

# ColorADD

## Colour identification system for the colour-blind

Developed by Miguel Neiva, a Portuguese graphic designer, professor at the University of Minho, the *ColorAdd* project seeks to help mitigate an issue that affects about 10% of the world's male population, in an area where all societies are increasingly involved and concerned - inclusion.

## CONCEPT | PROCESS

### ColorADD, Universal Colour Identification System.

The ColorADD code is a tool that seeks to ensure full integration into society of 10% of the male population - about 350 million individuals - with colour interpretation issues, namely the colour-blind. However, despite this impressive number, there were no socially effective responses aimed at inclusion of this "large minority" of the population, because there is a lack of general knowledge, regarding the issue of colour blindness, and of its constraints, for those who live every day with this limitation. There are several obstacles that go unnoticed to the average citizen, but that make all the difference for minorities. ColorADD does not have the solution to all these obstacles, but aims to solve one: the exact understanding of communication, "where colour is a factor of identification, orientation or choice."

ColorADD has been trying to raise awareness and enhance community sensitivity to the issue of colour blindness. This is a constraint that is not visible to the "eyes of others," and, therefore, is often hidden by the colour blind themselves. Herein lies one of the main pluses of the code, since it integrates, while preserving the privacy of those who need it, at no cost for these. A real tool capable of "Including Without Discriminating."

Developed on the basis of the 3 primary colours, represented by graphic symbols, the ColorADD code is based on a logical association process which enables the colour blind, through the concept of colour addition, to relate symbols and to easily identify the whole colour palette.

Black and White appear to guide colours towards the dark and light shades.

### ColorADD in the School Community

Education is a pillar in this Mission. The code has become an integral part of Education, a unique tool at the service of School Communities, materialized by the protocol signed with the Ministry of Education

and Science of Portugal. It is at school that typically the colour blind population lives the first exclusion constraints, and lack of accessibility. It is also here that the learning process and code ownership has greater potential. Every field of education has been a strong focus of ColorADD, catalysed by the strong momentum of demand for its solutions by school communities.

The ColorADD.Social NGO, a non-profit association, emerged from the desire to give a more integrated response to the growing demand for solutions from the education community.

With a mission to promote the integration of part of the population with challenges in identifying colours in the school community, ColorADD.Social wants to ensure the right to education and access to information in the field, without constraints and in a non-discriminative manner.

The idea is for this to be done by empowering and training educators, highlighting the need for early detection of colour blindness and to find answers to this issue by using the ColorADD code in schools, providing all the necessary support for its implementation.

Alongside the NGO, ColorADD.Social promotes partnerships for conducting free screening of colour blindness, including the Ishihara test, targeted for this community in order to provide early diagnosis of students, teachers or operational assistants, and their subsequent referral for appropriate personal follow-up by professionals.

Thus, we think it is possible to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the evolution of the concept of colour blindness in society, by promoting community awareness towards an issue hitherto unknown to a large majority of the population, as well as getting more updated statistics on the Portuguese colour blind population.

Also within schools, the ColorADD code is also implemented in several School Libraries by referencing the colour in the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), which is seen as an essential factor for organizing and identifying contents / books in libraries.

### **ColorADD partners (explain how companies, agencies, and organizations are the vehicle to reach 350 million people)**

It is through companies, agencies, and organizations that the code is gaining greater visibility and social impact day-by-day. Partners using the ColorADD code engage in social responsibility as a competitive advantage, by promoting an inclusive, non-discriminatory tool.

The sustainable and independent growth of ColorADD is can be achieved only by obtaining revenue from licensing of the Code, in order to ensure systemic replication and dissemination of the concept at a global level.

In order for the code to be accessible to all, the licensing cost is indexed to the size of each company / agency. The aim is to turn the Code into a Universal language, increasing the number of users who benefit from it, at no cost and without having to state their condition.

The ColorADD code is being used in several areas of activity, namely in Hospitals, Public Transports, Schools, Universities, Local Authorities and in Companies in general, where we highlight the Textile and Footwear sector, and companies that manufacture School and Teaching Materials. The code has already received the approval of the academic, scientific, innovation and marketing communities, and the approval of various authorities at national and international levels.

#### **Creation of Social and Economic Added Value**

The ColorADD code is an inclusive system that creates added economic and social value for companies, agencies, organizations, under the following perspective:

The economic benefits for companies / entities are quite clear:

- a) Added value to their products, making them more inclusive and accessible to a significant section of the population.
- b) An image associated with social responsibility and innovation.

The advantages for customers of companies / agencies (Colour-blind) are the following:

- a) Access to products adapted to their specific needs
- b) This access is inclusive because it does not require the identification of the colour-blind.
- c) The ColorADD project has an important role to raise awareness among society to the issue of colour-blindness, namely to the high number of existing colour blind (which usually are not identified), and that through the implementation of the Code, for example, in textile labels, minimizes constraints of those with Colour identification issues at the time of purchasing garments.

#### **Dissemination of the Code at Global level.**

After being tested in Portugal (in companies and agencies, and once its effectiveness and crosscutting nature is guaranteed through various implementation experiences in various sectors), the goal now is to replicate these models around the world, ensuring that it will bring Colour To All. In certain sectors, such

as the textile sector, everything is prepared for taking that step - 90% of the colour blind need help buying clothing, and more than 60% need help in choosing. It is worth highlighting that in less than five years of activity, ColorADD has already achieved high national and international recognition, reflected in over 200 implementations in different areas and sectors. About 23 million garment labels have already been referenced, more than 200,000 colour pencil boxes, serving over 2.5 million tourists that visited the city of Porto in 2013, or 210,000 passengers / day using the Porto LRT Metro, among other indicators with a strong social impact.

In terms of internationalization, the recent recognition by the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs, ASHOKA is becoming a strong "engine" to booster dissemination, promotion and systemic use of the code, transversely worldwide.

Currently, ColorADD has developed partnerships with various companies and organizations in Spain, the Netherlands, UK, Japan, Brazil and Canada, and we're even in talks with renowned multinationals. It should be highlighted that all these partnerships have been developed and are being developed based on the contact by these entities, so the dissemination of the Code has surpassed our best expectations!

It should be noted that it is through our partners' products, present in various countries, that the code has gained greater clout, ensuring visibility and recognition for companies in various countries where it is present, because of its usefulness for a large minority of the population, and for the creation of social and economic added value for companies.

*Miguel Neiva*

[www.coloradd.net](http://www.coloradd.net)