer my thoughts.

Gregory Saville  
ICA Inaugural Chair and Co-founder  
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