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In 2016, Canada welcomed 296,340 new permanent residents from over 190 countries. Specifically, the Canadian Government resettled more than 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 4, 2015 and February 29, 2016. The commitment from Canada continued into 2017 with a total of 40,000 refugees arriving in Canada as of January 29, 2017.\(^1\)

The United States of America granted permanent lawful residence to more than one million people in 2015.\(^2\) According to the Pew Research Center, “Americans are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past, and the U.S. is projected to be even more diverse in the coming decades. By 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority.”

With growth in people and increasingly diverse populations, the design communities of the North American nations must create robust economic, social, and political infrastructure that is built for success among all demographics. The Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) and American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) held the Impact Summit 2017: Migration, Culture, and Diversity in the Built Environment to emphasize the role of interior designers and explain how they can work with other professionals to build successful communities.

The Impact Summit 2017 was held May 8-9, 2017, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Presented here are the outcomes of the event and the action steps that will guide the design community, governments at all levels, other design sectors, and non-profit organizations in designing for diversity.

**FOOTNOTE**


IMPACT SUMMIT 2017

The Impact Summit 2017 began with a guided walking tour of Toronto’s acclaimed Regent Park, a diverse and thriving regenerated community. This was followed by keynote addresses by The Honourable Ratna Omidvar, C.M., O.Ont., Senator for Ontario, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Global Diversity Exchange (GDX) at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University and Richard van der Laken, Acclaimed Dutch designer and entrepreneur, Designpolitie (Design Police), What Design Can Do. The rest of the Summit was dedicated to expert-led panels on migration, diversity, and culture, respectively. Each panel discussion was followed by facilitated conversations among attendees. The discussions focused on key findings from the panels, ways to apply the information, and next steps.
The 2017 Impact Summit: Migration, Culture, and Diversity in the Built Environment was the second Summit and the first in Canada. Jointly hosted by IDC and ASID, the Summit addressed the following issues:

- How do we encourage resilient design in our cities and neighborhoods to support and serve migratory populations?
- How do we create inclusive societies that instill a culture of belonging?
- How do we celebrate the diversity that is rooted in identity?

Impact Summit attendees included senior practitioners, thought leaders, and emerging influencers drawn from the fields of design and architecture, building and facilities management, city planning, mental health professionals, and all levels of government, as well as the business and non-profit sectors.

Much of Impact Summit 2017 centered on the success of Toronto’s Regent Park – a revitalized community rebuilt with economic integration in mind. A cultural and racial mosaic, the 69-acre area community served as the backdrop for many conversations and presentations.

The participants actively contributed to expert discussions and breakout sessions geared towards building and sustaining the cohesive, integrated, and inclusive societies that North America needs, both now and in the future.
Regent Park is a 69-acre community in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, that is in the midst of a three phase, 15-20 year revitalization plan. The subject of a glowing 2016 New York Times article, “In Toronto, a Neighborhood in Despair Transforms Into a Model of Inclusion,” the neighborhood has been an example of how private and public partnerships can rebuild a community by inviting new, diverse residents and visitors. The article explains, “the new Regent Park... provides a blueprint for successful economic and cultural integration.”

The Regent Park community was originally built in 1948 with narrow streets and walkways. The inaccessibility to the rest of the city led to seclusion and isolation of residents from the nearby downtown Toronto-area. Over time, the neighborhood was more known for its socio-economic gaps, crime, and violence then the initial goal of being a tight-knit community. In 2005, the construction process began to completely rebuild the community to be a vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income area of Toronto.

Upon completion of each housing building, every Regent Park resident who had relocated during construction had the right to a new unit. According to Toronto Community Housing, in addition to the new market rate housing the community, the new buildings replaced more than 2,000 Rent-Geared-to-Income housing and created more than 200 new affordable housing units. The streets were widened and the new sidewalks were built. Public transportation to the area increased to make it more accessible to other Toronto residents.

The neighborhood has a high population of immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia and people of all religions and backgrounds. Regent Park’s revitalization extends far beyond housing – it is an inclusive community built to serve the diverse residents. The aquatics center has blinds that protect the privacy...
of women for religious sensitivities, and the gender-neutral locker rooms have private cubicles for changing. Daniels Spectrum, a “cultural hub” arts and cultural center, is open to all and is the headquarters to seven non-profit organizations.

Regent Park businesses also provide employment opportunities to residents. The City of Toronto mandated that the new businesses that have opened in the community employ Regent Park residents. To assist with the massive construction of the new buildings and infrastructure, there are apprenticeships available to residents to provide a career path and work within their own neighborhood.

The first event of the 2017 Impact Summit was a guided walking tour of Regent Park. Attendees walked the thriving neighborhood and visited the aquatics center, community center, parks, and residence hall. The community visit laid the groundwork for the conversations surrounding migration and diversity and the role of professionals in the built environment.

SOURCES


"Citizenship is the basis from which all other rights flow."
- Ratna Omidvar

Keynote speaker, the Honourable Ratna Omidvar, C.M., O.Ont., Senator for Ontario, the Senate of Canada, provided her unique story and how it drives her work in the Canadian Senate. Born in India and married to an Iranian, Senator Omidvar spoke passionately about settling and building a life in Canada. She believes that providing a pathway to citizenship is essential, and says, “Citizenship is the basis from which all other rights flow.”
DIVERSITY VS. INCLUSION

Senator Omidvar opined the differences between diversity and inclusion. Diversity is a demographic reality. The choices of what we as a society do with diversity are what constitute inclusion. While societal demographics create societal diversity, there is still a need for businesses to ensure they have a diverse workforce. The Senator used a quote from Einstein to further her point: “When we all think alike, no one thinks very much.”

Ryerson University, where Senator Omidvar is a Distinguished Visiting Professor, conducted a study focused on diversity and the inclusion of immigrants and visible minorities. The findings showed that in a group of 10 people, if one person is of a different background, that person is considered a token by the other nine; when it is increased to two people, it is considered an interest group; and it isn’t until there are three people of a different background in the group of 10 that they achieved a measure of inclusion.

When closing, the Senator warned to not continue on the path of being in a “virtual silo.” We increasingly tend to connect with people who are similar to us and that is made easier online. Senator Omidvar concluded with a story of sponsoring an immigrant family and stated, “It was the best thing I ever did in my life.” She then challenged the design organizations from the U.S. and Canada (ASID and IDC) to create a large dinner with people from a different place and a different way of life. She encouraged the organizations to design a space that is welcoming for an inclusive event that brings together a large group from diverse backgrounds.
Panelists discussed a myriad of topics related to migration, specifically, the lessons learned from Regent Park and solutions to acclimate migrants and help them build a sense of community. Dr. Ghayda Hassan described her initial uneasiness about being a clinical psychologist who works with refugees at a conference hosted by interior design organizations. It was immediately evident when touring Regent Park and listening to the role of the design community how the work here relates to her profession. When assisting migrants and refugees to become a part of a new land, it is important to consider these needs:

• **Ensure Physical Safety** – Many refugees and migrants come to North America fleeing war or persecution. The safety of a physical space can help with recovery from traumatic experiences.

• **Fighting Against “Uprootness”** – How can migrants get rooted in a community? According to Dr. Hassan, “Rootness means being able to detach from a past and reattach to a new present.” For Regent Park, this includes migrants and those who moved to temporary housing during construction. How can they build, or rebuild, roots in the neighborhood?

• **Ensure Cultural Safety** – People feel they are not in danger just being who they are.

• **Create a Cultural Belonging** – Making a new area a cultural center. The residents begin to make the area their own by engraining their culture in a place to make it a neighborhood.

The adoption of cultural belonging can be long and in many cases take years. There are ways to make a space belong to the new inhabitant, and the panel established a few ways to begin the process of cultural belonging in a new community. An example is providing a space in the neighborhood that people can change. Give them ways to make it their neighborhood. This could be as simple as providing access to a garden. Leaving a mark on a space can empower newcomers and provide a sense of ownership of a larger community.
Richard van der Laken of What Design Can Do and Designpolitie, stressed the importance of fully understanding a person’s background and realizing that their acclimation needs may not be immediately evident. Richard’s design practice is based in the Netherlands where he had recently hired a Greek immigrant. The Greek colleague referenced the United Nations Indexes specifically referencing the Freedom of Press Index. He mentioned that the Netherlands is ranked incredibly high (Ranked #5 in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index). Richard assumed that Greece would be ranked high as well since it is a European nation and a member of the EU. To his shock, Greece was ranked 88 in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index). The Greek immigrant was struggling with the access of information and the disparaging remarks that can be written in the press. It felt wrong or illegal to read the available information. This was an example of a basic right that was not available in a previous land that now requires an adjustment period.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Interior designers are essential to helping immigrants become part of a community.
- Physical and mental safety are necessities for immigrants.
- Providing employment for immigrants within the community provides a sense of pride and connection.
- Public-private partnerships can work, as seen with Regent Park.
- Staying ahead of the needs and demands of the population is essential to preventing a migrant crisis.
- Emotional ownership, or ‘rootness,’ in a community creates a sense of home for all people.

**FOOTNOTE**

To set the framework for a diversity conversation, the panelists challenged others to fight the impulse to disregard perspectives that challenge their own. When listening, do not think of how what the others are saying affects you, but how it affects them.

Diversity in a community is scalable. Regent Park is an example of infusing diverse races, religions, and cultures into the fabric of an area. At every step of development, from the residents to the entertainment, the impact on many different types of people was considered. However, diversity can be drilled down to things such as after-school programs that have a mindful curriculum. The use of imagery and stories that people of all backgrounds can relate to, is key.

Louisa Taylor cautioned people from thinking that diversity is just marginalized people or those who have economic challenges. She stressed that diversity is all around us, every day. It includes co-workers who have varying backgrounds or are underrepresented. It is important to “interrogate our assumptions about what diversity is on regular basis,” Taylor mentioned.
DESIGNING AN INCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

• For rental units, include three and four bedroom units in the design to accommodate families and microunits for those on the other end of the space spectrum.
• Bring diverse cultural references that are reflective of the community into the design.
• Finding a balance between safety and providing a welcoming environment, is paramount.
• Empower residents to “make their mark” on the design. This could be through an art exhibition featuring community contributors, a writable wall, or other ways for residents to be active participants.
• Provide an element of choice for residents.
• Think beyond diversity of cultures and factor in diversity of generations as well.
• Design universally.

POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR REVITALIZED NEIGHBORHOODS BASED ON REGENCY PARK SUCCESSES

• Establish successful public/private partnerships based on best practices.
• Introduce new policies that will encourage families to remain in cities and not force them to the suburbs in search of adequate space.
• Plan for buildings including daycares, health centers, and senior-living facilities near revitalized areas.
• Provide infrastructure to encourage mixed income-levels within communities.
• Incentivize businesses to build within revitalized communities and to hire local labor.
Culture interconnects people. To help us connect with one another it is important to understand the preferences of people. That is why it is so important to meet and understand future and potential inhabitants of a space.

**Cultural Planning** - Habon Ali described cultural planning as an effort that “emerged in the ’60s and ’70s as a way to better integrate the arts. Now, it has broadened and it is the way we respond to communities and community issues. Cultural planning defines how we can address cultural exclusion and community empowerment.”

Culture and its relationship with the built environment has its foundation in understanding backgrounds and how to design spaces that are sensitive to a variety of needs. The user groups of a space do not always know the design elements that are available and how they can fit their specific needs. A two-way conversation about culture with users and designers will help optimize a project.

Integrating more parts of the building industry into the conversation will develop a universal understanding of what is needed to ensure cultural inclusivity on a project. Engaging developers will aid in the understanding of design choices and why they are needed.
**KEY POINT**

Considering cultural sensitivities in a project does not require a new skillset for interior designers. The idea of engaging clients and end-users is part of good design. These are tools that interior designers already have, but should bear in mind the individuals that are part of the program process.

**PROJECT EXAMPLE**

Kia Weatherspoon detailed a project in southern Virginia. The concept began with the history of the culture in the area, which included the story of Pocahontas. The population was primarily Native-American and African-American. The designers looked to tell the story by meeting with community leaders. A few museums in the area had closed so they re-purposed the art that was previously on display and incorporated it into the project’s design. They weaved Native-American and African-American culture into the materials, art, and landscaping. The designers did not try to create a new culture; they used the culture that was already rooted in the community.
The Impact Summit 2017: Migration, Culture, and Diversity in the Built Environment proved to be a tremendous success that concluded with clear next steps for the hosts of the event, the Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) and the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). The conversation among the delegates focused on solving issues related to migration and diversity and illustrated the role of interior designers in creating solutions. The event extended beyond the design profession to connect with city planners, health professionals, non-profit organizers, and many other professionals to elevate the dialogue.

THE IMPACT SUMMIT 2017

- Create a taskforce or committee, individually or jointly, that will establish the measurable actions that the interior design organizations will take in response to migration, diversity, and culture issues to build a culture of belonging.
- Make migration and diversity issues a part of their public policy positions.
- Investigate ways for members of both organizations to get involved in pro bono work that benefits migrants and refugees.
- Promote diversity and inclusion rooted in identity within the membership and leadership of both organizations.
- Remain engaged with non-design partners to find creative solutions for migration, diversity and culture issues including building resilient cities. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, joint conferences, presenting at other organizations’ events, and writing articles for partner organizations’ publications.
IMPACT SUMMIT 2017: MIGRATION, CULTURE, AND DIVERSITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT SPEAKERS

HABON ALI, M.SC.PI,
ASSOCIATE, PMP,
URBAN STRATEGIES INC.

Habon Ali is an urban planner and Certified Project Management Professional with experience in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Her professional background has encompassed multiple disciplines including community development, waterfront planning, and transportation planning and policy. Habon was the project manager and planner on several high profile projects including the award-winning Central Transit Corridor Community Building Strategy in the region of Waterloo. The Strategy identifies key directions for community building, for place making, and for moving people within, to, and from the Central Transit Corridor. Most recently, Habon was involved in the development of a master plan for a downtown cultural hub in the Town of Oakville. Presently she is managing the creation of a Comprehensive Plan, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, and Downtown Economic Development Strategy for the City of Troy, New York that will address current and future community needs and planning issues. Habon also provides planning and development approval services for large-scale and complex development applications in Toronto and Mississauga. As a former DiverseCity Fellow (2009) and member of the Emerging Leaders Network, Habon has worked collaboratively with city leaders to collectively assess and advance proposals that better integrate diverse voices into the city building process. While a Fellow, Habon co-founded Local Democracy Week – an annual event that encourages youth to actively participate in building their schools and communities.

LISA ANDERMANN, M.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
PSYCHIATRIST AT MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL

Lisa Andermann, MPhil, M.D., FRCPC is an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, and a psychiatrist at Mount Sinai Hospital, where she works in the psychological trauma clinic and on the Ethnocultural Assertive Community Treatment Team. Dr. Andermann is a consultant psychiatrist and former board member for the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, and continues to be active on their health committee. She recently co-edited, with Laura Simich, a volume entitled Refuge and Resilience: Promoting Resilience and Mental Health among Resettled Refugees and Forced Migrants, International Perspective on Migration Series, Springer, 2014. Dr. Andermann’s main areas of interest in research and teaching focus on cultural psychiatry.
**KAY BRENDERS**  
*VICE PRESIDENT, NEWCOMER SERVICES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, WOODGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES, TORONTO*

Kay Brenders brings over 25 years of experience leading strategic communications, policy development, and program delivery in the non-profit sector, federal and provincial governments, and the private sector.

Over her career, Kay has been involved in several key initiatives including social housing reform and municipal amalgamation in Ontario. She has also led the strategic management and delivery of $5 billion in programming aimed at business innovation and commercialization, economic development, and infrastructure improvements throughout Ontario.

As vice president of Newcomer Services & Workforce Development, Kay’s focus at WoodGreen is in working to improve the lives of newcomers, helping them integrate and adapt to new lives in Canada, assisting single mothers (and their children) living in unstable conditions, to successfully transition to sustainable employment and independent living; helping children and youth access after-school programs; and supporting job-seekers so that they can find meaningful employment and training. Kay immigrated to Canada with her family as a child and has a unique appreciation for the newcomer experience. She welcomes the opportunity to make a difference and to positively impact others facing life’s challenges.

**DAVID CORDELL, WELL AP, LEED AP**  
*SENIOR ASSOCIATE, PERKINS + WILL*

David Cordell is a technical coordinator, sustainability leader, and senior associate of Perkins+Will’s Washington, D.C. office. His experience includes a variety of corporate, non-profit, healthcare, and hospitality projects for clients of various sizes. With over seven years serving as sustainability leader, he has worked on numerous LEED projects, several of which earned Platinum certification. In addition to his sustainability efforts, David has served as a project designer and technical coordinator for Perkins+Will for more than ten years. His projects have received multiple awards and have been published in Contract magazine, American Builders Quarterly, and Building Design + Construction.

**ANGELA DRASKOVIC**  
*CEO, YONGE STREET MISSION*

Angie Draskovic joined The Yonge Street Mission as president & CEO in June of 2013. After 16 years as an executive in telecommunications, Angie moved into the social profit sector in order to support initiatives that invest in people and work toward the end of poverty. Just prior to joining YSM, Angie founded and led ZOE Alliance Inc, a for profit social enterprise that equipped and empowered village-based businesses in developing nations for sustainable growth. Angie serves on the advisory panel to the City of Toronto for the Poverty Reduction Strategy and currently co-chairs the Executive Directors Network in Regent Park.
VALERIE FLETCHER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN

Valerie Fletcher has been executive director of the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) since 1998. Fletcher writes, lectures, and works internationally and currently oversees projects ranging from the development of a new national website on accessibility and inclusive design in cultural facilities for the National Endowment for the Arts, to a wide range of consultation and design services to public and private entities in the U.S. and globally. She created the IHCD User/Expert Lab that is engaged in the evaluation of places, products, and services. Her research focus is integrated social and environmentally sustainable solutions for multifamily housing, healthcare, culture, workplaces, and the public realm.

Fletcher’s career has been divided between design and public mental health and she is the former deputy commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, where she oversaw the largest participatory planning process ever undertaken in a state mental health system. She was principal of Fletcher Studio Design from 1978-1985.

She is a special advisor on inclusive design to the Open Society Institute and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and councilor for the International Association for Universal Design (IAUD) in Japan. She recently completed an international universal design benchmarking project for the government of Singapore, and is creating a website on accessibility and universal design for the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts, and The Boston Society of Architects awarded her the Women in Design award in 2005. She co-chairs the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts.

DR. GHAYDA HASSAN
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
AT UQAM UNIVERSITIY IN MONTREAL.

Ghayda Hassan is a clinical forensic psychologist, based at the University of Québec at Montréal (UQAM), specializing in child and adolescent mental health and development assessment, as well as adult mental health; family violence; child maltreatment, and spousal partner violence. Her extensive current and past research portfolio encompasses social pediatrics; intercultural research on the prevention of gender violence, and the impact of the international context of war and terrorism on immigrants’ mental health. At UQAM, Dr. Hassan teaches courses in psychopathology: abnormal psychology; psychodynamic psychology, and psychology: culture and ethnicity.

TREVOR KRUSE, ARIDO, IDC
REGISTERED INTERIOR DESIGNER
HUDSON KRUSE DESIGN

Trevor Kruse is the principal and owner of Hudson Kruse, a rapidly growing interior design firm in Toronto, Canada. Hudson Kruse specializes in residential development projects across North America, including such notable projects as the Trump International Hotel and Tower Toronto, the Spire and Radio City for Context Developments, as well as City Centre West in Mississauga, and NY Towers in Toronto for the Daniels Corporation. The firm was featured at Toronto’s Interior Design Show and was presented with a Design Effectiveness Award by Canada’s National Post.
SUSAN SPENCER LEWIN
PRINCIPAL
CS&P ARCHITECTS

With over 20 years of professional practice, Susan Lewin’s project experience and design background is extensive, with a focus on excellence in design and the creation of sustainable, accessible buildings and communities. As former chair of the Canada Green Building Council GTA, Susan is a dedicated advocate for sustainability issues and believes that environmentally conscious design is a necessary and achievable goal. She currently teaches sustainability at the George Brown College School of Design, and lectures and publishes on sustainable building and community design. Susan’s work typically includes the management of large urban projects with complex approval processes, significant challenges, and LEED Certification.

THE HONOURABLE RATNA OMIDVAR, C.M., O.ONT.
SENATOR FOR ONTARIO, THE SENATE OF CANADA
DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSOR, GLOBAL DIVERSITY EXCHANGE,
TED ROGERS SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Ratna Omidvar is an internationally recognized voice on migration, diversity, and inclusion. She is both founding executive director and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Global Diversity Exchange (GDX), Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University, Toronto.

GDX is a think-and-do tank focused on diversity, migration and inclusion that connects local experience and ideas with global networks, and is dedicated to building a community of international leaders who see prosperity in migration. Ratna arrived in Canada from Iran in 1981, and her personal experience of displacement, integration and citizen engagement have formed the foundation of her work, in recognition of which Prime Minister Trudeau appointed her to the Senate of Canada as an independent Senator representing Ontario. In addition to numerous international honours, Ratna has been appointed to the Order of Ontario and the Order of Canada for her work advocating on behalf of immigrants and reducing inequality in Canada. A prolific author, she is co-chair of the Global Future Council on Migration, hosted by the World Economic Forum; director at the Environics Institute and Samara Canada; is the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council’s Chair Emerita, and was formerly the Chair of Lifeline Syria.

JON PENNDORF, FAIA, LEED AP (BD+C)
SENIOR ASSOCIATE
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Jon Penndorf is a project manager and sustainability leader in Perkins+Will’s Washington, D.C. office. He is involved in the management and design of a variety of project types, from focused interior renovations to energy management across a full real estate portfolio. Jon is a recipient of the AIA’s Young Architect Award, the 2012 president of the AIA’s D.C. chapter, and the 2014 chair of the AIA’s Young Architects Forum advisory committee. With over 12 years of professional experience, Jon is engaged in many areas of the architecture community including community leadership, writing, and education.
LOUISA TAYLOR  
DIRECTOR, REFUGEE 613

Louisa Taylor represents a broad coalition of grassroots agencies and individuals responding to the global refugee crisis. Refugee 613 provides the platforms and people to connect key experts and decision-makers, mobilize volunteers, share information, and inspire community action. It aims to open Ottawa to as many refugees as possible, unleashing the skills, energy, and compassion of our professional and voluntary sectors to provide a warm welcome and improve integration. When she’s not leading a task force, connecting innovators and doers, or setting up the next learning event, she’s telling stories and helping others tell theirs, whether in print, online, or in person. Louisa thrives on bringing diverse people together to spark connection and social change and is a not-so-secret policy wonk that sees huge creative potential in migration, diversity, health, human rights, and open data.

MICHAEL UNGAR, PH.D.  
RESILIANCE RESEARCH CENTRE, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Michael Ungar is among the best-known writers and researchers on the topic of resilience in the world. His work has changed the way resilience is understood, shifting the focus from individual traits to the interactions between people and their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. As the Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience and Professor of Social Work at Dalhousie University, as well as a family therapist, he has helped to identify the most important factors that influence the resilience of children and adults during periods of transition and stress. He is the author of 14 books, numerous manuals for parents, educators, and employers, as well as more than 135 scientific papers. Dr. Ungar’s immense influence comes from his ability to adapt ideas from his research and clinical practice into best-selling works like Too Safe For Their Own Good: How Risk and Responsibility Help Teens Thrive and I Still Love You: Nine Things Troubled Kids Need from Their Parents. His blog, ‘Nurturing Resilience,’ appears on Psychology Today’s website.

Dr. Ungar is also the founder and director of the Resilience Research Centre where he coordinates over five million dollars in research in more than a dozen countries. Dr. Ungar regularly provides consultation and training to organizations like the World Bank, UNESCO, and the Red Cross. He is the former chair of the Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, executive board member of the American Family Therapy Academy, and a family therapist who works with mental health services for individuals and families at risk. In 2012, Dr. Ungar was the recipient of the Canadian Association of Social Workers National Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contribution to clinical work with families and communities.
RICHARD VAN DER LAKEN
ACCLAIMED DUTCH DESIGNER AND ENTREPRENEUR
DESIGNPOLITIE (DESIGN POLICE), WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

Richard van der Laken is an acclaimed Dutch graphic designer, entrepreneur, initiator, and on a fearless mission as an unlikely globetrotting ambassador for the social impact of design.

His work is well known in graphic design circles. His Amsterdam design agency, Design Politie (Design Police) has shaped the cultural scene in the Netherlands and shot to fame in the ‘90’s on a wave of interest in the Dutch design. Today, he divides his time between designing for clients and running a global project called What Design Can Do. It started as a conference on the impact of design. It rapidly attracted thousands to Amsterdam’s state theatre and to exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum. Earlier this year civic leaders in São Paulo invited What Design Can Do to Brazil. Now Richard is talking to the UN about a design response to the humanitarian crisis. In his career Richard was honored with many awards and nominations for D&AD, DesignMuseum Design Of The Year, ADCN (Art directors Club Netherlands), Dutch Design Awards and more. In 2008 a monograph about Designpolitie’s work came out under the title ‘The ABC Of De Designpolitie’. In 2015 What Design Can Do launched the book ‘31 brilliant Ideas For A Better World’, curated by Richard. Richard is a frequent lecturer at creative conferences and art schools worldwide.

KIA WEATHERSPOON
ALLIED ASID, DESIGNER
DETERMINED BY DESIGN

Kia Weatherspoon is a veteran educator, speaker, and president/CEO of Determined by Design, LLC. She has 12 years of collective interior design experience in hospitality and multi-family design. In 2014, Determined by Design LLC embarked on a non-profit project that led Weatherspoon to shift the company’s mission to elevating and creating interior design standards in affordable and supportive housing. Currently an adjunct professor at Marymount University, Weatherspoon also believes in service-based leadership, demonstrated through her active involvement with the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), where she has served on various councils and the National Board.

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