

A MINUTE OR REFLECTION FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

# good design and for all



THINKING OF DIVERSITY, A POSITIVE, CREATIVE AND USEFUL CONTRIBUTION



**ANY DEL DISENY 2003**  
 AÑO DEL DISEÑO 2003  
 YEAR OF DESIGN 2003  
 BARCELONA



Any Europeu  
 de les Persones  
 amb Discapacitat

*Illustration of the cover: with faces of a group of people in a party atmosphere (young and modern girls, a young boy, a bald man, an old woman and an oriental man). There is also a figure of the entire body of a pretty lady with a very elegant bun who is holding a full cocktail glass, while the waiter offers some snacks on a small tray. This woman is seated with a leg in a cast on which the name is written of the illustrator of the publication's images: Jordi Labanda.*

*At the bottom of the cover the logotypes of the Barcelona City Council, the Comité Catalán de Representantes de Minusválidos (COCARMI) and the Fomento de las Artes Decorativas (FAD) are printed; and at the top of the inner part of the dust cover the logos of the Year of Design and the European Year for People with Disabilities.*

*Cover of the publication:* A MINUTE OF REFLECTION FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

good design  
and for all

*Introduction:* THINKING OF DIVERSITY, A POSITIVE, CREATIVE AND USEFUL CONTRIBUTION

- (t In 2003 the European Year for People with Disabilities and the Year of Design coincided and the Barcelona City Council wanted to take advantage of this coincidence to develop the promise to improve accessibility in the city with actions that promote and stimulate the concept of design for all.

This was also the main aim of the co-operation agreement between the City Council, represented by the Institut de Cultura de Barcelona (ICUB) and the Institut Municipal de Persones amb Disminució (IMD), the Comitè Català de Representants de Minusvàlids (COCARMI) and the Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD).

This agreement pretends to create synergies and collaborations between the agents who are involved in the issues that are of interest to the citizens and, more specifically, to people with disabilities.

The brochure we offer you is the result of this collaboration and it pretends to sensitise professionals of the different design disciplines –graphic design, visual arts, crafts, architecture, fashion, jewellery, furniture and industrial design- of the necessity, the responsibility and the compromise we all have in society to develop spaces, services, implements and products that are easy to manage for everybody.

I hope this document will be a source of reflection for design professionals and that it may give them a new perspective in their creative and productive process towards design for all.

- ❉ COCARMÍ celebrates the publication of this document that contains the basic principles and concepts of design for all, representing the incorporation of the concept of diversity in the creative process of everything that surrounds us, which improves accessibility, the use and enjoying of the resources, spaces and services by everybody, as well as the expression of the universal acknowledgement of the right of equality and non-discrimination for all human beings.

Moreover this initiative is the result of the good work performed by the City Administration, the FAD and the organised civil society as part of the European Year for People with Disabilities.

Accessibility is the chain that makes us all one.

- (t The main raison d'être of design is to offer a service to society. Often this service implies an improvement of the people's quality of life. From the very beginning of our existence we human beings have been forced to invent "prostheses" to solve our important privations related to nature and, presently, it is us, designers and architects, who conceive these solutions that facilitate life as we know it. So now is the time to offer a service to society in the knowledge that this society is a diverse, rich and heterogeneous reality.

The coincidence of the European Year for People with Disabilities and the Year of Design has generated some very interesting collaborations and with this publication we invite you to reflect on this matter and on what we can contribute in our position of designers to improve the lives of people who for some reason, age, physical or mental state, culture, abilities etc., are often ignored whenever products or objects are produced.

We hope that you will be fascinated just like we ourselves are by this concept of Design for all that offers us a huge amount of creative possibilities and that implies new and exciting challenges. This is how we will be capable of creating a more pleasant environment for the citizens and a righteous and human society. You are invited!

*Next there are two pages with the following phrases only:*

## *HUMAN*

The human being creates for the human being.

Man, woman, person. **Diversity...**

Childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age. **Diversity...**

People who are tall, small, fat, thin. **Diversity...**

Temporary or definitive limitations. **Diversity...**

NOW IT IS DARK, I CAN'T SEE WELL  
READ ME THAT FOR ME, I'M NOT WEARING MY GLASSES  
WAIT A SECOND, I'M CARRYING THE KID  
I BROKE MY LEG AND I CAN'T GET ON  
I WENT OUT YESTERDAY AND I'M HAVING A HANG-OVER ...  
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, IT IS WRITTEN IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE  
IT WAS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE WITH OTHER OPINIONS  
DIFFERENT TO MINE  
HOW ON EARTH DO YOU OPEN THIS?  
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PROGRAM MY VCR!...

Vision of the future,  
market, economy.  
Seel more.

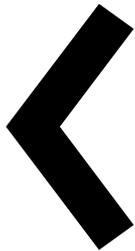
Utility, comfort, usefulness,  
security, sustainability, success...

Many people.

Diversity...

Useful design ,for all.

Good **design** for *all*



The text on the last two pages, with its poetic expressions, offers us a visual interpretation that maintains or emphasises the communicative value. The publication you are holding pretends to promote Design for All and to give an example of limit reading conditions –legibility for as many people as possible– and it serves as an expression of the fact that graphic development is also related to the context of diversity.

I'm sorry dear, we  
don't sell sizes  
over 36. Being fat  
isn't in...

**Have you tried  
"big size" shops?**



*Illustration with two women, a very thin and a very thick one one, in front of a dummy with a long dress. The thin woman, who is supposed to be the saleswoman says: “I’m sorry, dear, but we don’t sell sizes over 36. Being fat isn’t modern... Have you ever tried a “big size shop”?*

Man has been focussing on himself throughout history. This way we have evolved from a clearly theological society to a humanist society.

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Now another change is taking place and we believe it is interesting getting to know this change. It is about taking into account human diversity as an enriching aspect in the creative process of design.

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Now another change is taking place and we believe it is interesting getting to know this change. It is about taking into account human diversity as an enriching aspect in the creative process of design. Because the conception of the human being isn't just one. It is diverse. And now with the change of the century people have understood in a systematic way that diversity is a fact and that taking this diversity into consideration benefits and refreshes our conceptual ideas. It won't be long until we won't be able to understand products with little consideration for a wide range of people with different abilities.

This conscience of diversity has also undergone evolution. We have shifted from the simple concept of Architectural Barriers, identified with users with physical disabilities and integrated in the field of architecture, to a second level we will call Accessibility and which includes a wider range of users, projects, environmental architecture, the product object, transport etc. Another phase has begun some time ago already. It is the present concept of Design for All that offers a support to diversity related to physical, psychological or cultural appearance, not only as a standard but also as a work philosophy.

The coincidence in 2003 of the Year of Design and the European Year for People with Disabilities turns this into the perfect moment to introduce this idea in the world of design and to confirm it in the field of architecture.

### Human diversity

Principle of life, of values, relations, responsibility and cohabitation.

### Barriers

These are the elements in the surroundings of a person that limit his functioning and create disabilities.

### Architectural barriers

They are the impediments, hindrances or physical obstacles (related to urbanism, building or transport) that restrict or impede people's liberty to move.

### Barriers of communication

They are the impediments for the expression and reception of messages.

### Accessibility

The feature of urbanism, building, transport or the media that allow each person to use them.

### Design

"The solution mankind has disposed of from the very beginning to overcome his important shortcomings related to nature, now a way to understand life".

(André Ricard)

In the end of the eighties an American architect, Ron. L. Mace, who during most of his life was forced to use a wheelchair, invents the term Universal Design.

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If we resum his theories we can say that Universal design and the spaces that are useful to everybody in the broadest sense of the world, excluding adaptations or specialised designs and without supposing excessively elevated extra investment. Universal Design benefits users of all ages and levels of ability.

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In Europe and by means of the EIDD, these concepts are developed as Design for All and now we wish to promote its use in the worlds of design, architecture and engineering because we believe it can cause a new vision of diversity.

A number of principles are developed that establish the basic guidelines for the necessary and sufficient improvements in order to increase the number of users and that, at the same time, also offer substantial benefits.

These principles, which we believe should be revised constantly, should be interpreted positively because they benefit and enrich the product and its target and they never represent a restrictive lecture.

In the websites mentioned further on these principles are summed up.

Some of the most significant principles are resumed in the epilogue of this pamphlet.

## Users

A person who uses a space, a product or a service.

## EIDD

European Institute for Design and Disability. [www.design-for-all.org](http://www.design-for-all.org)

## Improvements

The improvement of the function and/or aesthetics of a product or service according to the real necessities of the user.

## CEAPAT

Centro Estatal de Autonomía Personal y Ayudas Técnicas [www.ceapat.org](http://www.ceapat.org)

## The Center for Universal Design

[www.design.ncsu.edu/cud](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud)

## CRID

Consorti de Recursos i Documentació per a la Diversitat [www.diba.es/crid](http://www.diba.es/crid)

## Design for All Foundation

[www.designforall.org](http://www.designforall.org)

## ECA

European Concept for Accessibility Network [www.eca.lu](http://www.eca.lu)

## Fundació Sidar

[www.sidar.org/recur/desdi/usable/dudt](http://www.sidar.org/recur/desdi/usable/dudt)

We invite you to work with this concept, not in a punctual way, but developing a way of thinking, a working process of continuous improvement. An restless and creative mind like yours can't turn its back to a reflection that is so evident, fruitful, profitable and with a human charge that dignifies the profession with a dimension that benefits society and itself.

AND I, WHAT CAN I DO?

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Very simple.

In the design process you can include the basic wheter people with more restrictions and the extremes of diversity in our society, both morphological and cultural, will be able to use them.

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If we observe this diversity and collectives with less abilities or of the less favoured we obtain two achievements: make the product for everybody and offer improvements to the user.

What is useful for people with disabilities is also useful for all the other users, even with better results.

### Think

“Stop, then start again. That is thinking!”

(Paul Valery)

### Profit

Gain, profit caused by a fact, a thing.

### Ability

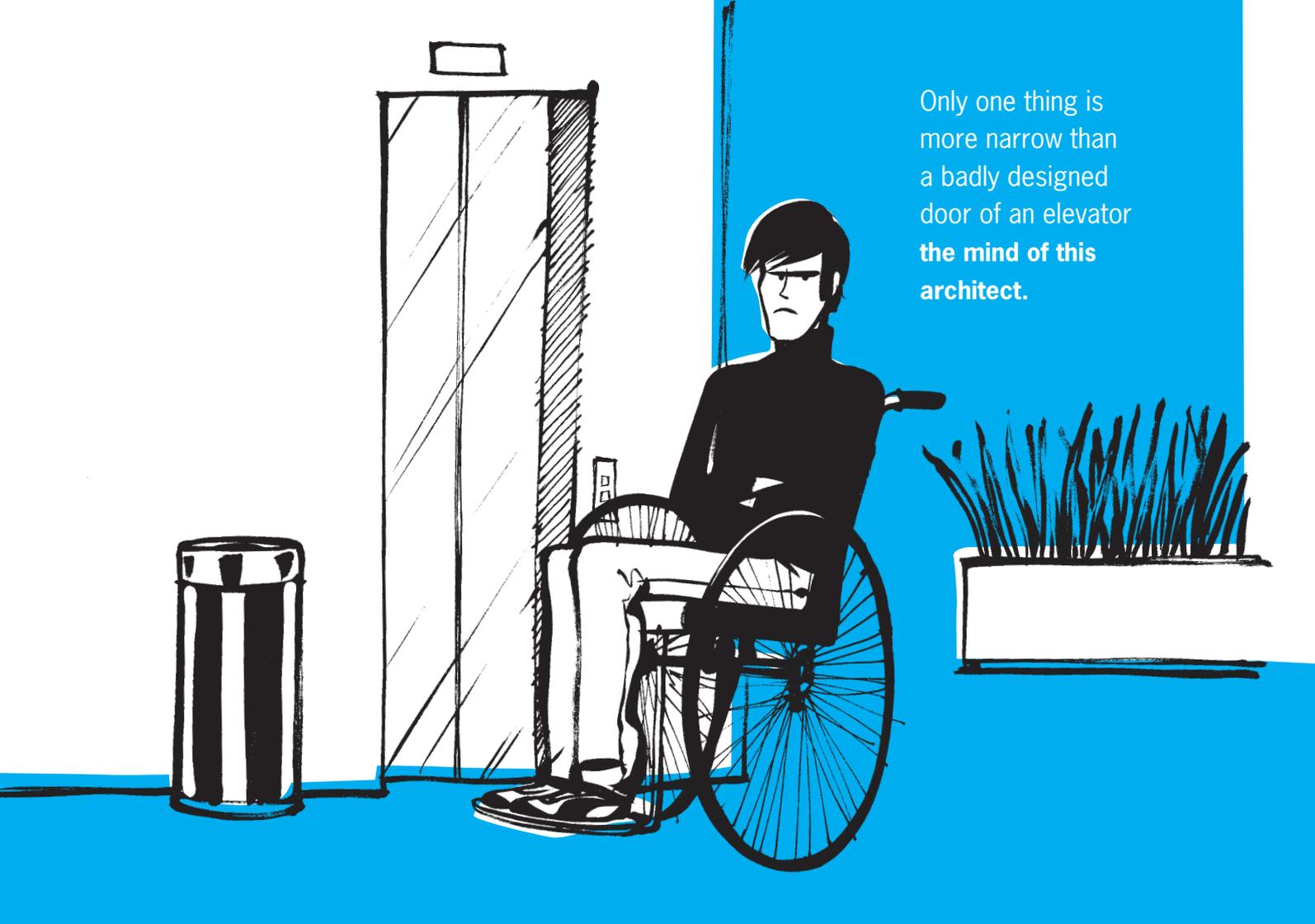
Capacity, mastery to do something.

### All

Means for everybody without exception.

### Disability

It's a generic term that includes losses, limitations in the activity and restrictions in the participation. shows the negative aspects of the interaction between the person and the environmental and personal factors.



Only one thing is  
more narrow than  
a badly designed  
door of an elevator  
**the mind of this  
architect.**

*Illustration with a narrow elevator door that is closed and a man in a wheelchair who is waiting with his arms crossed: There is something that is even more narrow than a badly designed elevator door: this architect's brain.*

The accessibility, use and enjoying of the products is for everybody: public administrations, private companies, technical and design personal and, finally, the users and consumers that should participate in the design process in a direct or indirect way.

The public administrations are making an effort to develop the respective programmes of elimination of BBAA in order to guarantee some minimum parameters of mobility and first-level personal independence, which are indispensable for great parts of the population with less possibilities and who therefore suffer serious risks of exclusion.

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But now we should incorporate accessibility measures in the creative and productive process of designers in all disciplines.

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All technicians and creators that are able to foresee a diversity of abilities of the potential user and in the use of the product; one way or another are assuring the future of their creations, of the projects and de products, with the expansion of future markets that have been excluded until now, but without losing the existing markets.

Unfortunately this hasn't been taught to us. This is why our work to divulge these ideas will only become unnecessary when in our educational processes, in our technical schools and universities diversity and the profits of its application are dealt with adequately.

## BBAA

Architectural barriers.

## Designers

“Who believes that the final target of design is the shape and its context”.

(Christopher Alexander)

“A person who thinks before he handles. He designs, imagines and describes so that the things can be realised”.

(Juli Capella)

“A designer with an aesthetic sensibility who works for the community”.

(Bruno Munari)

“Who thinks in the same way the collective does”.

(Giuseppe Pagano)

“Society demands high moral and social responsibility to the designer. It also demands a major understanding of the people...”.

(Victor Papanek)

“He who seeks a harmonic relation between production and culture”.

(Alberto Rosselli)

It is clear that the most profitable strategy is to conceive the goods and services thinking and identifying with the people who will use them.

This is not a recent invention. Ergonomics, CRM systems, *design focussed on the user*, the polls on the levels of satisfaction, the processes of control, the recollection of indicators, the policy of citizen participation, etc. already showed what we now have the opportunity to explain in a more adequate dimension.

We should eliminate the concept of the “standard client” and include people who make use of the services and who caused by their restrictions can make us see improvements that we wouldn’t be able to foresee in any other way.

The effort itself is already worth the while, although the aims aren’t achieved or aren’t achieved immediately. We are talking about middle or large term profits.

### Ergonomics

Contributes to design and to the evaluation of the tasks, works, products, environments and systems to make them compatible with the necessities, abilities and limitations of the people.

### CRM Systems

Customer Relationship Management, this means management based on the client.

### Design focussed on the user

Meaning the context of the use, i.e. deeply understanding the user, the surroundings in which the work and the user's tasks are developed.



No, the humming bird  
steak with reduced bitter  
foie was delicious...  
**it is the chair that is  
killing me!**

*Illustration with a young, oriental looking boy in a restaurant who is seated on a chair with an iron back. A waiter is standing next to him and listens to him say: No, the hummingbird steak with reduced bitter foie was delicious... it is the chair that is killing me.*

The profits are of an economical nature (amplification of the market, amplification of future perspectives) and they also enrich the creative process, the product and its variants, the satisfaction to amplify perspectives and targets etc.

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The indirect benefits or the alien ones can also be observed from two points of view: the social benefit of decreasing assisting design, (rehabilitation, orthopaedic, and specific design technologies) in benefit of Design for All in order to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities or who have less possibilities, with the social connotation of the integration and normalisation of their lives participating in and using the same products or service other people use.

The second perspective is that of improving the quality of the lives of the people who surround them.

### Rehabilitation

Its function is to recover the abilities and it contributes to the improvement of health and the quality of life.

### Orthopaedics

The use of whichever type of device destined to prevent or to correct any disturbances on the anatomic level of the people, in order to improve the personal independence.

### Specific design

The design of a product or of a programme of specific integral rehabilitation for each patient.

We are not talking about designing for the people with kinetic, visual auditory or psychological disabilities.

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It is about introducing a positive reflection in the design process, thus being able to observe how markets can be expanded and without increasing the cost.

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In a sufficiently dark surrounding each and every one of us has the same restrictions as a person with visual disabilities; this is why every improvement or support that is included for people with disabilities will help us all. Similarly in a sufficiently noisy environment each and every one of us has the same restrictions as a person with auditory disabilities. And when we carry heavy weight we have the same restrictions as a person with dysfunctions in a hand. This way a great number of everyday situations in which one way or another we are all disabled.

As a consequence we are not talking about special devices. Assisting design is a specific field that has nothing to do with Design for All.

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The world of design and diversity don't have to be opposed to one another, they can and should coincide.

In the same way we should forget the idea that adapted design doesn't have *glamour*, if that is an excuse in the first place. Definitely incorporating the specific necessities of some people in the product supposes an improvement for everybody, and we also contribute to a better world.

### Usefulness

The quickness and facility with which people fulfil their tasks by using the product-object that is of interest.

### Environment

In the group of people who have problems with interacting with their environment we include children, pregnant women, the left-handed, the obese, the old-aged, people who use a cart to go shopping or who carry their babies in carts, people who carry packages and suitcases, people with post-traumatic scars of an accident, physical-kinetic or psychological diminution, people who work in limit conditions, people who are in a country without speaking its language etc.

### Restrictions (of capacity)

Caused by diseases, accidents or caused by natural physiologic ageing.

### Glamour

Having an exciting and often ephemeral and romantic attractive power in order to fascinate.

In this club we don't  
allow anyone over  
40, **they don't go**  
**with the decoration...**

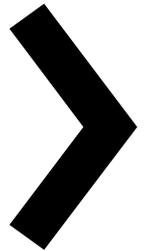


*Club Le Cool*



*Illustration with the entrance of a club called “Club Le Coll”. A couple of young girls are inside and an older man wants to get in while a modern boy who is standing at the door tells him: In this club we don’t allow people who are over 40; they don’t go with the decoration.*

Epilogue: principles of Design for All  
In order for a design to be accessible to everybody the suggestions of  
the next two pages should be taken into account.



- ⌘ The product should be simple, the elements, useless actions and efforts should be reduced to the minimum.
- ⌘ The product should adapt to the interactive capacities of the users.
- ⌘ The design should allow a fast and unmistakable perception of how the product should be used.
- ⌘ The design should respond to a conceptual model of functioning that adapts to the preceding experience and to the expectations of the person who has to use it.
- ⌘ A clear relation between the systems of activity should be at the disposal of the user. A mapping or a map of the natural interaction between the action and the product's response.

- ⌘ The system of feedback or retroaction should be foreseen, giving information about the state and the activity of the product.
- ⌘ We should consider the possibility that the users make mistakes or use the product for unsuspected purposes.
- ⌘ The product has to be secure and reliable, so that it can be used with the confidence that all possible causes of an accident have been eliminated previously.
- ⌘ Flexibility and adaptability are required related to the specific necessities of the people and also to the use of the accessories.
- ⌘ When all this appears to be definitely complicated as a last resort we have the possibility to create standards.

## *Credits of the publication:*

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FAD – Foment de les Arts Decoratives

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Abril 2004



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Ajuntament



de Barcelona



F7D 100 ANYS  
 ANOS  
 YEARS