

# Preface

This book has two underlying messages, the emerging importance of the social issue of inclusion and human diversity in contemporary society, and the increasing awareness that there is no such thing as a ‘standard human being’. The first question is considered to have a primarily political repercussions. US President Obama spent his mandate championing inequality and social disparity as a necessary milestone towards economic revival, among other things, while a vital role in the strategies adopted by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 framework program is played by the ones that focus on strengthening equality, participation and accessibility for all to goods, services and what Dahrendorf called “life chances”. What this means is that the issue of social inclusion of diversity and for equality is firmly on political agendas all over the world, not least because of increasing awareness that new visions, new strategies, new tools and new approaches are needed, if we are to tackle the challenges arising from recent phenomena of economic and cultural globalisation, demographic change; economic migration from poorer countries and an ageing population in wealthier countries, a phenomena that are destined to upset the entire planet’s micro and macro-economic and social structures in years to come.

The second issue tackled in this book is more technical in nature, since the paradigm change from ‘designing for standards’ to the enlightened awareness that there are no such concepts to fit the standard human being, this has immediate, direct repercussions on the specialised dimension of designing. The realisation is at last taking hold not only that those individuals are physically, psychologically and culturally ‘diverse’, but they also have widely diversified skills, abilities, aspirations and desires that make each one of us unique and not at all replicable. Since the diversity of individuals is the rule, not the exception, it makes sense to consider it as a resource, not as a limiting factor or a restriction on design, while equality between individuals, communities and peoples should be treated as fundamental strategic inputs to the sustainable development of contemporary society, where everybody should have the same opportunities to experience places, products and services. Numerous design approaches have been adopted to facilitate social and cultural

inclusion in recent decades: Design for Disability, Universal Design, Inclusive Design, and Design for All. All of these philosophies, approaches, and methodologies aim to build value on all aspects of human diversity, from psycho-physical to cultural issues, and to offer equal opportunity to everyone in order to experience places, products, services, and systems. With this in mind, this book sets out to forge a climate conducive to discussion and comparison between these approaches, without any prejudice in favour or against any one of them, but attempting to identify the elements they hold in common and to build each one's heritage of originality, because we are convinced that the true resource of design for Inclusion may well be found in this very diversity of opinions.

In particular, this book describes the state of the art of recent research conducted in a variety of fields that share the focus on design for Inclusion and was presented in the first international conference on design for Inclusion (AHFE 2016, Orlando, FL). On this occasion, the numerous research papers presented were collected together into twelve different thematic areas, corresponding to different sections of this book:

- Design for disability and social inclusion;
- Design for inclusion and product development;
- Designing for inclusion in the public sector and cultural heritage;
- Designing for inclusion: methodologies and future trends;
- Inclusive design is good design: future strategies and challenges of inclusive design;
- Multisensory designing;
- Inclusive and universal design in clothing, footwear and accessories;
- Designing for inclusion in learning experiences;
- Designing for inclusion of an ageing population;
- Designing for inclusion in the information society;
- Global perspectives on people-centred design;
- Design for inclusion in the living environment.

Lastly, two additional groups of research papers report on experience from specific countries. These are:

- Dissing the dis: the Swedish concept;
- Design for inclusion: the Japanese perspective.

Each section contains research paper that has been reviewed by members of the International Editorial Board. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to the board members as listed below:

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