



What is universal design...inclusive design...design-for-all?

...a **framework** for the design of places, things, information, communication and policy that focuses on the user, on the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design.

Or, more simply: **Human-Centered design (of everything) with everyone in mind**

Universal Design Principles:

Equitable Use: The design does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users.

Flexibility in Use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

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

Perceptible Information: The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

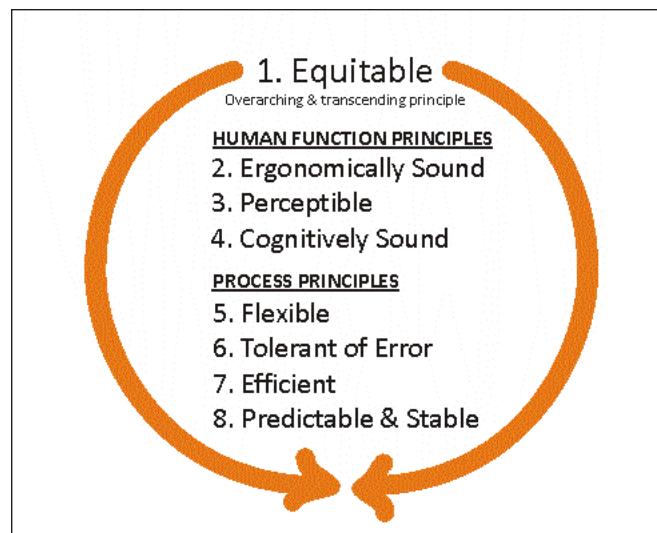
Tolerance for Error: The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Low Physical Effort: The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

Size and Space for Approach & Use: Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

[Developed by a group of US designers and design educators from five organizations in 1997. Principles are copyrighted to the Center for Universal Design, School of Design, State University of North Carolina at Raleigh. The Principles are in use internationally.]

Useful Variation of Both UD Principles & Organization:



The depiction above organizes universal design principles in a new way. It which breaks out the three broad functional groupings of human ability separately from the ‘Process Principles’ or guiding strategies for design that works for the broadest spectrum of functional limitations. Equitable use is the overarching principle that drives the integration of the two types of principles. This is derived from the work of Dr. Robert F. Erlandson in his book Universal and Accessible Design for Products, Services and Processes, CRC Press, 2008.

Relationship between Legally Mandated Accessibility & Universal Design

Legally mandated requirements for accessible design, within a civil or human rights context, provide a vital basis for autonomy and opportunity for people with disabilities. To be effective, legal mandates require an infrastructure of information and enforcement in order to ensure meaningful compliance. Inevitably, the legal mandates establish a set of minimum standards for some built, information and communication environments and address the needs of people with some types of functional limitations.

Accessibility laws and codes are a limited indicator of the potential of design to facilitate independence, participation and well-being for a growing proportion of people. Accessible design focuses primarily on accommodating the needs of wheelchair users and, to a lesser extent, people who are blind. Wheelchair users are a small number of people but their wheeled devices make very clear demands on the built environment.

But the few accessibility features commonly included in the law fall short of supporting maximum independence and well-being for many people across the spectrum of age and ability. That includes the world’s rapidly growing proportion of older people.

Universal or inclusive design *starts* with accessible design and calls for a more creative and imaginative engagement of designers to design places and products that will work seamlessly for the widest possible group of potential users.

Sustainable design is not limited to *environmental sustainability* but also *social sustainability*. Demographic shifts demand setting a priority on the power of design to minimize anyone’s functional limitations and facilitate everyone’s performance. To succeed, we must reframe design education and practice and embed this vision of inclusive design into public policy at every level and into sustainable development and design policy.