

Black Lives Matter

West 8's response

West 8 strongly stands by the Black Lives Matter movement and we believe, unequivocally, that there is zero room for any form of racism or discrimination, in our offices, our field and the rest of the world. The recent protests have opened the door to serious conversations, not only in North America but also in the Netherlands. It is not enough to be complacent; going forward we must be actively anti-racist and call out systematic injustices within our communities to create positive change.

As landscape architects and urban designers, we help shape the public domain. We know that the spaces we design can create a groundswell of change and affect a broad cross section of society. Since the founding of our firm in 1987, each of our designs has been based on the core values of inclusivity, accessibility and freedom of expression. Our work process strives to represent and include the identities of the communities that we are building for.

This would not be possible without our culturally diverse team. West 8 is a collective of designers that includes people from over 18 different nationalities and of different cultural backgrounds. We truly embrace this diversity and believe it is essential to do our work right: to create spaces that support human expression and -inclusion.

We realize that as a global leader in our practice area, we are in a privileged position and are not divorced from our responsibility to drive change at all levels.

We are aware that we can all do better and are committed to taking quantifiable actions to make it happen. We have taken the past weeks to reflect and propose a thoughtful response that includes a list of actionable efforts to accelerate change.

This list is in no way exhaustive of our commitments to encourage change, but should be seen as our first step. Internally, we have started a larger discussion and we will work with our existing diverse group of employees to investigate, address and remove the barriers that directly affect Black, Indigenous and People of Color within our field.

Action 1

Mentorship prioritization for Black, Indigenous and People of Color considering a career in design

West 8 has a responsibility to encourage and promote the talented minority voices in the field of Landscape Architecture and Urban Design. Going forward, our leadership team will actively offer opportunities for one-on-one sessions, network building, portfolio guidance, and application consult. Both our offices aim to deliver a minimum of two mentorship tracks per year / five mentorship actions per year.

Action 2

Increased opportunity internships for Black, Indigenous and People of Color

For the past 35 years, West 8 has offered paid, 6 month, internship positions for both the Rotterdam and New York offices. Effective immediately, we will actively invite Black, Indigenous and People of Color to apply for a landscape architecture or urban design internship.

We continue to offer all talented interns and employees opportunities to grow within the firm.

Action 3

Commitment to improve design by offering local employment within projects

We believe that meaningful community engagement is at the heart of good design for the public realm. Through our project work we will employ Black, Indigenous and People of Color to join our project team. We will actively engage local universities and colleges for exchange and reflection. This role will be a vital, visible, and engaged team member working within the design process, engaging the local community, advising on community

feedback and design direction.