International Awards 2013
Design for All Foundation

Based in Barcelona, the Design for All Foundation works to compile and share knowledge relating to design for all, and to recognise international examples of good practice.

Effectively synonymous with universal design, design for all seeks to ensure that products, services and environments are designed so that anyone can use them. It is a holistic approach which seeks to overcome interaction issues by designing to take into account human diversity, different situations and contexts.

To meet design for all criteria, a product, service or environment must be:

- Respectful of diversity.
- Safe.
- Functional.
- Healthy.
- Understandable.
- Aesthetic.

Origins of the awards

The International Design for All Foundation Awards were launched in 2010 to recognise excellence in design for all and publicise global examples of good practice. As there was no regular international awards scheme in the field, Design for All Foundation President Francesc Aragall (below right) and Executive Patron Imma Bonet explain that the “awards came about from a sense that more and more people around the world were involved in delivering advances in Design for All, and we wanted to recognise this”.

The three original award categories – covering the public, private and not-for-profit sectors – reflected the main knowledge areas defined by the Foundation, according to Francesc: “We felt there was a different message to be offered to each.” In 2012, a fourth category was introduced: rather than complete projects, this sought design ideas to be experimented with users in “Living Labs”, where users co-create products, services and environments in real-life settings.

“There is simply no comparable opportunity for a wide array of entities from across the globe to pitch their work for consideration.”

Valerie Fletcher

Judging process

The Foundation filters entries before passing them to an international jury of experts, representing different sectors and specialisms, for evaluation. In the 2013 edition the jury included strong representation from the universal-design community, along with representatives from internationally recognised design centres, local and national government, and Living Labs:

- Francesc Aragall, Design for All Foundation.
- Per Eriksson, Mayor of Askersund.
- Valerie Fletcher, Institute for Human Centered Design.
- Rama Gheerawo, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design.
- Pau Herrera, Barcelona Centre de Disseny.
- Keiji Kawahara, International Association for Universal Design.
- Pete Kercher, EIDD - Design for all Europe.
- Hugh Musick, Illinois Institute of Technology Institute of Design.
- Marie Prost-Coletta, Delegate for Accessibility.
French Government.
• Roberto Santoro, European Society of Concurrent Enterprising Network.
• Edward Steinfeld, Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access.
• Isabelle Vérilhac, Cité du Design.

The awards attract a huge range of projects, from adapted sports and multisensory museums to inclusive communications. Each is awarded points in five areas: how well it fulfils the award objectives, its methodology, the extent to which the outputs meet design for all criteria, its impact and its innovation.

Design for all, as juror Pete Kercher explains, is not a "limited, compartmentalised approach" with a focus solely on inclusion for disabled people, but instead aims to "include everyone in every aspect of modern society". Form is not prized over function, but true "designs for all" should be aesthetically pleasing, according to Francesc, so that they are more likely to appeal to a wide range of people: "It’s not about designs which advertise themselves as being ‘for disabled people’ and are stigmatising."

Original solutions are also valued, with the emphasis being on "finding the most interesting concept or the most significant innovation”, he says. Perhaps this is why Valerie Fletcher believes the awards “inform the field about the state of the art and raise the bar on what to expect”. Certainly, those awarded in 2013 bring something interesting to the design for all debate and suggests new possibilities in the field.

"The awards provide a context for designers to think about the meaning of universal design and guide people from around the world to compelling cases for design that can accommodate people of all abilities."

Hugh Musick

Ceremony 2013

In 2013, the ceremony took place in Saint-Étienne as part of the city’s International Design Biennial. The Biennial’s theme was “Empathy, or the experience of the other” and it featured exhibitions such as “EmpathïCITY: Making our city together” on collaborative design for people-centred places and “Sixième sens” (“Sixth sense”) on design adapted to human diversity.

The Mayor of Saint-Étienne, Maurice Vincent, (above left) opened the ceremony and presented an award, with another being presented by jury member Marie Prost-Coletta (below, with Audrey Dodo for the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Andere Augen’s Gregor Strutz and Francesc Aragall). Each project was explained before the winners and finalists were invited to the stage to accept their trophies and certificates.
Not-for-profit organisation

Winner: Emergency ambulance redesign

Redesigning the UK ambulance might seem daunting, but it was perhaps overdue. According to Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (HHCD) Senior Research Fellow Ed Mathews, the current design is little more than an evolution from the horse-drawn carts used to transport injured soldiers during the Crimean War, despite needs having changed substantially, with fewer patients requiring hospital treatment.

HHCD assembled a multidisciplinary team to co-design a new solution with key workers and patients. The design process was coordinated, according to Senior Associate Gianpaolo Fusari, by “allowing people with different areas of expertise to blend in at different stages”.

Designers worked with paramedics to understand their needs and review proposals, while clinical experts carried out measurable, repeatable tests to evaluate design concepts and engineers solved technical challenges. Drawing on a wide range of perspectives occasionally led to differences in opinion, but decision-making was steered, Gianpaolo says, by strong leadership from HHCD.

The resulting design provides a standardised, intuitive treatment space which improves safety by designing out error, reduces injury through better ergonomics and allows stock levels and the risk of infection to be controlled. The intuitive design of the user interface allows easier diagnostics, communications and data transfer.

The jury was suitably impressed: Keiji Kawahara, Executive Director of the International Association for Universal Design, noted the “careful research with stakeholders” which resulted in “a revolutionary model of ambulance interior, evaluated and modified to reach the required standard”, while, for Valerie Fletcher, “as usual, the calibre of research and design comes together so thoroughly at the HHCD.”

“As a member of the jury I have been privileged to review some splendid initiatives and inspiring thoughts showing new directions in Design for All.”

Keiji Kawahara
Finalist: Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I’DGO)

Over several years, using analyses based upon large population samples, the I’DGO research project, delivered by a multidisciplinary consortium of research centres at Edinburgh, Salford and Warwick universities, examined the connection between getting outdoors and quality of life. The project “focused on the most effective ways of shaping outdoor environments inclusively”, according to I’DGO Communicator Máire Cox, “seeking to provide the evidence that empowers older people to live an active life in their community for as long as they choose”.

In 2012 the project reported findings which showed that the ability to get out and about impacts significantly on quality of life, that there are many environmental barriers to day-to-day access for all and that inclusive urban design and joined-up policy-making have the potential to improve outcomes. The consortium has contributed to policy development, raised awareness of age-friendly placemaking and published professional guidance.

For juror Hugh Musick, the consortium’s “rigorous, empathic and very thoughtful” method has “a lot to teach others”, while their efforts to establish universal standards are “absolutely necessary”.

OPENspace, the consortium leader, has since begun “Mobility, Mood and Place”, a project funded by the cross-council funded Lifelong Health and Wellbeing programme. http://bit.ly/EPSRC-age-friendly-design

“The Design for All Foundation Awards scheme is very high-profile, drawing international attention to examples of best practice.”

Máire Cox

Finalist: Dutch Golden Age multisensory guidebook

When graphic designer and Andere Augen (“Other Eyes”) founder Gregor Strutz spent a year in Norway after school, he came into close contact with visually impaired people for the first time.

Returning to his native Germany to study communication design, he became aware of the tension between the “very visualised world” in which he was immersed and his experience of situations where graphic
design had disabled his Norwegian friends. He learned that “user-centred design solutions lead to improved product usability”; in fact, for him, graphic design for all “leads to its own aesthetic, bringing viewers into the world of visually impaired users and helping all readers to understand the content”.

In collaboration with a user-led organisation of visually impaired people and the Staatliches Museum Schwerin (Schwerin State Museum), Andere Augen created a multisensory guidebook telling the stories of a selection of Dutch Golden Age paintings on display at the museum.

“"In combining a multisensory opportunity for very diverse users, the guidebook enriches everyone’s experience.””

Valerie Fletcher

Texts about each of the paintings were written, an audio description was recorded and a series of tactile images was produced. These were then used in reading rehearsals with visually impaired users to determine which tactile images best conveyed the descriptions.

The final book contains paintings reproduced with increased visual contrast and tactile reliefs. Audio description and sound effects are provided, along with textual background information: using a screen printing technique with embossed varnish, Braille was printed on the same page as the standard print without destroying its legibility. Hence the book allows readers to experience the same content in different ways, and also provides a tool for education.
Government or public body

Joint winners: Tactile, “talking” model of Berlin and models of the Reichstag building

A city for all: The Berlin approach

Berlin has attracted international attention for its design for all work: in 2012, Technische Universität Berlin (TUB) (Berlin Technical University) students won the Schindler Award, an accessible design challenge for young architects, shortly before the city was named Access City 2013 by the European Commission. Completing the hat trick, two tactile-model projects submitted by the city senate and TUB respectively won the Design for All Foundation public body category.

More than most cities, Berlin has tangible experience of physical, political, social and cultural barriers, embodied by the wall which divided it for 30 years, leaving a legacy of logistical issues following reunification. “The two halves of the city had to be brought together and different transport and planning systems standardised,” explain Gerd Grenner and Ingeborg Stude of the Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt (Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment), regular participants in the EuroCities Barrier-Free Working Group. Embracing barrierefrei (“barrier-free”) construction as the means to achieve this, the senate enacted a state anti-discrimination law in 1999.

Proactive leadership from the senate led to the development of manuals like 2007’s Barrier-free planning and construction in Berlin and checklists for barrier-free museums, as well as the definition of priorities in the design of public spaces, transport and infrastructure. Gerd emphasises that the role of public space, especially its accessibility to all residents and visitors, is pivotal to the city’s aim to adapt to demographic change and “present itself as a liveable, welcoming German capital”. Accessibility is seen as a continuous process, with stakeholders being involved in the planning process and in setting priorities.

In 2011, following ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Berlin Senate adopted 10 disability policy guidelines, based on a design for all approach, to be implemented by 2020. This according to Gerd, represents “a paradigm shift in city policy”, aiming to ensure “that all buildings and spaces can be used by everyone independently, simply, intuitively and comfortably, so that special solutions for disabled people will be largely redundant”.

Tactile innovation at TUB

Meanwhile, Fach Modell + Design (Model + Design Department) at TUB, led by Burkhard Lüdtke, had been involved in its own design for all project: a tactile representation of the Reichstag, the German parliament building. The commission, prompted by requests from visually impaired visitors, represented a change in direction for the design team, as architect Annette Müller explains: “After years of focusing on visual design processes, we were confronted with the tactile perception of three-dimensionality.”

Modell + Design spent several years developing a material which allows the detail of the buildings to be reproduced and recreates the temperature and surface feel of stone architecture. As well as creating tactile models of the Reichstag building and its surrounding area, they produced track-guided reliefs representing the views from the top of the building, with a shoulder bag to carry them. A key aspect of their design process was to create multiple prototypes for testing by users, whose feedback was used to modify the designs.

The team used the same method when asked to create the tactile model of Berlin for the senate. Working collaboratively with users threw up some
issues the team hadn’t predicted, such as the fact that “tactile perception of three-dimensionality differs from visual perception”, Annette explains: “For example, if we look at the six-sided figure of the Memorial Church tower, we see one full side and two shortened by perspective, but our partners insisted that we show all three sides the same size.”

The model, on permanent display at the Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, comprises different modules which offer the flexibility to be updated or extended. Sites of interest are reproduced at a larger scale in order to highlight them. Using the same innovative material as that used for the Reichstag, the Berlin model also incorporates Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to convey information about points of interest as an audio message or text displayed on a smartphone.

The result, according to Reiner Delgado of the Deutschen Verein der Blinden und Sehbehinderten (German Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People), “allows citizens to get an impression of the city as a whole and a more detailed appreciation”. It invites interaction, in contrast to the common practice of not allowing visitors to touch architectural models, as Annette notes. An additional benefit of the project was that it made the university’s architecture students aware of the need to design for diversity.

The jury deemed these models perhaps the best in the world: for Valerie, “the constantly evolving sophistication of features, materials and functions is thrilling”, while Keiji Kawahara emphasised that “the key factor in its success is the user-involvement research and evaluation method”.

**Finalist: Aragonese Augmentative and Alternative Communication Portal (ARASAAC)**

Funded by the Government of Aragon, ARASAAC (http://arasaac.org/) facilitates functional communication for all through the use of graphic materials. “The main use is to support communication and behavioural management, with all that implies in terms of the development of personal independence and learning,” explains Rafael Lizandra Laplaza, the educational department’s special needs consultant.

The system comprises more than 13,000 pictograms developed in cooperation with end users and is free
While ARASAAC was originally intended for school-age children, Rafael notes that a wide range of people benefit from the system, including older people, people with conditions like cerebral palsy and people from different cultural backgrounds. The extent of its impact is suggested by the impressive number of hits (10,000,000) the portal received within a year, along with a rapid and voluminous following in social networks. The portal is currently available in several languages, and its creators are working to offer more linguistic versions.

Software is also available, including AraWord, which allows words and pictograms to be written simultaneously and AraBoard, which allows communication boards to be created for computer and mobile devices.

Finalist: Accessibility construction using local materials in New Lucena

Implemented by the Local Government Unit (LGU) of New Lucena, Iloilo, a fourth-class municipality in the Philippines, this project aimed to improve accessibility for all in the barangay, or district. A holistic approach was adopted, with the municipality setting up different committees focusing on data monitoring, capacity building, advocacy, networking and environmental accessibility.

Using low-cost local materials such as wood and bamboo, the LGU installed facilities such as ramps, accessible toilets and pathways in government-owned facilities and, by creating ordinances and
providing advice, encouraged the private sector to do likewise. Users were involved throughout, including during a mock-up exercise prior to construction, where disabled people were invited to try out the planned facilities and provide recommendations for improvement. A special educational programme was initiated, and preschool daycare centres were able to accept disabled children.

On hearing of New Lucena’s selection as a finalist, spokesperson Mylyne Sustento commented: “It is our dream to inspire other countries that, despite limited financial resources, it is not impossible to create accessible and responsive services for our constituents.” Council representatives believe that impact in terms of changing attitudes and participation has been significant: residents have become more open-minded, while parents who had previously been hiding their children at home have now enrolled them in the government’s special education programme.

For juror Hugh Musick, the submission was a refreshing change from examples of “accessibility washing”, showing “a real honesty” and taking responsibility for the discrimination against the disabled people in its community”, with very positive results. “If this community can work toward universal design, there is no excuse for larger, better funded cities to not do this and much more.”

“For us to make our project known to other countries was such a great achievement. We know that because of this event there are more countries being inspired to deliver projects that serve the greatest number of people regardless of their needs and diversities.”

Mylyne Sustento
Finalist: UD Woonlabo (Universal Design Living Lab)

Faced with the problem of how to explain the concept of universal design, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg (Limburg Province University) and Toegankelijkheidsbureau (the Belgian Accessibility Office) decided to build a demonstration home to “introduce visitors to the concepts of visitable and adaptable housing and universal design,” says Mieke Nijs, the project’s coordinator.

Co-creation was integral to the process from the start, with users being involved in the design and retrofit of an existing building to house the centre. First, focus groups selected demonstration products from a list. The results were filtered; where the information was contradictory, Mieke notes, project leaders prioritised what the centre should include. Next, plans were drafted, designed in a way which could be understood by all. These were discussed with focus groups, whose feedback was used to inform the building stage. Mieke emphasises that consultation is ongoing, with feedback from visitors and product testing with users constantly informing the development of the centre.

At UD Woonlabo users can try out the latest inclusive-design innovations, while manufacturers can test their products with users; more than 30 companies currently participate. It also offers a setting for interdisciplinary research which will in turn be used for training courses, as well as supporting accessibility centres in giving advice.

Feedback has been positive since the Lab’s opening in 2013: Mieke describes the excitement of visitors who realise that “a house can look good, and non-stigmatising, yet still meet the needs of the user”. Rather than browsing an “abstract catalogue”, people can experience products for themselves, while manufacturers “can demonstrate their products in a realistic house and show that they can be useful for a wide variety of people”.

“The award encourages people to start making designs for everyone. Hopefully companies will bring these concepts to market, so we will have more for people of all ages and abilities.”

Mieke Nijs
Private company or professional

Winner: Hyvän Mielen Pihapolku (The Path of Joy)

While some designers focus principally on aesthetics, iam design’s Isko Lappalainen views good design as much more: the creation of “things that are better to use and easier to manufacture, leading to lower production costs and a more affordable consumer price”. Usability was therefore the starting point of iam design’s winning project to transform an underused courtyard into a welcoming outdoor space for two assisted-living homes, in collaboration with residents and staff; the company tried to “step into someone else’s shoes and find new solutions to everyday outdoor activities”.

The co-design process used a range of methods to engage users, including interviews, workshops, an initial design concept, a “wishes wall” where participants could express what they would like to see and an observation camera. This multifaceted approach led to a final design which provides a thoughtful, sensitive, context-specific response, taking into account the challenges posed by seasonal conditions in Finland.

The layout is designed to be safe, easy to use and understandable, as well as flexible, with adjustable elements and areas for both sociable and solitary activities. Requiring minimal maintenance, the design stipulates the use of sustainable materials and makes
According to Isko, it was the users’ delighted reaction to the project which inspired the company to apply for the award. The project has also been fêted in the Finnish press which, he says, has raised awareness about Design for All approaches in the country.

“For me, the Path of Joy captures the spirit of universal design – a public space that is inclusive, beautiful and can be enjoyed by all.”

Hugh Musick

Finalist: Accessibility Web Geographic Information System (AWG)

In their work as access consultants in Porto, Nuno Peixoto and Rafael Montes of the company ProAolutions.pt found that they were compiling a large amount of information about accessibility in local areas which was going unused. In addition, says Rafael, there was a great deal of accessibility information “created by and for citizens” which was “failing to reach the right people via the usual communication channels”.

With the aim of putting “clear, precise and reliable information at users’ disposal”, they created AWG, an online platform based on an open-source database through which accessibility information about a
municipality can be documented, managed and searched.

The interactive software allows users to inform themselves about accessibility in their local area and identify routes which meet their accessibility requirements. It also offers a forum, open to anyone, where users can upload feedback for the local council and

highlight where improvements need to be made. For their part, municipal councils can use the software to gain a global view to support the development and management of an integrated accessibility plan. The company is currently improving the web version and hopes to launch a version for mobile devices in the coming months.

Rafael believes that tools such as AWG can contribute “to the creation of a more just and participatory society”, although he cautions that there is still much work to be done. “These technologies are very new and it will take time before they are genuinely for ‘universal’ use in society.” Continuing poverty and illiteracy in many parts of the world mean that technological development should go hand in hand with social development. Above all, the awareness that “cities exist as a result of and for people” should guide the introduction of any new technologies.

Finalist: Guía Virtual Accessible Museos (GVAM) (Accessible Virtual Museum Guide)

In 2008, the software developer Dos de Mayo began a research project with private- and public-sector organisations, research centres and user associations to create a mobile museum guide which would offer a richer experience for visitors.

The project’s multidisciplinary, cross-sector consortium brought together organisations with a range of specialisms: Dos de Mayo and Madrid’s Carlos III university were responsible for technological development, the Centro Español de Subtitulado y Audiodescripción (Spanish Subtitling and Audiodescription Centre) defined accessibility requirements, while disabled people’s organisations collaborated at all stages, especially in user testing. This led, according to GVAM Researcher and Product Director José Pajares, to a higher quality product, as users demanded very high standards.

As tablet-style mobile devices did not exist at the time, the project developed its own device, manufactured in Spain, which incorporated accessible multimedia functions and an interior geographical positioning system (GPS). Taking into account the anxiety of some users in the face of unfamiliar technology, the team created very simple controls.

The system is now compatible with mobile devices, with more precise GPS; interfaces are accessible and can be adjusted according to individual requirements by activating features such as subtitling, audio-description, audio tours, sign language, magnification, pictograms and high contrast. The GVAM content management system, Ventour, allows museum professionals to upload content wirelessly and offers a statistics option so that they can study visitor behaviour.
Venues can also create customised applications: the text-to-speech option can be used to produce a complete audio guide, while the subtitling editor generates captions instantly.

This is an exciting time for the cultural sector, with digital technologies offering museums more ways for visitors to interact with their collections. However, José cautions that a clear, coherent and user-centred digital strategy is important, with a focus firmly on “enriching the experience of all people” to avoid “creating tensions” and “result in the facilities being underused.”

He emphasises that ongoing user testing remains fundamental to the project, with the aim of continuous improvement. In addition, consortium work groups continue to be organised to develop and share knowledge, which is then disseminated via the Tecnologías Accesibles en Museos (Accessible Technologies for Museums) network (www.redtam.org).

**Finalist: The Standing Knife**

According to its Chief Executive, Lone Kobberholm Storgaard, the Danish company Design Concern always uses the design for all approach and tries to convince customers to embrace it as well. Although this means that the company “spends more time researching user needs,” she explains, “it pays off as we create bigger market for our customers”.

In creating the Standing Knife, the company wanted to include users with low strength or impaired hand
or shoulder function and therefore set out to make a practical utensil which could be used safely and comfortably, irrespective of strength or dexterity.

Involving users and occupational therapists from the outset, the design process involved five stages:

- Analysis of diverse user needs.
- Creative design development based on user input and observation.
- Prototype development and user testing.
- Adaptation of design based on user feedback.
- User testing prior to manufacture.

The final design is based upon the principle behind a saw, to ease joint strain; its angled shape facilitates use, while its upright position and ergonomic grip ensure less tension in the hands and arms. Its silicone-coated grip, in a bold colour which is easy to see, allows safe use even with wet hands.

Yet the knife doesn’t advertise itself as assistive technology: Lone explains that user studies by Design Concern and Danish design-for-all consultancy Bexcom show that many assistive devices are underused because users think they are unattractive and signal disability; one participant in the design process commented that “the knife should be a tool that anyone would want to buy”. The design method used here thus results in a “win-win” situation, according to Lone, which has convinced the manufacturer of the need to incorporate design for all in its future operations.

User-centred design in Living Labs: Project proposal

Winner: Life 2.0

You may not have heard of the term “Living Labs”, but the concept is simple: “providing better opportunities for co-design with users during the development stage,” says Saara Newton, Life 2.0 Project Coordinator. Although relatively young, the Living Labs community in Europe is thriving: the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) numbers more than 300 Living Labs.

This dynamic new force for user-centred services has not escaped the European Commission: keen to foster closer collaboration between the design community and Living Labs, in 2012 they announced funding for the Integrating Design for All in Living Labs (IDeALL) project. Delivered by a consortium led by the Cité du design and including the Design for All Foundation and ENoLL, the project aims to enhance competitiveness and improve public services by supporting user-centred design in industry and government. As a first step towards bringing the design and Living Lab communities together, in 2012 a new category was created for the Design for All Foundation Awards, seeking design ideas which could be experimented with users in Living Labs.

The 2013 winner, Life 2.0 (http://www.life2project.eu/), is a European project to create a user-friendly online platform which would increase opportunities for older people to socialise and remain active, delivered by a consortium of research institutions, business, local authorities, user organisations and housing associations in Finland, Denmark, Spain and Italy.
Ethnographic research was conducted in Joensuu, Aalborg, Barcelona and Milan; the results were used to generate user personas, user stories and service scenarios before the platform was co-designed and piloted in real-life situations. This resulted in three priority areas, modified following user testing and feedback: to be able to offer or request assistance, to find out about local events and to look up local services.

During the project, variations between different regions were identified, such as a greater willingness of participants in southern Europe to organise events themselves, and participants from sparsely populated areas being prepared to travel longer distances to events. The resulting service allows users to upload announcements about the assistance and skills they can offer, while local organisations can share updates about activities in the area and local businesses can publicise relevant services. Participants in the pilot have benefited from strengthened social relationships, acquired new skills and gained greater independence.

The project consortium would like to see widespread implementation of the system, says Saara, and are currently developing a business model. Following the award, they hope to collaborate with Living Labs in multiple regions, “so as to widen perspectives in development issues,” to find similar projects and partners and to share methods for co-design development work.

“The spirit of engaging users to achieve user-centered design for all is inspiring the Living Labs movement to launch projects which involve citizens to address today’s societal challenges.”

Roberto Santoro
The future of the awards

Like the field of design for all itself, the awards continue to evolve, with a new format from 2014 onwards. The jury certainly have ambitious visions for the future: Valerie would like to see more awareness in the design world that “designing for the reality of life in the 21st century is one of the most compelling and satisfying creative endeavours imaginable” and hopes to see more collaboration between developing and more developed nations. Pete hopes that the awards will continue to keep pace with innovation in the field and to attract an increasingly higher calibre of entries. As for Hugh, the involvement of major global organisations would act as a “signal to the world at large to start paying attention”; one way of doing this, he suggested, might be “a new category that addresses redesign of an existing or iconic product”.

However the awards develop in future, they will no doubt continue to highlight inspirational examples across different sectors and disciplines and offer global recognition for best-practice design for all projects. For anyone working towards a more user-centred, user-friendly world, they provide an ideal opportunity to showcase their achievements.