

UNIVERSAL DESIGN



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IIUM PRESS

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

PHILOSOPHY AND SELECTED APPLICATIONS IN
MALAYSIA

EDITORS

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IIUM PRESS

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Published by:
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Universal design: philosophy and selected applications in Malaysia
Asiah Abdul Rahim

ISBN : 978-967-418-130-7

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by:
IIUM PRINTING SDN.BHD.
No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3
Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves
Batu Caves Centre Point
68100 Batu Caves
Selangor Darul Ehsan

Contents

Figures	vii
Tables	ix
Contributors	x
Preface	xii
Foreword	xiv
1 Universal design philosophy <i>Jim Harrison</i>	1
2 Workplace accessibility to disabled employees in Malaysia <i>Junaidah Hashim, Saodah Wok and Asiah Abdul Rahim (3062/10705)</i>	11
3 The concept of barrier free in health care spaces <i>Norwina Hj. Nawawi (2915/10709)</i>	20
4 Implementation of universal design by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, Malaysia <i>Ch'ng Gaik Bee @ Dalilah Bee Abdullah</i>	30
5 Factors influencing walkable in city centre of Kuala Lumpur <i>Shuhana Binti Shamsuddin and Siti Fatimah Ilani Binti Bilyamin</i>	43
6 Universal design in waterfront development <i>Nurul Syala Abdul Latip and Shuhana Shamsuddin</i>	54
7 Public buildings' compliance to Malaysian standards for accessibility and universal design in Putrajaya, Malaysia <i>Syazwani Abdul Kadir and Mariam Jamaludin</i>	64
8 Designing inclusive educational space for autistic children <i>Farjana Rahaman and Asiah Abdul Rahim (3061/10005)</i>	70
9 Disabled facilities in the higher learning institution of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak <i>(5206/10009)</i> Campus, Kuala Lumpur <i>Mansor Ibrahim and Saliza Samiran</i>	84
10 Provision of facilities for learning disabled students in secondary schools: a case study of SMK Putrajaya Precinct 11 <i>(1) Mansor Ibrahim and Nur Syaza Mohd Zubir (5200/10010)</i>	96
Conclusion	112
Bibliography	116

9 Disabled facilities in the higher learning institution of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak Campus, Kuala Lumpur

Mansor Ibrahim & Saliza Samiran

INTRODUCTION

Disabled community is a part of a particular segment of the society that tends to be neglected in many courses of life. In discussing matters pertaining to education for disabled, the design of built environment acts as a benchmark that verify the functionality of disabled facilities and inclusion of disabled community in their educational surrounding. Providing appropriate form, design and adequate facilities for their daily needs will certainly promote healthier social inclusion. This is important as adaptation of built environment, social environment and spiritual wellbeing are inevitable in supporting the needs of their daily living and nurturing future prospect such as academic achievement, self-potential, social skill and self-confidence.

The disabled can be under category of *impairment, disability and handicap*. As defined by Barnes in Disabled People International of United Kingdom, in Claire Tregaskis's Construction of Disabilities (2004) ⁽¹⁾, *Impairment* can be defined as the physical, mental or sensory impairment that leads to functional limitation. While *Disability* is a physical and social barrier which results in loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on the equal level with others. In other word, limitation of movement does not caused by the physical disadvantages alone but built environment and social barriers as well. *Handicap* on the other hand, was defined by the rules of Universal Design as the loss or limitation to participate within community on equal level of others, emphasizing more on the short-coming the environment and social inclusion. These three definitions are in tandem with Disablement concept drafted by United Nation which consists of: a) Losses or abnormalities of bodily function and structure (impairments); b) Limitation of activities (disabilities); and c) Restriction in participation (handicaps). As a concept which continuously evolves, disability is no longer perceived as the effect of physical or mental impairment but rather the result of deprivation of participation within community due to attitude and environmental barrier.

Universal design on the other hand, is defined as "the design of products and environment to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design" (Preiser and Wolfgang, 2001) ⁽²⁾. In the context of education setting, Universal Design application can assures full access of academic