

Design Education: Tradition and Modernity

Conference held at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India,
2 – 4 March 2005

Intent Statement for Design Education – Ahmedabad 2005.

We, the delegates from 27 countries met, shared and discussed on Design Education, Tradition and Modernity. The power of this diversity of experience created a common ground to make a statement for Design Education.

We reaffirm that:

- Today, the profession of Design has manifested our capability to shape its natural, built and social environment. It is a valuable and living cultural resource. It has constantly evolved to benefit from advancement of knowledge and technology and in humanizing the opportunities offered by these advancements for the benefit of all.
- Governments across the world would increasingly focus on quality of delivery and quality of life aspects; design can be an important driver for change. The other partners like industry, development organisations and institutions should collaborate for the promotion of design.
- Design is a creativity activity where logic and intuition interact to develop opportunities thereby initiating desirable change and facilitating innovations.
- Design recognizes variety and diversity as valuable stimuli in achieving both individual, collective growth with meaningful sustainable outcomes.
- Design is more than just products, communications, or services and includes the creation of holistic experiences and systemic innovations for the quality of life and environment

Design Education

- Design education must include ways to partner with community, industry, development organizations and government to promote value based design. Design education, should address effective ways to collaborate with the community and the potential users to ensure the positive adoption of the design solutions. Educational institutions must create collaborative networks to exchange ideas and design education initiatives.
- There is a need to augment education of design and related human resources in all countries including different means of collaborations and 'team' based creative methods and delivery systems. Design education must prepare students to be culturally sensitive and respect the local and other contexts – specific lives of people.

- Design education must draw upon multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural sources to facilitate originality and innovation. It should embrace valuable teaching methods like peer learning, self-learning, shared learning, and group learning to foster teamwork developing a student centric approach and creating awareness of markets.
- Design embraces all disciplines in its concern with innovation of forms, configurations, patterns and relationships that shape the man-made environment, responsive to our aspirations.
- Design education should be geared to improve the quality of our lives through a careful consideration of physical, cognitive, social, cultural, emotional and other real needs.
- Design regards research as a process for empowering designers in assuring quality and achieving leadership in both cultural and global contexts. It enables bridging the gap between vision and action, to respect cultural differentiations and take responsibility for its solutions.
- Design education needs a clear formalization of a flexible and updateable design curriculum with emphasis on theory, research, analysis and synthesis ready for 'realization' and 'making'. We recognize the need for balancing of analog and digital approaches to problem solving depending upon the context of design.

The above points and common concerns are in concurrence to the UN declaration of the year 2005 AD to 2015AD as the decade of Education and Sustainability. We resolved to understand the key drivers of the future of design and facilitate their incorporation into a responsible design education framework through these discussions.

In order to facilitate further dialogue on a regular basis on design education, it is proposed to have a biennial international conference on 'Design Education'. This can be hosted in rotation by the institutions of design. For this, it is proposed to have an 'international forum' for Design and Education, the objective of which would be integration and dissemination of design knowledge by creating confluence of academicians, designers, students and other stakeholders. This would have a virtual as well as a physical platform of communication for sharing this knowledge and experience. The virtual platform would be through website interactions and other digital means while the physical interaction should be through a rotational biennial conference which shall be hosted by a concerned member country.