**Interview with Young Professionals Application Day winner Luis Fernando Barrios**

The Weatherman Kids Umbrella is an umbrella that prioritises child-friendliness – from its function and workmanship to its size and weight. It impresses with its robust construction and safety features.

In this interview, Luis Fernando Barrios, the designer behind the Weatherman Kids Umbrella, explains how designing an umbrella for children is not just a question of functionality, but also of playing with the imagination of young users. He also provides valuable insights into his design philosophy and the challenges he faced in developing a child-friendly everyday object:

**Red Dot: How has designing the Weatherman Kids Umbrella shaped your perspective on designing for specific user groups like children?**  
  
**Luis Fernando Barrios:** Designing the Weatherman Kids Umbrella opened my eyes to the unique needs and preferences of children. It’s more than just making things smaller; it’s about understanding how they interact with the world. Children are playful and curious, so I had to make the umbrella not only functional but also fun and safe to use. It’s a rewarding challenge to think from their perspective and create something that speaks to both their imagination and everyday needs.

**What part of your design do you take the most pride in or what makes it particularly meaningful to you?**  
  
I’m particularly proud of the safety and durability aspects. Knowing that parents trust my design to keep their children safe in unpredictable weather conditions is incredibly meaningful to me. I also take pride in creating a product that kids are excited to use—it’s not just a tool, but something that brightens and complements their day.

**Were there any breakthrough moments that shaped your project?**  
  
One breakthrough moment came when I realised that traditional umbrella designs often overlook how children naturally grip, handle, and even play with objects. This insight led me to develop an ergonomic handle with an increasing angle diameter, allowing the umbrella to adapt as children’s hands grow. I also included rounded tips to prevent potential accidents during play, recognising that, in a child’s imagination, an umbrella can take on many shapes and uses. It’s these small yet thoughtful details that can significantly enhance the overall user experience.

**Did you have any mentors or peers who helped guide your vision or challenge your ideas?**  
  
Absolutely. I’ve been fortunate to have mentors who pushed me to refine my ideas and think critically about my design decisions. Their feedback was invaluable in shaping the final product. My peers also played a big role by challenging my assumptions and offering fresh perspectives that helped me innovate.

**As a young professional, how do you stay current with design trends while ensuring that your work stands out as innovative and unique?**  
  
I make it a point to immerse myself in a wide range of design fields, from everyday products to medical devices. This cross-disciplinary approach helps me stay updated on trends, but I also stay true to my personal design philosophy: simplicity, user-centred design, and sustainability. By staying curious and open-minded, I find ways to blend trends with my own ideas to create something fresh and original.

**What kind of projects or industries excite you for the future?**  
  
I’m particularly drawn to designing physical products, like umbrellas, lamps, furniture and everyday objects, that enhance people’s quality of life. My focus is on creating designs that are not only functional and beautiful but also sustainable, minimising harm to the planet. While smart and technology products are exciting, I find more fulfilment in crafting items that improve daily life in simple, thoughtful ways, blending timeless design with environmental responsibility.

**How has participating in the Red Dot Award: Product Design influenced your career as a young professional?**   
  
Being awarded a Red Dot has been a game-changer. It validated my design approach and opened doors to new opportunities. Being recognised on an international stage has allowed me to connect with other talented designers and brands. It’s also given me the confidence to take on more ambitious projects and push the boundaries of my creativity.

**What advice would you give aspiring designers who want to participate in the Red Dot Design Award or who are early in their design careers?**  
  
My advice is to stay persistent and trust your instincts. Entering a prestigious competition like the Red Dot Design Award can be intimidating, but if you believe in your vision, it’s worth the effort. Also, be open to feedback and embrace the learning process — it’s through challenges and setbacks that you’ll grow as a designer. Most importantly, stay curious and never stop experimenting with new ideas.