

# Design for All – All Users Included

## 1. What is Design for All?

- ▶ Design for All (DfA) is about ensuring that environments, products, services and interfaces work for people of all ages and abilities.
- ▶ Design for All has recently become a mainstream issue because of ageing of population.

## 2. Why Design for All is important?

- ▶ Easy-to-use, accessible, affordable products and services improve quality of life of all citizens.
- ▶ For many ageing or disabled persons access to built environment, access to services and user-friendly products are not just a quality factor but a necessity.
- ▶ Design for All is economically viable. Including DfA early in the process is more cost-effective than making renovations after solutions are already in the market.
- ▶ DfA provides effective knowledge on user needs.

## 3. What are the major obstacles in implementation of DfA in Europe?

- ▶ Key actors in society – both in public sector and industry – still lack a long term, strategic approach to DfA.
- ▶ More expertise is needed. Design for All studies need to be integrated in education of professionals in design, technology fields, architecture, marketing etc.
- ▶ R&D funding on DfA, especially for multi-disciplinary research and development projects is insufficient.

## 4. Good practice on Design for All?

- ▶ International information technology industry has put a significant effort in improving e-accessibility. Solutions bring internet and web-based services available for an increasing number of users, especially ageing users and users with visual impairments. For more information see e.g. <http://www.microsoft.com/enable/>  
<http://www-306.ibm.com/able/>
- ▶ Public sector solutions on accessible websites enhance democracy. See e.g. the website of the Parliament of Sweden <http://www.riksdagen.se/>.
- ▶ Elevator industry has actively developed accessible solutions. E.g. KONE Corporation and its innovation on the machine-room-less elevator provides a technology base for improved accessibility.
- ▶ In the SME sector, Lappset Group, children's playground developer from Northern Finland has chosen Design for All as a strategic approach. A recent R&D project focused on a future playground concept not only for children but for two other generations as well, parents and grandparents. For more information, see <http://www.lappset.com>

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## 5. Population is ageing rapidly. What are the major challenges for information technologies?

- ▶ A key challenge for all actors involved is to understand the real needs of diverse user groups and the ability to use this knowledge in developing products and services. Ageing users are far from a homogenous group and growingly demanding as consumers.
- ▶ Development of affordable, accessible services for geographically remote areas is another key challenge.

## 6. How does STAKES support Design for All?

- ▶ STAKES has led the Finnish Design for All Network since its establishment in 2002. The network has currently 36 member organisations: research institutions, higher education institutions and NGOs.
- ▶ The Finnish DfA Network belongs to the European Design for All e-Accessibility Network EDeAN. EDeAN has national networks in 24 countries. STAKES hosts the EDeAN Secretariat for 2006.
- ▶ STAKES is responsible for maintaining and developing the <http://dfasuomi.stakes.fi> website, providing information on DfA. The Finnish DfA Network collaborates actively with ministries, municipality sector, industry and NGOs. The work is coordinated by STAKES.

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