

Home-away-from-home

Presentation abstract

Universal Design (UD) creates social, physical, and virtual environments that respond – to the greatest extent possible – to the needs of the range of the population, with changing physical and mental abilities throughout their lifecycle. It is an evolution from wheelchair accessible or barrier-free design to a more integral and inclusive approach. The key of Universal Design is the focus on a range of needs, not averages. Average based thinking excludes parts of the population and therefore relies on special design features to fill the gap for elderly and people with various dis-abilities.

Tourist destinations should go beyond ad hoc services and meet the principle of Universal Design. In a modern journey all the stages of the travel chain should be accessible, usable and enjoyable by all. This starts from accurate information about the destinations, transport and mobility to a diverse array of tourist products and activities, and last but not least good design of the accommodation.

This UDLiving Lab is a typical inner city one-family house in the city of Hasselt. It had been renovated and split in two distinct and fully equipped housing units. In a complementary way, both autonomous units demonstrate the principles of accessibility, adaptability and Universal Design. Originally the project is conceived as a demonstration house for private ‘home modification’, an experimental and contemporary synthesis of a UD concept for private housing. The basic idea is that private houses should reflect the dreams and needs of his owner the residents, but simultaneously some universal characteristics should be present. Universal qualities refer to instant basic accessibility (visit ability) and usability, and to design for adaptation to future needs of the users.

After five years of operation (2013-2018) the UDLiving Lab expands the theme of private housing by including the field of ‘home-away-from-home’, in temporary (tourist) accommodation. Tourist or temporary accommodation should reflect the feelings of ‘home’ and offer functional qualities. Since the diversity of potential visitiers grows, and in the future will be even greater than today, entrepreneurs should consider accessibility of tourism and leisure spaces as a basic quality, an opportunity for differentiation and attracting new customers.

A pertinent lack of sufficient adapted and accessible tourists accommodations has motivated the Provincial Government of Limburg (Belgium) to encourage the owners to adopt the principles of Universal Design. Local professionals involved in Tourism (like f.e. owners of hotels, B&B’s, adventurer’s refuges, homestays, bungalows, and youth hostels) will be informed and trained, and in addition will be offered the opportunity to stay overnight in an existing Universal Design Demonstration House, called UDLivingLab.

Using the idea and the principles of Universal Design as a method to offer more accessibility can ‘stretch the fit’ and results in economic value. By this stay overnight entrepreneurs can experience a real –life setting and will be introduced to the why and how of Universal Design as aspect of their bussiness case.

About the UDLiving Lab

The UDLivingLab is a tangible result of an ongoing dialogue and collaboration between end-users, healthcare professionals, designers, users, experts and policy makers. This unique partnership from PXL, UHasselt and Inter triggers the public by demonstrating the added value of accessibility, adaptability, home modification in a realistic house setting and seen from the perspective of Universal Design.

The basic structure of the UDLivingLab integrates research and innovation. The UDLivingLab is the result of combining explicit knowledge from Occupational Therapy (PXL), architecture (UHasselt) and accessibility and UD (Inter) with over thirty companies and mixed with implicit knowledge (tacit) from participating user / experts. Next to the demonstration house, the facility houses a Visitor Center and Exhibition & Research space that offers facilities for training, research, lectures, information and consultation.

Universal Design is a utopian concept, and as such the Universal Design demonstration house intends to show, in a dynamic way, the best of everything, for a wide diversity of people.

Lead speaker : Anouk Tuinstra

Organisation : Universal Design Living Lab (UD Woonlabo)

City (Country) : Hasselt(Belgium)

Biography : Anouk Tuinstra is the project manager of the UD Living Lab, in Hasselt (B). She is a dynamic occupational therapist who has specialized in primary healthcare coordination. She favors interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary work because complex problems or subjects can only be understood by combining perspectives of multiple disciplines. Thinking and acting across traditional boundaries helps in solving complex problems. Anouk Tuinstra sees the UD Living Lab as the tangible result of an ongoing professional dialogue and collaboration between end-users, healthcare professionals, architects and policy makers.

2nd speaker :

Organisation :

City (Country) : ()

Biography :