

Circle of Blue Receives Rockefeller Foundation Centennial Innovation Award

Circle of Blue founder J. Carl Ganter to accept award for new model that informs global decision-making about global water crisis

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- “A global shift and recalibration about how the world approaches and responds to its greatest challenges.” — J. Carl Ganter, Director, Circle of Blue
- Water scarcity is emerging as a serious threat to people, business, the environment and political stability across the world, including the United States.

NEW YORK (June 25) — The Rockefeller Foundation announced today that J. Carl Ganter, director and co-founder of [Circle of Blue](#), a team of leading journalists and researchers that reports on water and resource issues globally, will receive the foundation's [Centennial Innovation Award](#).

Ganter will be honored for developing a “unique, multi-disciplinary approach to documenting and reporting on the global freshwater crisis.” He is one of four individuals and organizations [that](#) the foundation is acknowledging for innovative ways to promote the well-being of humanity around the world.

With an intense focus on fresh water and its relationships to food, energy, climate, and health, Circle of Blue has created a breakthrough model of front-line reporting, data collection, design, and convening. It is cited across grassroots networks, research journals, mainstream and niche media, consultancies, risk analysis reports, ministerial meetings, and high-level scenario sessions.

"Innovation occurs when problems and potential solutions are reframed, re-imagined, or recombined in new ways to achieve a transformational product, process, or service," said **Dr. Judith Rodin**, president of the [Rockefeller Foundation](#). "Circle of Blue is an integral part of the global network of innovators that is restructuring and re-organizing social systems to yield better solutions and create stronger, more resilient societies."

Circle of Blue's non-advocacy, on-the-ground reportage makes complex issues understandable and provides trusted information and data that connects local stories to global trends. Water scarcity and quality are emerging as serious threats, and the statistics of the unfolding water crisis are sobering — more than 5 million people die each year due to a lack of safe drinking water. Water scarcity is affecting people, business, the environment, and political stability across the world, including the United States.

"It's a great honor to be recognized by the Rockefeller Foundation. We're seeing a global shift and recalibration in how the world deals with its greatest challenges, particularly the

global freshwater crisis," said **J. Carl Ganter**, Circle of Blue's director. "We are listening better. We are becoming more nimble in how we work and collaborate. We are empowering people at all levels with better information to make better decisions. Solving the world's resource challenges requires an effort just as tenacious and adaptive as the problems themselves."

To meet these challenges, Circle of Blue is designing its next phase [—](#), an independent "global resources situation room," where solid journalism, adaptive communications, and solutions-oriented dynamic processes converge.

The Rockefeller Foundation specifically cited Circle of Blue's [Choke Point: U.S.](#) and [Choke Point: China](#) projects for helping the world to better understand and respond to the global confrontation between rising demand for energy and shrinking reserves of fresh water. "Their reports on the 'choke points' in the water supply of the United States and China are informing the global conversation on the issue and inspiring action," said the foundation.

"I can think of few organizations more worthy of this prestigious award than Circle of Blue," said **Jane Harman**, president, director, and CEO of the [Wilson Center](#) in Washington. "The [Wilson Center's partnership with Circle of Blue](#) on environmental issues, particularly the nexus of water and energy in China and other critical countries, has been a huge and proven success. The combining of journalism, science, data, design, and convening power is an innovative model that works."

By connecting policymakers, scientists, academics, businesses, and the general public, Circle of Blue pushes the boundaries of emerging technologies, design-thinking, and creative processes. Collaborations with organizations like such as [Google](#), [The Value Web](#), [GlobeScan](#), [SustainAbility](#), and others have led to interactive "big data" projects, ideation workshops, and global surveys that give a face to the issues, making them relevant and personal.

"Our planet's future relies on the ability to spot weak signals of emerging trends and understand them in the context of global political risk," said **Ian Bremmer**, president of [Eurasia Group](#), a political risk research and consulting company. "Fresh, on-the-ground intelligence is crucial to that understanding. No one is better positioned to deliver groundbreaking knowledge on the critical resource of global water than Circle of Blue."

Ganter is an award-winning photojournalist, reporter, and broadcaster who has helped shape the multimedia era. He is a member of the [World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Water Security](#). Ganter founded Circle of Blue in 2000 when he first saw the need for a reliable, central source of compelling information about fresh water and its impacts on the world's poor and vulnerable.

"There is renewed hope for plotting a better course, a new vector about how the world can adjust and become more resilient. We are entering an exciting era of accelerated innovation and problem-solving," Ganter said. "But to be successful, we need to understand our starting points, understand the connections between issues, and set high expectations for ourselves and our institutions."

A fresh example, in recognition of the Innovation Award, starts today as Circle of Blue launches an ongoing series of profiles that highlight "[Action Figures](#)." The project

spotlights innovators who are doing extraordinary work on water, food, and energy. The network includes social entrepreneurs, artists, poets, peacemakers, photographers, business leaders, negotiators, researchers, musicians, and visionaries who are inspiring change around the world one idea, one story at time.

"To respond to the world's greatest, most urgent challenges — in ways that are fair and equitable — we need trusted information, clear context, and solutions-focused dialogue," said **Henrik Skovby**, executive chairman of [Dalberg Group](#), a leading social impact consultancy. "Circle of Blue helps cut through the complexities of global development. They capture the important stories, from planet-wide issues to the local heroes who are shaping a world that is healthier, smarter, and more transparent. Through knowledge and informed action, we can make a better future."

Participate online

Follow the Rockefeller Centennial Innovation Forum's live stream

[Rockefeller Foundation LiveStream](#)

About Circle of Blue

Based in Traverse City, Mich., and founded in 2000 by leading journalists and scientists, Circle of Blue provides relevant, reliable, and actionable on-the-ground information about the world's resource crises. Circle of Blue, a non-advocacy, non-profit organization, has received support from a range of foundations, including [Ford Foundation](#), [Packard Foundation](#), [Mott Foundation](#), [Energy Foundation](#), [Skoll Global Threats Fund](#), Alpern Foundation, and the Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Foundation, and individual donors. Among Circle of Blue's collaborators are, [Google](#), [China Environment Forum](#), [The Value Web](#), [GlobeScan](#), [SustainAbility](#), the [Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](#), [COLLINS](#), [Ball State University](#), [Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism](#), and [Western Kentucky University's Hoffman Institute](#).

Circle of Blue is a nonprofit affiliate of the [Pacific Institute](#).

The Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation's mission to promote the well-being of people throughout the world has remained unchanged since its founding in 1913. Today, that mission is applied to an era of rapid globalization. Our vision is that this century will be one in which globalization's benefits are more widely shared and its challenges are more easily weathered. To realize this vision, the Foundation seeks to achieve two fundamental goals in our work. First, we seek to build resilience that enhances individual, community and institutional capacity to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of acute crises and chronic stresses. Second, we seek to promote growth with equity in which the poor and vulnerable have more access to opportunities that improve their lives. In order to achieve these goals, the Foundation constructs its work into time-bound initiatives that have defined objectives and strategies for impact. These initiatives address challenges that lie either within or at the intersections of five issue areas: basic survival safeguards, global health, environment and climate change, urbanization, and social and economic security.

Online

- About the **Rockefeller Foundation Centennial Innovation Award**
<http://centennial.rockefellerfoundation.org>

- View the **live stream and participate** in the Innovation Forum beginning at 12:45 p.m. EDT, Tuesday, June 26
<http://centennial.rockefellerfoundation.org/events/entry/innovation-forum-2012if>
- Read **Rockefeller Foundation Centennial news**
<http://centennial.rockefellerfoundation.org/news>
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<http://www.circleofblue.org/actionfigures>
- Twitter users: Please use the hashtag **#RF100** for tweets about the event.

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