

PRESS RELEASE

INSTITUTE OF NEURODIVERSITY, NEUROPOWER WORLD, AND SINGAPORE BRINGS NEURODESIGN TO THE FOREFRONT OF SINGAPORE'S URBAN PLANNING

Hazleen Ahmad, Founder of Neuropower World and Chair & Founder of ION Singapore, to launch pilot projects and training programmes embedding neurodesign into workplaces, housing, parks, and transport hubs

Singapore, 13 November 2025 – The Institute of Neurodiversity (ION) Singapore and Neuropower World, dedicated to advancing inclusion and opportunities for neurominorities, hosted their first Neurodesign Roundtable — *Re-thinking Urban Spaces: Designing Cities for Every Mind*. The session brought together leaders from urban planning, business, and the community to explore how cities can better support cognitive diversity and mental well-being.

With 15-20% of the global population being neurodivergent, and brain-related conditions projected to cost the world US\$16 trillion by 2030, designing for cognitive inclusion is not only a moral imperative it is an economic strategy.

The newly launched report – *Re-thinking Urban Spaces: Designing Cities for Every Mind* – builds on global insights into the emerging Brain Economy, where nations increasingly compete over cognitive capital the capacity to learn, innovate, and adapt rather than solely on resources or data.

Hazleen Ahmad, Founder of Neuropower World, Deputy CEO of the Institute of Neurodiversity (ION), and Chair & Founder of ION Singapore, also shared during the World Economic Forum-C4IR Riyadh panel on Brain Economy - *Unlocking Human Potential in the Age of Cognitive Capital*, “Every brain accommodated is a mind activated, and every mind activated is a new frontier of growth. By designing for both neurohealth and neurosensory needs, we unlock human potential and build resilient, creative, humane nations.”

Charlotte Valeur, Founder of the Institute of Neurodiversity (ION), added, “Designing for neuroinclusion is designing for humanity. The Institute of Neurodiversity is proud to see Singapore taking a leading role in embedding neurodesign into how we plan, build, and live. This is not just about accommodating difference, it is about building systems that recognise the full spectrum of human potential.”

Key Insights from the Report include:

1. Designing for neurodivergent needs creates environments that benefit everyone
2. Inclusive design supports well-being across all ages, from children to seniors
3. Choice features, such as dimmable lighting and quiet areas, should become basic standards
4. Urban planning is a public health tool that can reduce stress and cognitive overload
5. Becoming a “Well Nation” would build mental health and inclusion into everyday life
6. Seven Pillars of Neurodesign: *Sensory Load; Arousal Regulation & Choice; Wayfinding & Predictability; Attention & Restoration; Aesthetics & Emotion; Social & Psychological Safety; and Cognitive Load & Comprehension*
7. Cross-sector collaboration is essential for designing resilient, human-centred cities
8. Pilot projects and training programmes will test Singapore’s potential as a global leader in neuroinclusive urban design

As Hazleen Ahmad further shared, “When we observe nature, we gain insight into human-centred design. For example, the Kingfisher inspired Japanese Shinkansen engineers to reshape the train’s nose, reducing noise and improving aerodynamics. Similarly, by studying human cognition and neurodiversity, neurodesign helps us create urban systems that are faster, kinder, and designed for everyone.”

Kay Sargent, Bestselling Author and Senior Principal, Director of Thought Leadership, Interiors – HOK, shared, “A growing percentage of individuals consider themselves neurodivergent, one in five people. Yet our cities and systems are rarely designed with these minds in mind. Neurodesign helps us build environments that support dignity, focus, and inclusion.”

Future-ready cities are designed for the full range of human cognition, and neurodesign turns this vision into reality. *Re-thinking Urban Spaces: Designing Cities for Every Mind* marks an opportunity for Singapore to evolve from a Smart Nation and City in Nature into a Well Nation, where mental health and inclusion are built into urban life through cross-sector collaboration in planning, public health, and education.

Roundtable participants included: **Hazleen Ahmad, Edwin Lim, Jasmine Palardy, Mustapha Kamal Zulkarnain, Eva Tisnikar, Shalaka Samant, Anuj Jain, Jin Chan, and Fred Zikry** (*See Annex for full designations*).

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About the Institute of Neurodiversity, Singapore LLC

In Singapore, ION is a non-profit organisation that connects lived experience with science and policy to shape systems that enable inclusion across workplaces, education, and healthcare. ION Singapore is committed to transforming lives by fostering Awareness, Research, Connections, Collaborations, and Celebrations.

For more information, please visit: www.ioneurodiversity.sg.

About Neuropower Singapore Pte Ltd

We bridge neuroscience to society by turning complex science, systems, and lived neurodivergent experience into practical, human-centred tools. Through neurotechnology, neurodesign, and neuroinclusive strategy, we create scalable, science-backed solutions for a kind world where all minds thrive.

For more information, please visit: www.neuropower.world
and follow Neuropower World on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/neuropowerglobal/.

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Annex

Roundtable Panellists

1. **Hazleen Ahmad**, Deputy CEO of the Institute of Neurodiversity (ION) & Founder & Chair of ION Singapore
2. **Edwin Lim**, Founding Partner of Terragro Sdn Bhd
3. **Jasmine Palardy**, Partner at The Good Future Co and Director of WRDCTY
4. **Mustapha Kamal Zulkarnain**, Owner and Founder of Arkitek Mustapha Kamal
5. **Eva Tisnikar**, Architectural Researcher and Associate Lecturer
6. **Shalaka Samant**, Head of Design at Isprava
7. **Ulrike Agostin**, Business Development Manager for Partner Programs at Cisco
8. **Anuj Jain**, Ecologist, Conservationist and Biomimic
9. **Jin Chan**, Architecture MArch Student at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL
10. **Fred Zikry**, Data Analysis Apprentice at Bloomberg