

**Guest Editor:**



**Debra Ruh,**

***CEO and Founder of Ruh Global IMPACT***

***Executive Chair and Co-Founder of Billion-Strong Organization***

***Debra Ruh is a renowned international speaker and advocates who specializes in disability inclusion strategy, innovation, technology, and branding. She is an influential market leader, a published author, and a successful entrepreneur.***

***Debra hosts a widely acclaimed program called "Human Potential at Work," which has a broad audience in 92 countries and 113 regions. As the founder and CEO of Ruh Global IMPACT, she takes pride in her work, along with her role as the Co-founder and Executive Chair of Billion Strong.***

***As the creator and executive chair of TecAccess previously, Debra played a vital role in the early stages of the award-winning firm.***

***During the early 2000s, she generated significant revenue and built a team of technologists, with over 90% having disabilities. Despite her achievements, she remained humble and committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.***

***She strongly believes in all individuals' potential, stating that "the true disability is the inability to recognize human potential." With this conviction, she founded Ruh Global IMPACT in 2013 as a social enterprise and think tank to tackle global issues.***

***Debra and Ruh Global IMPACT founded a global nonprofit named Billion Strong ([www.Billion-Strong.org](http://www.Billion-Strong.org)) in 2021. Its mission is to promote disability identity and empowerment worldwide.***

***Debra has authored three books: Inclusion Branding, which is accessible in English, Spanish, and Arabic, and as an audiobook on Audible; Tapping into Hidden Human Capital; and Finding Your Voice Using Social Media. <https://tiny.cc/DebraRuh> or [www.RuhGlobal.com](http://www.RuhGlobal.com).***

***Debra Ruh is a well-known public figure and speaker who was honored to address the United Nations General Assembly at the Conference of State Parties 9th session (COSP9) by the President's office of the UN on May 13, 2016. Recently, she was chosen to assist the United Nations (UN), International Labor Organization (ILO), and Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN). Moreover, in 2018, the U.S. State Department appointed Debra Ruh as a global speaker and ambassador for the United States. She talks about inclusion and disability while traveling to foreign countries. In 2018, she was chosen as a Global Goodwill Ambassador.***

***She is honored to hold the position of board director and officer at the World Institute on Disabilities (WID) since 2018. Additionally, I***

**have served as a board advisor for AI in Women and Ethics from 2020 to 2021. She is also a member of the Forbes Business Council, Forbes Women's Council, and Forbes Employment and Empowerment Council since 2021.**

**It is a great honor for Debra to serve as an ambassador for these incredible organizations: Zero Project, ConnectAID, Business Disability Forum (UK), Valuable 500 (Global), and Purple Light Up (UK).**

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## **Guest Editorial :**

**I am deeply honored to serve as the Guest Editor for the June 2023 edition, Vol-18 No-6 of the Design for All Institute of India Journal. I want to sincerely thank Dr. Sunil Bhatia for entrusting me with this role and express my heartfelt gratitude to all the authors who have contributed to the journal.**

**Our journal's focus for this edition is on the themes of Inclusion, Disability, Diversity, Identity, and Accessibility. We're excited to share a compilation of articles that delve into the unique experiences and viewpoints of individuals with disabilities and the newest advancements and trends in assistive technology and accessibility.**

**In this issue, readers'll discover articles that delve into personal stories of resilience and triumph and offer insightful analyses of the intricate connections between disability and other identities, including race, gender, and sexuality.**

**Discover articles exploring the fascinating realm of assistive technology, highlighting the newest advancements that enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities by enabling them to live more autonomously, communicate more efficiently, and access information and services with greater ease than ever before.**

**Welcome to journal , which celebrates the resilience and diversity of the global disability community. We aim to inspire, inform, and empower you through the articles in this issue. We hope they will ignite conversations and ideas on how to collaborate to promote inclusivity and equality for all individuals with disabilities.**

**Thank you for joining us on this journey, and we hope you enjoy reading this issue of our magazine.**

## **Design for All**

**Design for All (DfA) is an inclusive design philosophy that recognizes the importance of creating products, services, and systems accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. Inclusion, identity, diversity, and accessibility are key components of DfA in relation to disability, ensuring that people with disabilities are valued, respected, and included in all aspects of life.**

**"Design for All" is designed for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality" (EIDD Stockholm Declaration, 2004). The European Commission "encourages manufacturers and service providers to produce new technologies for everyone: technologies suitable for older people and people with disabilities, as much as the teenage techno-wizard. Design for All originates in barrier-free accessibility for people with disabilities and the broader notion of universal design.**

**Regarding disability, DfA is particularly important as it ensures that people with disabilities are not excluded from using products, services, or systems due to inaccessible design.**

**Inclusion is a core value of DfA. It recognizes the importance of creating an inclusive society where people with disabilities are valued and included in all aspects of life. The inclusive design ensures everyone can use products, services, and systems easily and with dignity. It also promotes the social inclusion of people with disabilities by removing social participation barriers.**

**Identity is another important aspect of DfA about disability. For many people with disabilities, their identity is closely linked to their disability. Therefore, it is important to design products, services, and**

**systems that are not stigmatizing or exclusionary. By recognizing and respecting the identity of people with disabilities, DfA ensures they are not marginalized or discriminated against.**

**Diversity is also an essential component of DfA. Disability is a diverse experience, and DfA recognizes that there is no "one size fits all" solution for designing for disability. It is important to consider the diverse needs, preferences, and abilities of people with disabilities when designing products, services, and systems.**

**Accessibility is the cornerstone of DfA. Accessibility means designing products, services, and systems that everyone can use, regardless of their abilities. This includes designing products, services, and systems that are easy to use, intuitive and require minimal physical or cognitive effort. Accessibility also means ensuring that information is presented clearly and understandably, using appropriate formats and languages.**

**Disability inclusion and accessibility are fundamental human rights essential for creating a more equitable and just society. To achieve inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities, we need to shift our mindset from viewing disability as a problem or a burden to recognizing it as a natural and valuable aspect of human diversity.**

**This shift in mindset requires a comprehensive and intersectional approach that addresses the multiple barriers and challenges that people with disabilities face in different areas of their lives, including education, employment, healthcare, transportation, and social participation.**

**To achieve this vision, we must invest in accessible infrastructure and technology, promote inclusive design and universal access, and**

**provide comprehensive and culturally sensitive support and services for people with disabilities.**

**At the same time, we need to challenge the social, cultural, and economic structures that perpetuate ableism and discrimination against people with disabilities. This requires raising awareness and promoting a culture of respect, inclusion, and celebration of difference.**

**In final words, India has a large and diverse population, with a significant number of people with disabilities. As a result, Design for All has become an increasingly important concept in India in recent years, with various stakeholders working towards creating an inclusive and accessible society for all individuals, including those with disabilities.**

**Universal Design is becoming increasingly popular in India, with many architects and designers incorporating the principles of Universal Design into their work.**

**Whether you are a person with a disability, a caregiver, a researcher, a policymaker, or simply an interested reader, our magazine has something for you. Join us as we explore the rich and multifaceted world of disability identity and disability rights.**

**As an editor for the "*Design for All Institute of India*" issue, we aim to promote disability inclusion and accessibility through awareness and meaningful dialogue. Our collaboration with experts, advocates, and people with disabilities will offer diverse perspectives and insights to readers, driving positive change towards a more inclusive and accessible world.**

In this "Design for All Institute of India" issue, we present 7 articles from leaders worldwide.

In his article *"The Power of Disability Identity: Uniting and Empowering a Global Movement,"* Dr. LaMondré Pough emphasizes the crucial role of a positive disability identity in driving global change. The article introduces Billion Strong, a movement that aims to unite, elevate, and empower individuals with disabilities worldwide. With over one billion people living with disabilities, it is essential to recognize the importance of cultivating a strong disability identity. The article also highlights the potential consequences of neglecting this issue. It emphasizes the significant achievements a united and empowered global disability community can accomplish, as demonstrated by Billion Strong's initiatives.

In the second research, *Nabil Eid* discusses the importance of being prepared for natural disasters through *Disability-Inclusive Disaster Management - Leveraging ICT Accessibility*. It is crucial to have infrastructure and accessibility tools in place to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not left behind during emergencies. Inclusive disaster preparedness and response can save lives and guarantee that everyone can access vital resources and services. However, the challenges during disasters can be significant and complex, such as the loss of infrastructure and communication channels, which can create communication barriers and hinder people with disabilities from receiving critical information in real time.

In *Richard J. Streitz's "Smart Cities and Smart Communities: A Global Perspective,"* the third paper provides an overview of how



advanced technology transforms urban environments into more efficient, sustainable, and livable. Through the use of information and communication technologies, such as advanced sensors, data analytics, and automation, smart cities can optimize services in real-time, including transportation, energy, water, waste management, public safety, and healthcare. This article also examines the global perspective on smart cities and communities, highlighting how cities and countries adopt smart city initiatives to improve urban infrastructure and services. Finally, the paper explores the key challenges and opportunities of implementing smart city initiatives.

In the fourth article, *Puneet Singh Singhal* shares his *Vision for Promoting Disability Inclusion and Accessibility on a Global Scale*. He draws on his personal experiences with poverty, domestic violence, and non-visible disabilities to underscore the importance of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) worldwide. The article highlights the need to eliminate stigma and misconceptions surrounding non-visible disabilities, foster truly inclusive environments, and recognize intersectionality. Singhal stresses the importance of collective responsibility among nations, sectors, and individuals in working towards a future that is diverse, inclusive, equitable, and free from discrimination.

*Jasmin Ambiong's* article titled *"The Significance of Inclusive and Accessible Banking for the Financial Freedom of Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals"* highlights the shared objective of individuals with disabilities to attain financial independence. They aim to have the resources to sustain their necessities, travel, live independently, and have financial security for possible healthcare expenses in the future.

To attain financial independence, individuals should be able to manage their finances freely. It is crucial that persons with disabilities are provided with access to various financial institutions, particularly banks, and feel accepted within these establishments. A crucial aspect of attaining financial independence is having a reliable bank. Banks need to recognize that individuals with vision impairments can manage their finances, particularly with assistive technology that grants them access to banking applications.

*David Pérez Rueda* in his article examines *the critical role of international cooperation in supporting Latin America's efforts to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. It underscores the importance of a holistic approach in addressing the region's various challenges, including economic and social inequality, insufficient infrastructure, climate change, and political instability. The article advocates for continuous commitment, innovation, and adaptation in pursuing these goals and emphasizes inclusion's crucial role, particularly for people with disabilities. It concludes that despite its challenges, Latin America has the potential to make a significant contribution to global sustainable development while also benefiting from international collaboration.

In his article *"Project Discovery, Share Solutions, and Create Impact"* *Sayomdeb Mukherjee* defined the term "Solution" as finding an alternative approach to overcome a challenge by circumventing the problem, allowing individuals to lead a life of dignity and independence. This can take the form of a product, workflow, or unique methodology that empowers people to perform tasks that would typically pose difficulties.

**Most of us rely on simple yet creative solutions in our daily routines, often unaware of their significance. People with disabilities, along with their caregivers or family members, are no exception. Unfortunately, these solutions often go unrecognized and unrecorded.**

## **Conclusion**

**I am honored to have been given the opportunity to guest edit the latest issue of the "*Design for All Institute of India*" Journal.**

**I am deeply grateful to the talented authors who have contributed their exceptional articles, which have shed light on the essential issues of identity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility. Their insights have enriched the discourse on the disability community, and I appreciate their valuable contributions.**

**I would also like to recognize and commend Dr. Sunil for his invitation to edit this issue of the journal. Dr. Sunil's steadfast dedication to promoting inclusive design has been instrumental in shaping the journal's focus on these critical issues.**

**Thanks to his visionary leadership, we have been able to create a platform that empowers voices that are often marginalized in mainstream discourse.**

**I extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone involved!**

**Debra Ruh**