Connected World

Mission Statement

Today’s world is a Connected World, with 24/7 online communication, millions of citizens living together metropolitan areas, and people, goods and ideas travelling around the globe as never before. These connections inevitably change people’s lives, as well as their perspectives: on past and future, on facts and fiction, and on challenges and opportunities. Those changes are at the heart of Connected World research at the Vrije Universiteit.

***Connecting the unconnected***

Recognizing that connections leverage exchange, communication, and action, and therefore are indispensable as agents of change, our primary mission is to connect the unconnected.

With our research we aim to contribute to improve societal problems linked to disconnection: better connecting ethnic or social groups in metropolitan melting pots, better connecting citizens to the landscape and environment they inhibit, better connecting global citizens to improve mutual understanding, and better connecting affordances of digital technologies to human needs of inclusion, mutual cooperation and support, and accurate information. With our research we aim to have real impact in unleashing the potential of the Connected World.

The issues that are key to our mission have global significance; they are also vital to some of the major UN sustainable development goals (SDG’s); to reduce inequality in social systems, economic structures and power relations (SDG 10), to make communities more inclusive, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11) and to reduce conflict and promote peace by improving governance systems (SDG16).

***Broadening perspectives***

We believe that to accomplish our mission, we need to adopt a broad perspective. Therefore, interdisciplinarity—genuine collaboration between researchers from different disciplines, collaboration with non-academic partners, and project-based learning are cherished as the dominant approach to provide better answers to the challenges posed by the Connected World. Vrije Universiteit is unique in facilitating this approach through interfaculty, cross-disciplinary research institutes. In line with this secondary mission, in the coming years we will:

* Increase the focus on interdisciplinary research and education, prioritizing the formation of discipline-transcending teams focusing on our primary mission *connecting the unconnected*
* Intensify societal embedding, focusing on forming public and private partnerships in living labs (academische werkplaatsen), in order to engage citizens and organizations in the exchange of ideas and the development of societal solutions;
* Start the formation of “DreamTeams” where staff, junior researchers, students, ans societal partners work together on addressing tangible societal challenges.

For more information regarding Connected World please visit <https://vuweb.vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/cw>.