



PRESS RELEASE

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WDCD Accelerator 2025: Empowering Designers to Redesign a Circular Future

A GLOBAL PROGRAMME SUPPORTING CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Amsterdam, 4 February 2025 – The world is facing a climate emergency, and business as usual won't cut it. We need radical, creative solutions—and we believe designers are uniquely positioned to lead the way. But groundbreaking ideas need more than vision. They need resources, expertise, and a strong network. That's why What Design Can Do (WDCD) is launching the WDCD Accelerator 2025—a global programme dedicated to empowering designers and creative entrepreneurs with the tools, funding, and network to develop their circular and regenerative innovations. Applications are open until 31 March 2025.

A SYSTEM IN CRISIS NEEDS A COMPLETE REDESIGN

The next decade is pivotal. Global temperatures are rising, biodiversity loss is accelerating, and resources are being depleted at an alarming rate. Our current economy—based on wasteful production and overconsumption—is driving environmental breakdown and social inequities.

For years, What Design Can Do has challenged creatives to rethink the status quo—from climate action and clean energy to waste reduction and circular innovation. After six global Challenges, one thing has become clear: redesigning isn't just an option, it's a necessity. The systems around us, built on extraction, pollution, and inequality, don't just need adjustments—they need a complete reset.

That's why we're evolving. We're opening the doors to all possible solutions—beyond categories, industries, or disciplines – in the WDCD Accelerator. Whether you're rethinking materials, reinventing business models, or reshaping narratives, we're here to support those who challenge the norm and dare to disrupt.

WHY DESIGN?

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WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

We believe designers have a unique ability to contribute to a more just and regenerative future. By rethinking materials, waste systems, and production processes, they can help reshape industries and inspire cultural change.

From biodegradable textiles and regenerative urban planning to circular business models and storytelling, design can play a crucial role in the transition to a circular economy—one where waste is minimized, resources are repurposed, and ecosystems are restored.

However, meaningful change doesn't happen in isolation. For design-driven solutions to have real impact, they need support, collaboration, and the right conditions to grow.

If you're a designer or creative entrepreneur with a vision for a circular future, this is your moment.

With the WDCD Accelerator, you'll get the tools, mentorship, and network to scale your impact and turn your vision into reality.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR SELECTED TEAMS?

Winning teams will take part in an intensive accelerator programme designed to help them develop their ideas, grow their impact, and take their projects to the next level.

A Hands-On Sprint in Amsterdam

The programme kicks off with a week-long Sprint in Amsterdam, where participants will collaborate with mentors, industry experts, and fellow changemakers. This hands-on experience will provide:

- Practical coaching on business strategy, impact measurement, and storytelling
- Inspiration and insights from leading designers, investors, and sustainability pioneers
- Behind-the-scenes visits to innovative Dutch design studios and businesses

Expanding Reach & Gaining Global Exposure

After the Sprint Week, teams will continue their journey with a six-week online mentorship programme, connecting with a global network of experts, investors, and creative leaders.

The programme will culminate at WDCD Live in Amsterdam, Mexico City, or Delhi, where teams will present their projects on the main stage to an audience of industry leaders, investors, and changemakers—gaining visibility, connections, and new opportunities to grow.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are open from 4 February – 31 March 2025. Submit your project via accelerator.whatdesigncando.com.

WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

For more details, download the Application Guidebook for insights on criteria, process, and what makes a strong submission.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Since 2017, the WDCD Accelerator (formerly the WDCD Challenges) has supported over 4,000 applicants, 77 winning teams, and countless impactful projects.

If you're ready to push boundaries and redesign everything, apply now.

Let's make it happen. 🚀

FOR THE EDITORS

View our press kit for photos and additional press materials. Our press webpage has more information about past Challenges and What Design Can Do.

For any press inquiries or more information regarding the WDCD Accelerator 2025, please contact WDCD's Head of Communications via daphne@whatdesigncando.com

ABOUT WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

What Design Can Do (WDCD) is an international platform that advocates for design as a tool for social change. Since 2011, WDCD has undertaken numerous activities to promote designers' role in tackling the world's most pressing societal and environmental challenges.

WDCD has hosted 15 successful conferences in Amsterdam, São Paulo, and Mexico City and has engaged the creative community with urgent issues like climate change, circularity, and social equity.

To see previous Challenge winners, visit: www.whatdesigncando.com/projects

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