

Greetings from all at Visionary Design Development. In this newsletter we continue our series on the Seven Principles of Universal Design and a report on her recent visit to Seoul by Saumya Kaushik.

SEOUL

Saumya Kaushik



After a lot of research for a possible short holiday destination, my partner and I finally settled on visiting Seoul, South Korea. Seoul had this mysterious, intriguing feel to it. Also considering the number of travel documentaries on Seoul were so few, it only increased our curiosity!

It's an occupational hazard to not view a city without the lenses of accessibility, urban design, landscape and architecture. Wayfinding especially stood out for me as I am constantly complaining about the same in Melbourne. The Korean planners / designers being aware that language can be a potential barrier they have signage in English everywhere, making it very easy for tourists like us to navigate through to their city using their subway system only.

I found it hard not to compare Melbourne and Seoul and was completely aware that it was perhaps not fair to do so either. Melbourne is rated the most liveable city and Seoul only ranked fifty eighth as per 2015 index. Being a resident of the most liveable city and a loyal Melbourne Metro user, I was amazed at Seoul Metro System (Seoul Metro). Seoul Metro's Planning, technology, design and density really helps with good transport network. Planning – Multiple entry points to the station; Technology – especially if you are a tourist, vision impaired or hearing impaired as the display on the platform shows which train station the train has arrived and departed, a tune is played when the train is approaching altering the passengers who then form a line at the side of platform screen doors. Since there are platform screen doors it is fairly clear where the doors will open so it does feel really secure to get into the train, also as people form a straight line on either side of the doors to get in, I have rarely such discipline back home. Maybe platform screens on all existing stations will help with that! Ticketing system and vending machine seemed simpler to understand as well. Design – One of the first thing was the number of ceiling mounted grabs and at a height which even teenagers

could easily grab them without tip toeing. Being a short person I again constantly complain about that on Melbourne Metro. There are just not enough of them! Density – As the city is densely populated my comments above were probably fairly obvious features for Seoul Metro and along with the ease of just turning up at the station at non-peak hours and the wait time for the train wasn't longer than a couple of minutes.

Towards the end of our holiday I did conclude Seoul is a remarkable city. However, it's not all perfect but I did feel they had the city design done keeping people with all abilities in mind.



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Experienced in hands-on construction of affordable, sustainable housing: Bower Studio (remote, indigenous housing in Australia) 2012. Pathways to Humanitarian Sector (Architects without Frontiers) 2014. Bamboo Workshop (Giant Grass) 2015. Cyclone Housing Design and Build Workshop Bangladesh (Building Trust International) 2016.

Gwanghwamun Square. Young people are playing in the water on a hot day.



THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

GUIDELINES

- 3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- 3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- 3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- 3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

The case for making our society more universally accessible and usable to all is a compelling one on many fronts. Universal Design proposes a progressive and evolving approach to the development of inclusive environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible. Not only does Universal Design make good business sense, it also has many compelling social and legal drivers.

Benefits to the Individual from Universal Design

The human-centred approach to design that Universal Design supports is user-friendly and convenient, but is also respectful of user dignity, rights and privacy.

The degree of difficulty that people experience when using a product, service or environment can vary, such as:

- A person who has no significant problems but who would appreciate a well-designed accessible and usable product, service or environment;
- A person who has little difficulty with all features;
- A person who has difficulty with some features;
- A person who has trouble with most features;
- A person who is unable to use the product at all.

The degree of personal benefit will vary accordingly. Therefore, if a product, service or environment is well designed, with accessibility and usability in mind, all of the people in the categories above will benefit.

Universal Design creates inclusive design solutions and promotes accessibility and usability, allowing people with all levels of ability to live independently. The ability of a person to remain as independent as possible can be influenced by how accessible and usable products, services and environments are. Factors that promote independent living, such as universal design, have a key role to play in dealing with this global phenomenon.

"Universal Design assumes that the range of human ability is ordinary, not special."

Elaine Ostroff, 2001

Further Information:
The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.



Intuitive Design
Operation of single lever faucet is readily understood without instruction or previous experience.

CALENDAR

October 2017

- 1-3 International Conference on Healthy Aging. Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia
- 16-17 The Future of Political Stability and Human Security Maryland, USA.
- 19-21 Evidence for Action in an Aging World. Winnipeg, Canada.

November 2017

- 10-11 MINORITY STUDIES '17. Istanbul, Turkey
- 14 The Place of Memory and Memory of Place. Cambridge UK.
- 29-30 Smart Cities as Socio-Technical Systems. Helsinki, Finland

December 2017

- 1-2 Contemporary Urban Issues. Istanbul, Turkey.
- 5-6 Poverty and Sustainable Development. Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 28-29 MacroTrend - Energy & Sustainability. Paris

If you would like to discuss collaboration possibilities across the areas of accessibility, research or architecture for any of your projects, please contact our office.