TACKLING THE CORE VALUE OF INCLUSION

INSIGHTS AND EXAMPLES

When talking about being inclusive in the lifestyle industries, we think of products and/or solutions that are accessible and affordable to all, but inclusion is more than just those two topics. For example, inclusivity throughout the whole value chain; how workers are being treated, if there are equal opportunities for women or minorities, etc.

Another thing we heard in the co-design phase is that being disabled is something we all face at a certain moment in our life (e.g., being elderly, pregnant or temporarily disabled). And then there is also the process component of inclusiveness: were end users involved in the first phases of the design process?

This article might give an impression of some more variety of inclusiveness, although only specified for one aspect (the gender data gap): that smart phones are so big because they had to fit in the hand of an average man; that body armour of female police officers does not protect, and many other examples here. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/feb/23/truth-world-built-for-men-car-crashes

If we need to give more details in defining what is inclusive design, let us add/expand the following points:

- Introduce participative actions into the whole design process/cycle, (e.g., collecting ideas and needs from future users via on-site studies, public surveys etc.).
- Combine more than one expertise/discipline in the design team (e.g., for footwear: physiotherapists + designers + experts in biomaterials).
- The object itself promotes and strengthens the possibility for people to be together (e.g., a bench that can fit many people, a virtual platform for swapping vintage clothes, a board game for kids that calls for their parents to play along).
- Ergonomy principles in product design needs to take in consideration more than the standard human body features (and function regardless of gender, age, ability, body stats etc.).
- Introduce the concept of adaptability (if the object doesn’t fit the use of somebody, it can be easily adapted: e.g., adjustable height of a chair or a table, a modular sofa that can be expanded as the family grows, a double layered pair of jeans that can fit multiple weather conditions/temperature).
- Consider a fluid, broad spectrum of users (e.g., a pen that can be used both with the left and the right hand, genderless clothes, extra-tactile objects for people with reduced sight).
- Quality/style and sustainability should not prevent the object to be affordable.

Source: Joint Research Center
New European Bauhaus