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Technical Note / Technical Report

UIA Architectural Education Commission – Delivering the Promise

Ashraf M. Salama^{1*}, Selma Harrington²

¹ School of Architecture and Built Environment, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom

² Architects Council of Europe (ACE), the New European Bauhaus Forum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI), Dublin, Ireland

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* Correspondence: ashraf.salama@northumbria.ac.uk

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Abstract

This report documents the work of the UIA Architectural Education Commission (EDUCOM) during the 2023–2026 Triennale, co-directed by Ashraf M. Salama and Selma Harrington. It records the mandate received from the UIA President and Council and the integrated programme through which it was implemented. This includes five international webinars engaging more than thirty speakers from all five UIA regions; a pilot survey of education systems in seventeen countries; a global survey of 345 schools across 159 countries, the largest evidence base ever assembled for an EDUCOM activity; the third edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education; and the revision of the UNESCO-UIA Charter, approved by the UIA Council in April 2026 for ratification at the Barcelona Congress, July 2026. Guided by three working principles that involve evidence, collegiality across institutions, and regional balance, the Commission's activities were sequenced so that they informed each other. The defining condition emerging from this body of work is a gap between the values the discipline declares and the institutional capacity to operationalise and implement them effectively. The report concludes with the limitations of the Triennale's endeavours, projections for EDUCOM 2026–2029, and a reflection from the co-directors on trust, evidence, and the promise of architectural education.

Keywords: UIA EDUCOM; Architectural education; Triennial report; UNESCO-UIA Charter; Evidence-based policy; Implementation gap; International Union of Architects (UIA)

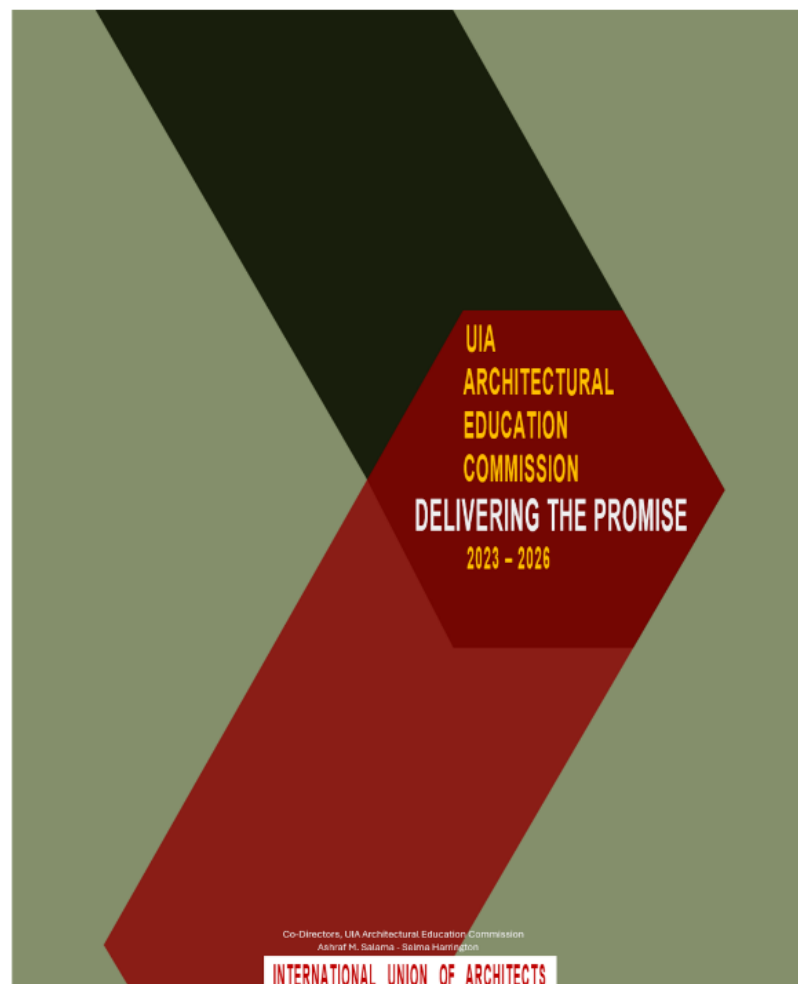
Highlights

- A complete record of EDUCOM 2023–2026: five webinars, two surveys, the third Award edition, and the revised UNESCO-UIA Charter.
- The Triennale produced the first comprehensive global dataset on architectural education, replacing assertion with evidence.
- The defining finding is an implementation gap between the values schools declare and what their curricula actually deliver.

UIA Architectural Education Commission

Delivering The Promise

This report documents the work of the UIA Architectural Education Commission (EDUCOM) during the 2023–2026 Triennale. It records the mandate received from the UIA President and Council, the activities through which that mandate was satisfied, including five international webinars, a pilot survey, the global survey of 345 schools across 159 countries, the third edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education, and the revision of the UNESCO–UIA Charter. The condition of contemporary architectural education which emerges from this body of work include a gap between the values the discipline declares and the institutional capacity to enact them. The report closes with the limitations of the Triennale’s endeavours, directions for the next Commission, and a reflection from the co-directors.



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Ashraf M. Salama (Egypt / United Kingdom) and Selma Harrington (Ireland)
Co-Directors, EDUCOM, UIA Architectural Education Commission [2023-2026]

› 1 ABOUT THE COMMISSION: A TRIENNIUM OF ENGAGED INQUIRY

The UIA Architectural Education Commission (EDUCOM) is one of the six standing commissions of the International Union of Architects (UIA). Its mandate is to advance the quality, relevance, and global reach of architectural education in the public interest, working in collaboration with the UNESCO-UIA Validation Council and aligned international organisations. EDUCOM operates on the UIA Triennial cycle, with co-directors appointed the UIA President, Regina Gonthier. The membership of the Commission are drawn from the five UIA regions.

The 2023–2026 EDUCOM was co-directed by Ashraf M. Salama (Egypt / United Kingdom) and Selma Harrington (Ireland), with Jana Revedin (Germany) as UNESCO Delegate and Adviser. The membership comprised seventeen colleagues drawn from across the five UIA regions: Hugo Franck, Mladen Jadric, Christine Leconte, and Stefano Francesco Musso (Region I); Bálint Bachmann, Cristian Tiberiu Blidariu, and Andrii Markovskiy (Region II); Valter Luis Caldana Junior, Reynaldo Ledgard, and Constance Zurmendi Dibarbouré (Region III); Deborah Barnstone and Xinnan Zhang (Region IV); and Igbayemi Daniel Akeremale, Bassem Ariguib, Kevin Bingham, Vipin Yétundranathsingh Dhunnoo, and Jean-Jacques Kotto (Region V).

The Commission began its term at a moment when architectural education sits under unusual pressure. Climate challenges, accelerating urbanisation, social inequality, and rapid technological change have collectively expanded the remit of the architect well beyond the design of individual buildings. Graduates are now expected to operate as civic leaders, interdisciplinary collaborators, cultural mediators, and ethical stewards of the built environment. Schools, accrediting bodies, and professional organisations are being asked to rethink how this expanded role is taught and how its quality is assured. EDUCOM has positioned its Triennial programme to address this question directly.

Three working principles have shaped the Commission's approach.

- The first is evidence: every recommendation and every revision proposed by EDUCOM is anchored in data gathered systematically from schools and from the international community of educators and professionals. The pilot survey of seventeen countries, the global survey of 345 schools across 159 countries, and the webinar series engaging more than thirty speakers from all five UIA regions together form the largest evidence base ever assembled for an EDUCOM activity.
- The second principle is collegiality across institutions: EDUCOM has engaged systematically with allied disciplinary organisations, including the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE), the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), the Federation of Architects of Africa (FPAA), and other partners, recognising that the questions facing the discipline are common questions and benefit from common deliberation.

- The third principle is regional balance: across surveys, webinars, and the Award jury, the Commission has worked deliberately to ensure that voices from all five UIA regions are heard, with sustained attention to Region V (Africa) where participation in international education forums has historically been lower.

Working under these principles, the Commission has completed its 2023–2026 mandate through an integrated programme: five international webinars across two years; a pilot study of education systems followed by a comprehensive global survey; the third edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education; a revision of the UNESCO-UIA Charter for adoption at the UIA Assembly in Barcelona 2026; and representation at major international forums including EAAE, the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Academy, and the launch of a new National School of Architecture in Mauritania. The sections that follow document each strand of this work and the picture of contemporary architectural education that emerges from it.

› 2 MANDATE AND RESPONSE: HOW EDUCOM MET THE OBJECTIVES

The mandate of the 2023–2026 EDUCOM was set out in the Commission’s roadmap agreed with the UIA President at the outset of the period. The roadmap identified six principal areas of work: reviewing the UNESCO-UIA Charter of Architectural Education for adoption by the General Assembly; conducting a comparative study of architectural education systems and a global survey of schools; discussing the evolution of the profession and the role of the architect; defining an appropriate education to face future challenges; organising the third edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education; and curating EDUCOM sessions at the UIA World Congress in Barcelona. Each of these areas has been progressed to completion or to the point of formal adoption at the Barcelona Congress.

› 2.1 From Objectives to Programme of Work

The Commission translated the roadmap into a coherent programme of work by recognising that the six areas were not independent. The Charter revision required, in advance, reliable evidence on what schools are actually doing and on how the profession is evolving; the Award required clear criteria informed by current thinking on innovation in pedagogy; and the Congress sessions required substantive material to put before the international community. The activities were therefore sequenced and connected so that each fed the others.

The pilot survey of architectural education systems, conducted in 2024 across seventeen countries, established the methodological foundation. The global survey, conducted in spring 2025 across 345 schools in 159 countries, scaled that foundation to a comprehensive evidence base. The webinar series, running across the full period, brought practitioners, educators, and representatives of allied disciplines into dialogue on the key questions emerging from recent challenges and work of the Commission. The Award, in its third edition, documented the schools whose pedagogical practice was already pointing toward the directions that the surveys and webinars were identifying. The Charter revision then consolidated the findings into a renewed normative framework. With relevant and required overlaps, each activity informed the next, and the Congress sessions provide the venue at which the integrated programme is presented and debated.

› 2.2 Discharging Each Element of the Mandate

Charter Review

The Commission undertook a focused revision of the UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education, building on the comprehensive 2023 update rather than redeveloping the full text. A new Preamble frames architecture as a practice of regenerative justice; a new section provides guidance on the use of artificial intelligence in architectural pedagogy and practice; and a formalised update cycle clarifies the triennial and sexennial revision rhythm. The revised Charter was approved by the UIA Council in April 2026 and is scheduled for ratification by the General Assembly at the Barcelona Congress.

Pilot Survey and Global Survey

The comparative pilot study of architectural education systems was completed in August 2024. It was followed by the global survey of 345 schools across 159 countries, conducted between March and June 2025. Both studies have been written up as full reports with executive summaries, and a series of journal articles drawing on the data has been prepared, peer-reviewed, and submitted for publication. Both reports will be available at the Barcelona Congress in print and online.

Webinar Series

Five international webinars were organised between June 2024 and February 2026, engaging more than thirty speakers from all five UIA regions. The series addressed pedagogy, practice, and policy; emerging global trends in architectural education; alignment with allied built-environment disciplines; the connection between research, pedagogy, and practice; and the architect as listener, mediator, collaborator, civic agent, and critical practitioner. The proceedings of the series triangulate the survey evidence and inform the Charter revision.

UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education — Third Edition

The third edition of the Award was launched in October 2025 and concluded with the announcement of results on 17 April 2026. Thirty-two entries from twenty-two countries across all five UIA regions were shortlisted from more than seventy registrations. Five entries were awarded and four commended. The awards ceremony is scheduled for 2 July 2026 at the Barcelona Congress.

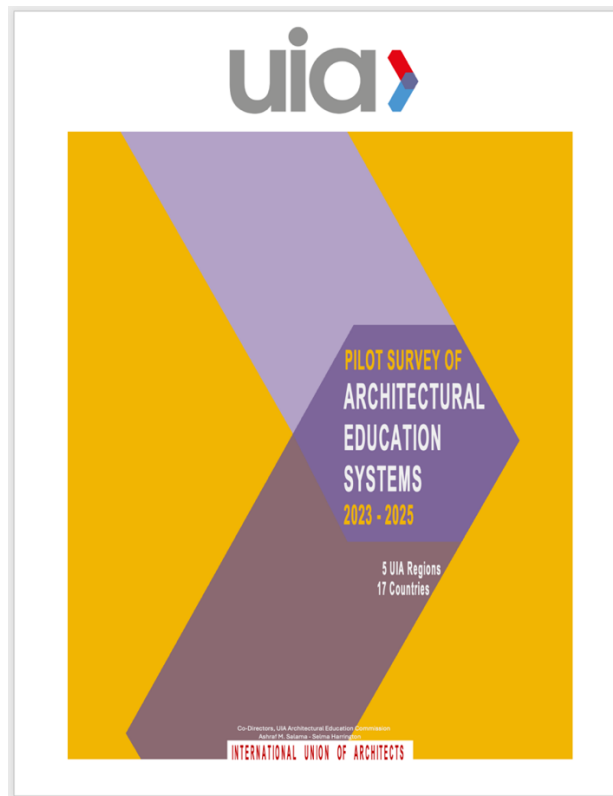
Barcelona Congress Sessions

The Commission has planned three interconnected sessions at the 29th UIA World Congress in Barcelona. The opening session, *Being and Becoming Architects in a Changing World*, brings the co-directors together to report on the full range of Commission activities and is joined by UNESCO Delegate Jana Revedin to reflect on the Charter revision. The second session, *Shaping Built-Environment Future Mindsets*, is a facilitated panel engaging EDUCOM, EAAE, IFLA, ISOCARP, ACE, and FPAA on the future of built-environment education and the evolving role of professionals in relevant disciplines. The third session, *Becoming Professionals — The Changing Role of the Architect in the 21st Century*, is organised jointly with the UIA President and UNESCO and returns to the fundamental questions of what it means to educate an architect today.

Representation and Engagement

Beyond the core programme, the Commission represented the UIA at the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE) Annual Conference on Transhistorical Pedagogies in August 2025, at the First NEB Academy Conference in Barcelona in February 2026, and at the joint UIA–Mauritanian Order of Architects Strategic Reflection Workshop for the launch of Mauritania’s first National School of Architecture in April 2026. Discussions with potential partners, including ACSA (USA), AASA (Australasia), Canberra Accord (Japan), and the EAAE Presidency, have surfaced concrete opportunities for collaboration that will inform the work of the next EDUCOM Triennale.

› 3 PILOT SURVEY OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS



*Pilot Survey of Architectural Education Systems, 2023–2025.
UIA Architectural Education Commission.*

The Pilot Survey of Architectural Education Systems, completed in August 2024, provides a preliminary comparative assessment of architectural education across seventeen countries spanning all five UIA regions. Conducted in collaboration with EDUCOM members and informed by guidance from the UIA President and Board, the pilot served two purposes: to surface a working evidence base on how schools structure programmes, prepare graduates, integrate contemporary challenges, and maintain standards through accreditation; and to establish the methodology and lens through which the subsequent global survey of 345 schools would be conducted.

› 3.1 Scope and Method

The pilot drew on responses from academic leaders, educators, and practising professionals from seventeen countries: Australia, South Africa, Mali, Nigeria, Japan, the Philippines, Italy, Cabo Verde, Ukraine, China, Romania, Hungary, Ireland, Austria, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Brazil. The mix was deliberate, encompassing mature systems with centuries-old educational traditions alongside emerging programmes still establishing their structures.

Respondents included professors, department heads, deans, programme directors, and practising architects with experience levels ranging from early-career to over twenty years in academia or practice. The blend of academic and professional viewpoints was central to the pilot's value, bridging the theory–practice divide that architectural education itself seeks to address.

› 3.2 Disparities in Professional Scale

The pilot revealed dramatic variation in the scale of national architectural professions, reflecting differences in population, urbanisation, and the maturity of registration systems. Japan reports 375,084 first-class architects; Brazil 215,000; Italy 151,000; the Philippines 50,000; China 46,989; Australia 14,000; Hungary 11,420 (with approximately 7,000 actively practising); and at the smaller end, Cabo Verde with 360 and Mali with 200. The variation demonstrates that architectural education does not operate within a uniform global landscape, where the demands placed on a school in a country with hundreds of thousands of registered architects differ fundamentally from those facing schools in countries where the profession is still being institutionalised.

› 3.3 Educational Infrastructure and Structure

School distribution mirrors professional scale. Brazil reports 840 architecture schools, China 303, Japan 180, the Philippines 110, and Italy 35. At the other end, Cabo Verde has one and Mali has two. School establishment dates span from the seventeenth century (Ukraine's first school dates to 1632) to the early twenty-first (Mali's in 2007, Cabo Verde's in 2006).

Despite this diversity, a clear convergence emerged toward a standardised programme structure: most countries follow a Bachelor-plus-Master model, with the three-plus-two formulation increasingly common globally and the four- or five-year integrated professional degree retaining a strong presence in the Americas, Asia, and parts of Africa.

› 3.4 Curricular Focus and Contemporary Challenges

The pilot examined how schools are integrating contemporary challenges into curricula. Sustainability and the SDGs are widely addressed but with significant variation in depth, where some programmes treat them as core organising principles, others as elective specialisations.

- Health and well-being in architectural education emerged as an area of rapid growth but still uneven implementation.
- Community development and social responsibility were reported as priorities, particularly in Europe, Latin America and Africa, where studios are often tied to live community projects.
- Inclusivity, diversity, and indigenous knowledge systems showed the widest variation, where some institutions provided detailed descriptions of curricular integration, others offered minimal information, suggesting both differences in implementation and differences in institutional awareness.

› 3.5 Methodological Lessons for the Global Survey

The pilot delivered three methodological lessons that shaped the design of the subsequent global survey.

- First, country-level reporting masks substantial within-country variation; the global survey would therefore operate at the school level, with 345 institutions sampled to capture diversity within national systems.
- Second, self-reported responses on contemporary themes — decolonisation, inclusivity, health — are often less developed than responses on traditional structural questions; the global survey would therefore complement self-reporting with documentary analysis of published curricula, faculty profiles, and institutional reports.
- Third, the comparative value of the pilot lay precisely in its reach beyond the usual European and North American frame; the global survey would extend this commitment, achieving substantive coverage of all five UIA regions and active participation from countries in Region V (Africa) where international participation has historically been limited.

› 4 GLOBAL SURVEY OF SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE: TRENDS AND PATTERNS



*Global Survey of Schools of Architecture — Trends & Patterns, 2023–2026.
UIA Architectural Education Commission.*

The Global Survey of Schools of Architecture constitutes the most comprehensive global assessment of architectural education undertaken to date. Commissioned by EDUCOM in 2025 and conducted between March and June of that year, it analyses 345 accredited architecture programmes across 159 countries and all five UIA regions. Drawing on a nine-dimensional analytical framework and ten cross-cutting thematic lenses, the survey maps how schools are responding to the converging priorities of climate change, technological transformation, social equity, and the evolving role of the architect in the 21st Century.

› 4.1 Framework and Methodology

The school selection within the survey procedures followed a two-step process designed to balance global representation with academic credibility. A first pool of 270 schools was drawn from QS and Times Higher Education rankings, with proportional representation across tiers and country quotas to prevent over-representation of any single national system. A further 75

schools were added from open databases of accredited schools to ensure inclusion of under-represented regions, producing a final dataset of 345 schools across 159 countries.

Two analytical layers were applied to this dataset. The first is a nine-dimensional framework that structures the data around programme and curriculum structure; accreditation and quality assurance; faculty information; student profile and outcomes; facilities and resources; pedagogical approaches and assessment; industry and community engagement; sustainability and social responsibility; and internationalisation. The second is a thematic analysis around ten cross-cutting lenses drawn from the earlier EDUCOM webinars: health and well-being, transdisciplinary curriculum, decolonised pedagogy, integration of the SDGs, AI-driven transformation, integration of allied disciplines, practice-informed pedagogy, emerging pedagogies, policy literacy, and the evolving role of the architect. Collectively, the two layers allow for a multi-scalar reading that connects institutional design to global patterns.

› 4.2 Headline Findings: Convergence and Divergence

Across the nine dimensions, the data reveals striking patterns of global convergence alongside persistent regional disparities. Convergence is strongest in admissions, programme structure, and the embedding of sustainability into curricula. Academic transcripts are universally required and standardised tests feature in 79% of admissions. Four- to five-year professional pathways dominate globally at 62% of programmes. Sustainability now appears in over 90% of curricula in some form, and integration of allied disciplines is nearly universal at 99%. These figures indicate that the basic structure of the discipline of architecture, what it teaches, how long it teaches it, and what it claims to value, has reached a level of international agreement that would have been hard to imagine even a generation ago.

Divergence, however, is equally striking in three areas. Accreditation and quality assurance reveal that while 92% of schools hold national accreditation, only 31% publish their quality-assurance metrics in transparent form. Facilities and infrastructure reveal a marked gap between European schools (78–87% showing research libraries and specialised centres) and schools in the Americas and Asia–Pacific (fewer than 50%), with African programmes matching peers in maker spaces but lagging in scholarly infrastructure. The thematic lenses reveal that the rhetoric of decolonisation, health-centred design, and emerging pedagogies is not yet matched by curricular implementation, where, for example, decolonised pedagogies and emerging pedagogies each appear in only 29% of programmes, and health-focused design in just 22%.

› 4.3 Four Systemic Challenges

Synthesising across the dimensions and themes, the survey identifies four systemic challenges that cut across regions and institution types.

- The first is the gap between stated ambitions and measurable accountability: schools declare commitments to sustainability, inclusion, and the SDGs at high rates, but only a minority publish the metrics by which those commitments could be assessed.

- The second is the inequality embedded in unequal access to digital infrastructure: digital and hybrid studios remain under-utilised at 11% globally, and the gap between schools with advanced fabrication and computational facilities and those with basic CAD labs is widening rather than closing.
- The third is the persistent marginalisation of decolonised pedagogy and health-centred design: both are widely discussed but unevenly embedded, and where they appear they are often elective rather than core.
- The fourth is the distance between what the profession declares its graduates must become civic leaders, interdisciplinary collaborators, ethical practitioners, and what curricula systematically cultivate, where the studio model and individual authorship remain dominant.

› 4.4 Regional Patterns

The regional analysis reveals distinct strengths. Western Europe leads in research infrastructure and structured industry partnerships, with 85% of schools reporting formal industry links and 61% offering substantial internships. Central and Eastern Europe shows strong technical expertise and alignment with European frameworks, although transparency in quality reporting is weaker than in Region I. The Americas present a bifurcated pattern: North America leads in computational and digital fabrication capacity, while Latin America emphasises civic engagement and contextual pedagogy. Asia and Oceania lead in international student mobility and in the rapid expansion of AI and digital design, with international enrolment ranging from 20% to 45%. Africa demonstrates strong commitment to regionally relevant design and to community engagement, with flagship institutions investing in advanced labs even where scholarly infrastructure remains constrained.

› 4.5 Implications for Policy and Pedagogy

The survey's implications are clear and direct.

- *For accreditation:* the field should move toward shared dashboards and standardised practices that make quality-assurance metrics comparable across systems.
- *For curriculum:* the gap between stated commitments and measurable teaching practice requires that programmes be designed with clear evaluative criteria from the outset, not retrofitted with metrics after the fact.
- *For pedagogy:* the under-utilisation of digital and hybrid models, and the marginalisation of decolonised and health-centred approaches, indicate that innovation in delivery and content must be supported by faculty development and institutional infrastructure, not left to individual studios to address these critical factors.
- *For internationalisation:* multicultural curricula appear in only 25% of schools, often as electives, and EDUCOM proposes that they be embedded in core curricula across all regions.

› 5 WEBINAR SERIES: GLOBAL VISIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION



Webinar Series —
Global Visions: Architectural Education and the Role of the Architect in the 21st Century, 2024–2026.

Between June 2024 and February 2026, EDUCOM convened five international webinars under the umbrella Global Visions for Architectural Education and the Role of the Architect in the 21st Century. The series engaged more than thirty speakers from twenty countries across all five UIA regions, drawing together educators, practitioners, and representatives of allied built-environment disciplines. Moderated throughout by the Commission co-directors, the webinars served both as a venue for substantive debate and as a triangulation mechanism for the evidence emerging from the pilot and global surveys.

› 5.1 The Five Webinars

- The first webinar, on 27 June 2024, addressed Architectural Education and the Role of the Architect in the 21st Century: Pedagogy, Practice, Policy. Eleven speakers from the five UIA regions opened the series with regional perspectives on the changing remit of the discipline.

- The second, on 23 January 2025, focused on Emerging Global Trends in Architectural Education, with talks by Jana Revedin, Ashraf Salama, and Selma Harrington on urgent transformations, decolonised pedagogies, and European initiatives.
- The third, on 27 June 2025, addressed Aligning Architectural Education Across Allied Built-Environment Disciplines, bringing representatives of IFLA and ISOCARP alongside specialists in landscape architecture, planning, and architectural pedagogy.
- The fourth, on 27 November 2025, examined Connecting Architectural Research, Pedagogy, and Practice.
- The fifth, on 26 February 2026, closed the series with The Architect as Listener, Mediator, Collaborator, Civic Agent, and Critical Practitioner.

› 5.2 Thematic Threads

Across the five webinars, four thematic threads recurred consistently.

- The first was the inadequacy of the inherited model: speakers from every region agreed that architectural education rooted primarily in formal aesthetics, technical mastery, and individual authorship is insufficient for the complexity and scale of the challenges graduates will face.
- The second was the necessity of transdisciplinary working: the questions facing the built environment can no longer be addressed within the boundaries of any single discipline, and architectural education must equip graduates to work across allied fields as a matter of routine rather than exception.
- The third was the expansion of the architect's role. Beyond designer of buildings, the architect is being called upon to act as listener, mediator, civic agent, and critical practitioner.
- The fourth was the centrality of regional context. The strongest pedagogical models surfaced in the webinars were those that responded directly to the specific environmental, cultural, and political conditions of their region, rather than importing generic frameworks from elsewhere.

› 5.3 Engagement with Allied Disciplines

The third webinar in the series was deliberately structured to position architectural education within the broader ecosystem of built-environment disciplines. Representatives of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) joined EDUCOM colleagues to examine where curricula converge, where they diverge, and where shared pedagogical resources could be developed. The webinar surfaced concrete proposals for joint studios, shared visiting-faculty exchanges, and coordinated approaches to common challenges such as climate resilience, equitable urban regeneration, and the integration of indigenous and vernacular knowledge. These proposals

have informed the structure of the Barcelona Congress panel that brings EDUCOM, EAAE, IFLA, ISOCARP, ACE, and FPAA together for continued dialogue.

› 5.4 The Architect as Listener, Mediator, Civic Agent

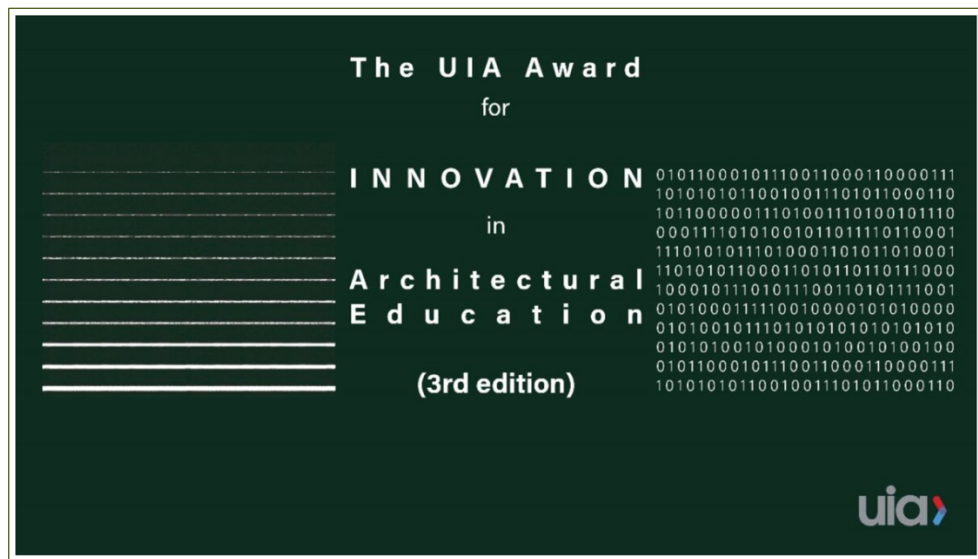
The closing webinar of the series consolidated a framing that had emerged across the preceding four sessions: that the role of the architect in the 21st Century is expanding from a primarily authorial role to one that encompasses listening to communities and clients, mediating between competing interests and demands, collaborating with allied professionals, acting as a civic agent in public deliberation, and maintaining a critical practice that questions assumptions and resists the path of least resistance. Each of these capacities has implications for what is taught in schools, how it is taught, and how it is assessed.

The webinar series places these implications on the table; the global survey provides the evidence on the extent to which schools are already addressing them; and the Charter revision codifies the principles by which they should be addressed going forward.

› 5.5 Outputs from the Series

The webinar series has been written up as a standalone EDUCOM report, entitled *Global Visions: Architectural Education and the Role of the Architect in the 21st Century*, which documents the contributions of all speakers, synthesises the thematic threads, and identifies the substantive directions for change that the series has surfaced. The report will be available at the Barcelona Congress and is published online on the UIA EDUCOM web page. Its findings have directly informed the new Preamble of the 2026 Charter revision and the framing of the Commission's Barcelona sessions.

› 6 UIA AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION: THIRD EDITION (2026)



The third edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education was organised by EDUCOM during the 2023–2026 Triennale. Building on the foundations laid by the inaugural edition (2020/2021) and the second edition (2022/2023), the third cycle (2025/2026) achieved the largest and most geographically distributed cohort to date. The Award's contribution to the Commission's mandate is important. It also identifies and documents the schools whose pedagogical practice is already realising the directions that the surveys, webinars, and Charter revision propose, and it makes their work transferable to others.

› 6.1 A Brief Historical Note: From Inaugural to Third Edition

The Award was conceived by Ashraf M. Salama and established in 2019 under the auspices of EDUCOM to celebrate the multifaceted nature of innovation across the boundaries of cultures and geographies, and to promote inspiring pedagogical practices that contribute to the creation of sustainable environments. The inaugural edition (2020/2021) drew 16 entries from nine countries and was assessed by a jury of ten; it presented four awards and three commendations. The second edition (2022/2023) attracted over 35 registrations and 15 shortlisted entries from twelve countries; it presented four awards and one honourable mention. The third edition (2026) marks a step-change in scale: 32 shortlisted entries from 22 countries across all five UIA regions, drawn from more than 70 registrations, with active participation from Region V (Africa) at scale for the first time.

› 6.2 Jury and Evaluative Framework

The third-edition jury was chaired by Jana Revedin (Germany), UIA EDUCOM Adviser and UNESCO Delegate, and comprised James B. Brown (Sweden), Karine Dupre (United States), Lindy Osborne Burton (Australia), and Jolanda Morkel (South Africa). Andrii Markovskiy

(Ukraine) served as jury alternate. The Award was managed and curated by Ashraf M. Salama, with a technical committee of Selma Harrington (Ireland), Kevin Bingham (South Africa), and Kaname Yanagisawa (Japan). The evaluative framework consolidated the six criteria refined through the previous editions, which include:

- innovative pedagogy,
- impactful inquiry,
- inclusive learning,
- research-driven design education,
- interdisciplinary engagement, and
- contextual responsiveness.

› 6.3 Awarded and Commended Schemes

Five entries were awarded for their excellence in pedagogy and their address of timely and pressing challenges.

The awarded schemes are:

- Technological University Dublin (Ireland) for its nationally significant Building Change curriculum reform.
- University of Lima (Peru) for Inclusive by Design, an international online workshop on Universal Design.
- University of Buenos Aires (Argentina) for (Inter)Urban Actions, a city-scale design laboratory at foundation level.
- South China University of Technology (China) for its Dialogue–Build–Innovate framework grounded in subtropical sustainability
- University of Pretoria (South Africa) for its staged pedagogy for climate justice, spatial justice, and circular material practice.

Four further entries were commended:

- Polytechnic University of Catalonia (Spain)
- Silesian University of Technology (Poland)
- Virginia Tech (USA)
- a cross-regional collaboration between Arizona State University (USA) and An-Najah National University (Palestinian Territories).

› 6.4 What the Third Edition Reveals

The third-edition cohort reveals six interconnected trends in pedagogical innovation:

- systemic curriculum reform across whole degrees and national systems;
- inclusive pedagogy with the direct participation of users with impairments;
- operational urbanism in foundational courses with measurable city-scale outcomes;

- technically rigorous sustainability anchored in physical making and measurable performance;
- justice-oriented pedagogy integrating climate, spatial, and material concerns;
- collaborative online international learning sustained through conditions of geopolitical adversity.

These trends correspond closely to the directions identified by the webinar series and corroborated by the global survey. The awarded programmes constitute, in essence, an evidence base that the directions EDUCOM has articulated are not aspirational but are already being realised in practice, in every UIA region.

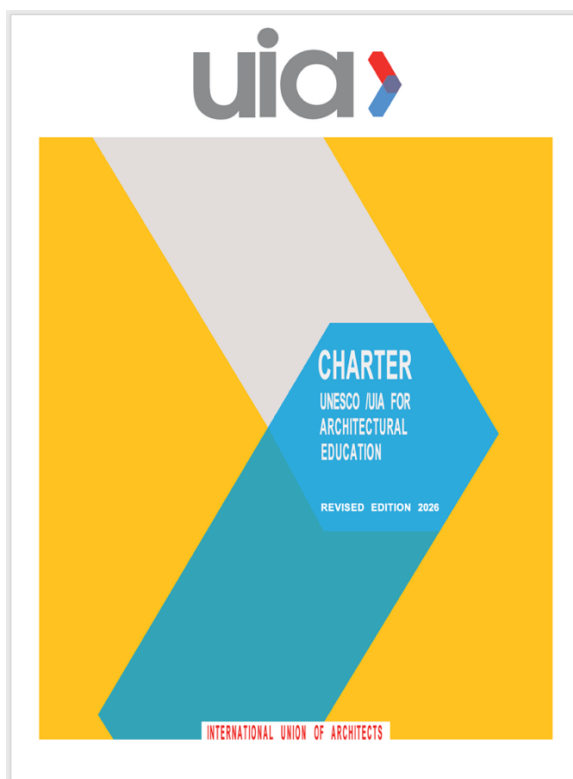
› 6.5 Outputs and Next Steps

A comprehensive synthesis report covering all three editions of the Award has been produced and is available at the Barcelona Congress. The awards ceremony for the third edition will take place during the Congress.

Looking forward, the jury has identified two structural recommendations for the fourth edition:

- The introduction of two distinct submission categories, one for course- or studio-level innovation and one for full-programme or curriculum-level transformation, so that entries are compared against peers of equivalent ambition;
- Expanded guidance on the inclusive-learning criterion, where the third-edition jury observed the greatest unevenness in evidenced practice.

› 7 UNESCO-UIA CHARTER FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION: REVIEW AND UPDATE



UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education, 2026 triennial revision approved by the UIA Council on 21 April 2026.

The UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education is the principal normative framework guiding the education of architects internationally. Originally approved in 1996 and revised on a sexennial cycle (2005, 2011, 2017, 2023), the Charter sets out the aims, objectives, capabilities, and conditions that architectural education should satisfy worldwide. EDUCOM was tasked with reviewing the Charter during the 2023–2026 Triennale. Given the comprehensive sexennial update completed in 2023, the Commission has approached the 2026 revision as a targeted update addressing specific timely issues, rather than a substantial rewriting of the document.

› 7.1 Approach to the 2026 Revision

The 2023 sexennial revision, which followed comprehensive consultation with the UNESCO Delegate, UNESCO-UIA Validation Council for Architectural Education, and EDUCOM members across all five regions, updated the Charter's treatment of the Sustainable Development Goals, regional and cultural variation, equity and inclusion, and the mobility of qualifications.

The Commission's view, informed by consultation with the membership and the UIA Council, was that the substantive structure of the Charter as updated in 2023 should remain intact, and that the 2026 revision should concentrate on three specific additions:

- a new Preamble that frames the contemporary mission of architectural education.
- a new section providing guidance on artificial intelligence in architectural pedagogy and practice.
- a formalised description of the update cycle itself.

This approach also avoids destabilising the validation manual and associated documents, which depend on the Charter's structural continuity.

› 7.2 Three Interlocking Emphases of the Revision

Three interlocking emphases define the 2026 revision.

- The first is regenerative justice as the unifying frame linking ecological and social commitments: the new Preamble reframes architecture as a practice of regenerative justice, recognising that environmental degradation and social marginalisation are expressions of the same structural condition.
- The second is equity, diversity, and inclusion embedded across pedagogy, studio culture, and participatory design: the revision strengthens the Charter's commitment to inclusive learning environments, vernacular and indigenous knowledge systems, and the participation of communities and non-human life in shaping design outcomes.
- The third is a new AI guidance framework positioning artificial intelligence as a complement to, not a substitute for, architectural thinking and authorship.

› 7.3 The New Preamble: Regenerative Justice

The 2026 Preamble represents the most significant single change in the revision. Where the 2023 Preamble framed architectural education around the qualitative development of the built environment and the responsibility of architects to meet the expectations of 21st-Century societies, the 2026 Preamble extends and reframes that responsibility. It opens with the declaration that architecture must become a practice of regenerative justice, recognising that climate breakdown, housing precarity, ecosystem collapse, and cultural erasure are entangled consequences of systems that have treated people and environments as expendable.

The updated Preamble calls for a situated, active pedagogy that cultivates cultural belonging, social empathy, ecological literacy, and political awareness in equal measure, and it positions vulnerable communities as custodians of vital adaptive knowledge whose vernacular practices, combined with the "right tech" of tomorrow's architecture, form the basis of a regenerative discipline.

› 7.4 New Guidance on Artificial Intelligence

The new AI guidance section addresses one of the most consequential developments in architectural pedagogy since the previous revision. It articulates three principles.

- First, AI as complement, not substitute: architectural education must ensure that the use of AI tools, including generative design, computational analysis, large language models, serves to deepen students' capacity for critical judgement, spatial reasoning, and creative synthesis, rather than diminish it; students must remain accountable for the social, environmental, and cultural consequences of their work.
- Second, equity, cultural diversity, and ethical responsibility, where schools should examine the data, assumptions, and biases embedded in AI systems, and prepare students to deploy AI in ways that respect regional contexts and uphold ethical responsibility.
- Third, continuous adaptation of curricula and assessment, where schools should regularly update their pedagogical methods and assessment frameworks to develop AI literacy alongside traditional competencies, with evaluation methods that can distinguish a student's own design reasoning from AI-generated output.

› 7.5 A Formalised Update Cycle

The 2026 revision formalises, for the first time in the Charter itself, the description of the update cycle and process. Minor updates occur every three years (triennial), involving potential revisions to wording and general statements; major updates are undertaken every six years (sexennial), addressing potential changes to objectives and criteria.

The update process is documented step by step: EDUCOM co-directors lead collaborative discussions with the membership; deliberations integrate strategic directions from the UIA Council and input from other commissions; EDUCOM members engage in collaborative review and identify revisions through consensus-building; potential updates are discussed with the UIA President and UNESCO Delegate; co-directors compile refined proposals for UIA Council consideration; and the revised Charter is presented at the UIA Assembly for formal adoption. All updates are recorded chronologically on the back cover of the document, maintaining a transparent revision history.

› 7.6 Adoption and Ratification

The 2026 revision was approved by the UIA Council on 21 April 2026, on the recommendation of EDUCOM and following consultation with the UNESCO Delegate. It is scheduled for ratification by the UIA General Assembly at the 29th UIA World Congress in Barcelona in July 2026. Once ratified, it will guide UIA operations throughout the subsequent triennial cycle and will inform the next sexennial revision in 2029.

› 8 THE DEFINING CONDITION: A GAP BETWEEN DECLARED VALUES AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Drawing the threads of the Commission's work during the period from December 2023 to July 2026, one finding stands out as more consequential than the others. Across the pilot survey, the global survey, the webinar series, the awarded entries of the third Award edition, and the deliberations on the Charter, the same condition recurs. Architectural education today declares a set of values that include sustainability, equity, decolonisation, health, inclusion, transdisciplinarity. These values have overtaken the institutional capacity of schools to enact them. The defining challenge of the next decade will not be to extend the declarations, which are by now nearly universal, but to close the gap between what schools say they value and what their curricula systematically cultivate. This section presents that argument and the evidence on which it rests.

› 8.1 The Defining Condition

Schools of architecture around the world have reached a level of consensus on what their graduates should be able to do, and on what values that education should embody, that would have been hard to imagine a generation ago. Sustainability is now embedded in over 90% of curricula in some form; integration of allied disciplines is nearly universal at 99%; SDG alignment is substantial at 88%; and the rhetoric of decolonisation, equity, inclusion, and the expanded role of the architect appear in mission statements, accreditation documents, and curriculum plans across all five UIA regions.

Behind these figures, however, a different picture emerges. Only 31% of schools publish the quality assurance metrics by which their commitments could be assessed. Decolonised pedagogies and emerging pedagogies appear in only 29% of programmes. Health-focused design appears in just 22%. Multicultural curricula are integrated in only 25%, often as electives rather than core. The expanded role of the architect, such as civic leader, mediator, ethical practitioner, is addressed by 38% of programmes. The studio model and individual authorship remain dominant; digital and hybrid studios remain under-utilised at 11%; and the third Award edition's jury identified inclusive learning as the least consistently evidenced criterion across the entire shortlist.

The gap between these two sets of numbers is the defining condition of contemporary architectural education. It is not a matter of insufficient ambition; schools are declaring the right things. Nor is it primarily a matter of dishonesty; the declarations reflect genuine commitments and substantial pockets of excellent practice. It is a matter of capacity, of the structural conditions that determine whether declared values translate into the daily routines of curricula, studios, and assessment practices.

› 8.2 The Anatomy of the Gap

Four worked examples illustrate how the gap operates in practice. Each is drawn from a theme that the Commission's evidence treats as central; each shows the same pattern of declaration outpacing implementation.

Sustainability

Sustainability appears in over 90% of curricula. Yet formal sustainability certifications are reported by only one-third of schools, and the publication of measurable outcomes, where, for example, building performance data from student projects, environmental footprint accounting in studio briefs, life-cycle costing in assessment criteria, is reported by a small minority. The third Award edition surfaced exemplars that close this part of the gap, where, for example, South China University of Technology requires that sustainability claims in student work be validated by realised physical outcomes and measured performance data; the University of Pretoria embeds material circularity as one of three thematic lines running through every year of its programme. These are visible because they are exceptional. The general case is a curriculum that talks about sustainability without measuring it.

Decolonisation and indigenous knowledge

Decolonisation features prominently in mission statements and in the discourse of pedagogical reform, particularly in the Global South and in institutions in the Global North that have committed to address their colonial inheritance. Yet, the survey shows that decolonised pedagogies are present in only 29% of programmes; the pilot survey found that responses on indigenous knowledge systems showed the widest variation in depth of any theme covered; and the webinar series surfaced a recurrent observation from speakers across regions that decolonisation risks becoming a vocabulary rather than a curricular practice. The mechanism is familiar; a commitment is added to a mission statement; a course or two is added to the electives; the core sequence remains untouched; and the institution can credibly claim the value while the daily experience of students remains substantially as it was.

Health and well-being

Health and well-being in architectural education is one of the most striking expressions of the gap. The webinar series, the Charter Preamble, and the broader professional discourse all treat health as central to the architect's remit. Yet, health-focused design appears in only 22% of curricula. The gap here is particularly significant because the public-interest justification of architecture, the reason the discipline is regulated and accredited at all, rests substantially on the architect's responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. A discipline that declares health central but teaches it in fewer than a quarter of its programmes is operating under a contradiction that the Charter acknowledges but that the curricula have not yet resolved.

Inclusion

Inclusive learning is the criterion on which the third Award jury reported the greatest unevenness. Programmes that did it well, such as the University of Lima's workshop on Universal Design with the direct participation of students with intellectual disabilities; Virginia Tech's Blind Design Workshop with vision-impaired co-designers, are striking because they

are rare. The general case treats inclusion as a statement of intent rather than as a structural feature of the curriculum and the associated teaching practices. The same pattern is demonstrated in the global survey, where inclusivity practices are institutionalised in 38% of schools, with the majority addressing inclusion as policy rather than as embedded pedagogical practice.

› 8.3 Why the Gap Persists

Four structural mechanisms reproduce the gap consistently across regions and institution types, and any serious effort to close it must address them directly.

- The first is the asymmetry between declaring and evidencing. Adding a commitment to a mission statement is administratively low-quality. Documenting that the commitment is being enacted, through measurable learning outcomes, transparent assessment criteria, longitudinal tracking of student capabilities, is expensive in time and in institutional discipline. The route of least resistance favours the declaration over the evidence, and accreditation systems that accept declarations as proxies for practice reinforce the pattern.
- The second is the asymmetry between the additive and the core. Adding a new course, a new elective, a new studio brief is straightforward. Restructuring the core sequence, including the assessment policy, the studio culture, the relationship between studio and seminar, the place of allied disciplines, is institutionally difficult and politically contested. New values therefore accumulate at the periphery while the core is left untouched, and the experience of the typical student remains shaped by a curriculum that has not actually changed.
- The third is the asymmetry of faculty incentives. The capacities that the expanded role of the architect requires community engagement, transdisciplinary collaboration, longitudinal documentation of impact, advocacy and policy work, are rarely rewarded in academic promotion criteria, which still privilege individual authorship, peer-reviewed publication in disciplinary journals, and design competition outcomes. Academics who invest their time and effort in the work that closes the gap therefore do so against, not with, the structural incentives of their institutions.
- The fourth is the asymmetry of resource distribution. The Award's exemplary programmes are concentrated in institutions with the staff time, technical infrastructure, community relationships, and institutional support to undertake sustained pedagogical experimentation. Schools operating with constrained resources and high student-to-faculty ratios, which the global survey shows are a substantial minority of programmes globally, face an unavoidable trade-off between declared ambition and delivered practice, and the gap is wider in such schools.

› 8.4 What Closing the Gap Would Look Like

The exemplary programmes recognised by the third Award edition, and the cases of systemic reform documented in the global survey, indicate what closing the gap requires.

Five conditions appear consistently in the programmes that have moved from declaration to embedded practice.

- The first condition is that declared values are made measurable from the outset. The awarded programmes do not retrofit metrics onto existing curricula; they design curricula with explicit evaluative criteria, such as student learning outcomes, documented impact, community feedback, that allow the institution to know whether the commitment is being delivered.
- The second is that values are embedded in the core sequence rather than appended at the periphery. Where decolonisation, inclusion, health, or sustainability appear as cross-cutting threads woven through every year of a programme, they become structural; where they appear as electives or specialisations, they remain optional.
- The third is that assessment is calibrated to the values being taught. Studios that teach community engagement cannot be assessed solely on the formal qualities of the final design product; programmes that teach inclusive learning cannot be assessed on the basis of a uniform examination practice.
- The fourth is that incentives for academics are aligned with the work the institution declares it values. Promotion criteria, workload models, and resource allocation must recognise the time and intellectual investment that community-engaged, transdisciplinary, evidence-generating pedagogical work requires.
- The fifth is that the conditions are sustained over time. The strongest programmes in the third edition of the Award share long institutional histories of consistent commitment; the gap closes not through single interventions but through sustained structural investment.

› 8.5 Implications for the Discipline

If the gap between declared values and institutional capacity is the defining condition of contemporary architectural education, then three implications follow for the work of the next decade.

For accreditation: the validation of architectural education must move beyond accepting declared values as proxies for embedded practice. Quality assurance metrics, shared dashboards, and standardised templates that make measurable outcomes comparable across systems are no longer optional.

For curriculum reform: schools should be supported in undertaking structural rather than additive reform, with shared methodological resources, peer learning networks, and recognition mechanisms, such as the UIA Award, that document and disseminate the programmes that have already moved from declaration to embedded practice.

For the international community: the gap is not a problem of individual schools or regions but a systemic condition of the discipline, and addressing it requires coordinated action across UIA, UNESCO, accrediting bodies, allied disciplinary organisations, and national chambers. EDUCOM is well positioned to convene that coordination, and the Commission proposes that the closing of this gap be the substantive priority of its next Triennale.

› 9 LIMITATIONS OF ENDEAVOURS

The programme of work completed during 2023–2026 represents the most substantial evidence base ever assembled for an EDUCOM Triennale. It is also, like any institutional programme of this scale, subject to limitations that should be acknowledged in the interest of honest reporting and to inform the work of the next Commission. The limitations described here are not failures of execution; they are constraints inherent to the conditions under which the Commission operated, and to the design choices that those conditions required.

› 9.1 Coverage and Representation

The global survey of 345 schools across 159 countries is the most comprehensive yet attempted, but it is not census coverage of the discipline. Within-country variation is captured for the larger national systems but not for the smaller ones; institutional types beyond the schools selected, including practice-based programmes, apprenticeship pathways, non-university routes to qualification, are under-represented; and the survey relied on what schools publish about themselves, which differs from what they actually do. The pilot study, with seventeen countries, was deliberately limited in scope; it served its methodological purpose but cannot stand as a systematic comparative assessment of national education systems. Future Commission work that wishes to make stronger claims about national systems will need a differently structured study.

› 9.2 Depth Versus Breadth in the Webinar Series

The five webinars engaged more than thirty speakers from twenty countries across all five regions, which is appropriate breadth for an introductory consultation. The format, however, traded depth for reach: each webinar offered a limited time per speaker, the dialogue between speakers was less developed than the individual contributions, and the medium itself constrained the kind of sustained exchange that the substantive questions warrant. The series functioned well as a triangulation instrument for the survey evidence; it would have been less effective as a stand-alone deliberative process.

Future work in this area would benefit from a mix of formats, including in-person working sessions and structured small-group discussions, to complement the webinar reach with the deliberative depth.

› 9.3 The Constraints of the Charter Format

The 2026 Charter revision was undertaken as a triennial update rather than a sexennial reopening, on the recommendation of the Commission and with the consultation of the UIA President and Council. This decision protected the validation manual and associated documents from destabilisation and respected the comprehensive 2023 revision. It also, however, limited the extent to which the survey evidence and the webinar directions could be fully integrated into the Charter's key sections. The new Preamble, the AI guidance, and the formalised update cycle are substantial additions; the structural sections on Objectives, Capabilities, and Conditions remain as established in 2023.

The next sexennial revision, due in 2029, will be the appropriate channel for the more substantial updating that the 2023–2026 evidence supports.

› 9.4 Engagement Beyond the Usual Centres

The third Award edition saw the first sustained participation of Region V (Africa) at scale, and the surveys achieved substantively better African coverage than previous EDUCOM cycles. Even so, the Commission's engagement remained more concentrated in Europe, the Americas, and parts of Asia than the discipline's actual geography warrants.

Outreach to under-represented countries within each region, including Central Asia, parts of South-East Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and much of Francophone and Lusophone Africa, was not as systematic as the Commission would have wished. Closing this gap is a priority for the next Triennale and is addressed in Section 10.

› 9.5 The Translation Question

EDUCOM's working language is English and the UIA's working languages are English and French. The Commission's instruments including the surveys, the webinars, the Award call, the Charter, are produced principally in English, with French and Spanish translations available for the Charter and for selected key communications. The scholarly and practitioner conversations that this report synthesises are also predominantly Anglophone. This reflects the working conditions of an international body operating with limited resources, but it constrains the reach of the work and risks privileging discourses that spread in English over those that do not.

Future Commission work would benefit from systematic multilingual engagement, at least with French, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and Portuguese, even where this requires partnership with regional bodies that can support translation and adaptation.

› 9.6 Resourcing the Ambition

The scale of the 2023–2026 programme including five webinars, two surveys, the Award, the Charter revision, the Congress sessions, the representation work was substantially larger than the resources available to [pursue it]. The Commission was sustained by the voluntary effort of its co-directors and members, by the contributions of the UIA President and the UNESCO Delegate, and by the institutional support of the co-directors' home universities or institutions. This is a fragile model and perhaps not sustainable. A programme of this ambition cannot reliably be reproduced on volunteer effort alone, and the next Commission will need either to scale its ambition to its resources or to identify mechanisms including partnerships, dedicated research funding, supported secondments, which allow ambition and capacity to align.

› 10 LOOKING FORWARD: PROJECTIONS FOR EDUCOM 2026–2029

The work completed during 2023–2026 establishes both a programme to be continued and a set of new directions that the evidence of the Triennale has revealed. This section identifies, without prescription, the trajectories that the next EDUCOM membership may wish to consider as it sets its own roadmap with the UIA Council. The proposals respond both to the evidence presented in Section 8 and to the limitations acknowledged in Section 9.

› 10.1 Continuing the Foundation

Five strands of work begun in 2023–2026 warrant continuation in the next Triennale.

- The global survey of schools should be repeated on a defined cycle so that the discipline has reliable longitudinal data on the trajectory of architectural education; the 2025 dataset establishes a baseline against which future surveys can measure change.
- The webinar series should continue, with thematic focus shifting to address questions surfaced by the 2025 evidence, particularly the implementation gap on decolonisation, health, and inclusion, and the structural conditions of digital inequality.
- The UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education should proceed to its fourth edition, ideally with the structural refinements proposed by the third jury: two submission categories (course/studio versus full programme) and expanded guidance on the inclusive-learning criterion.
- The UNESCO-UIA Charter, having been updated in 2026 on the triennial cycle, will be due for its next sexennial revision in 2029 and the Commission should begin substantive consultation early in the new Triennale.
- Engagement with allied disciplinary organisations should be deepened from episodic collaboration into structured partnership.

› 10.2 A Working Paper Series

The 2023–2026 evidence is sufficiently dense and consequential to merit a sustained publication programme that places it before the international community in transferable form. The Commission therefore proposes the development of an EDUCOM Working Paper Series during the next Triennale (2026–2029), building on the five publications produced for the Barcelona Congress.

The series would translate the surveys, the webinar proceedings, the Award documentation, and the Charter commentary into shorter, thematically focused papers addressing specific audiences, including accrediting bodies, national chambers/sections of architects, ministries of education, school deans/heads, studio leaders. Notably, a working paper format permits faster

turnaround than the full report cycle and allows the Commission to respond to emerging questions in close to real time.

› 10.3 Closing the Implementation Gap

Section 8 has argued that the defining condition of contemporary architectural education is the gap between declared values and institutional capacity to enact them. Closing this gap should be the substantive priority of the next Triennale. Concrete actions include:

- developing shared frameworks for documenting and evidencing inclusive learning, decolonised pedagogy, and health-centred design in ways that go beyond statements of intent.
- working with local accrediting bodies and with UNESCO-UIA Validation Council to incorporate such evidence into validation procedures; producing methodological guides for schools wishing to embed these themes into core curricula rather than electives.
- convening sustained dialogue between accreditors, schools, and chambers on how faculty incentives and assessment regimes can be aligned with declared values.
- continuing to identify, document, and disseminate the exemplary programmes that show what credible implementation looks like in practice.

› 10.4 Sustained Engagement with Region V and Under-Represented Countries

The 2023–2026 Triennale saw the first sustained participation of Region V (Africa) in EDUCOM activities at scale, but as acknowledged in Section 9, the engagement remained uneven across countries within each region. The next Triennale should consolidate the Region V trajectory and extend it to other under-represented contexts. Concrete possibilities include:

- a dedicated regional workshop programme in collaboration with FPAA.
- targeted outreach to under-represented countries in the next global survey.
- a Region V working group within EDUCOM to surface region-specific questions.
- structured engagement with francophone and lusophone networks that have been less visible in the Commission's English-language work.

› 10.5 Architectural Education and Artificial Intelligence

The 2026 Charter guidance on AI establishes principles; the next Triennale will need to translate principles into pedagogical practice. Possibilities include:

- a focused webinar series on AI literacy in architectural education, drawing on schools that are already experimenting with structured AI integration; a methodological guide on distinguishing student authorship from AI-generated output in studio assessment.

- collaboration with allied disciplinary organisations on shared positions, since the questions raised by AI in design education are common across architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and engineering.

› 10.6 Toward Structured Inter-Disciplinary Partnership

The engagement with EAAE, ACSA, IFLA, ISOCARP, ACE, FPAA, and other partners during 2023–2026 has demonstrated the appetite for sustained collaboration across allied organisations. The next Triennale could move this from episodic exchange, such as joint webinars, panel discussions, Congress sessions, to effective partnership models, including memoranda of understanding, joint programmes of work, shared publication outputs, and coordinated approaches to common questions facing built-environment education. EDUCOM is well placed to convene such partnerships given its position within the UIA and its working relationship with UNESCO delegate.

› 11 A REFLECTION FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

The preceding sections have spoken in the voice of the Commission. The closing pages are written, by exception, in our own as Co-Directors of the Commission. Three years is a long enough period to form a view of what the work has been about, and short enough that the view is still recognisably the view of two people and the members of the Commission who lived inside it. What follows is offered in that spirit.

When we took up the co-directorship in 2023, the substantive question we put to ourselves was whether EDUCOM could move from being a forum that registers the discussion of architectural education to being an instrument that shapes it. The distinction matters. A forum is valuable, it convenes, it surfaces, it disseminates. But the questions confronting architectural education in this decade are not questions a forum alone can answer. Climate challenges, social inequality, the unfinished work of decolonisation, the rapid arrival of artificial intelligence, the eroding boundary between disciplines are all conditions that demand the discipline to take positions, not only discuss positions. We have tried to use the instruments available to EDUCOM including the surveys, the webinars, the Award, the Charter, to do precisely that.

The clearest result of the Triennale, in our view, is the evidence base and thanks are to the UIA President who emphasised the need for the surveys. Before 2025 there was no comprehensive global dataset on architectural education. There was considerable opinion, considerable advocacy, and considerable assertion about what schools are and are not doing. There was little systematic evidence. The 345-school global survey, complemented by the pilot of seventeen national systems, changes that. For the first time, claims about the discipline can be measured against data; arguments about the gap between rhetoric and curricular implementation can be specified rather than asserted; regional patterns can be discussed without reaching for stereotypes. We regard this as the Commission's most durable contribution of the Triennale, and one that the next EDUCOM can build on rather than reproduce.

The most consequential single argument we have arrived at is the one set out in Section 8. The discipline is not, on the evidence, suffering from a lack of stated ambition. It is suffering from a gap between what schools say they value and what their curricula and teaching delivery actually teach. We have written it as a finding because the evidence supports it as a finding, but we hold it personally as well. If the next decade of work in architectural education does not address the implementation gap directly, through accreditation reform, through academic staff incentive realignment, through sustained investment in the core rather than the additive, then the declarations will continue to accumulate, the gap will continue to widen, and the discipline will continue to claim values it does not deliver. We hope this report contributes to making that outcome less likely.

We are conscious of what we have not done. The Commission has not engaged as deeply with practice as it might have; the dialogue with national chambers/sections and with the profession at large was less developed than the dialogue with academia and some professional elements. We have not managed to reach the under-represented regions and language communities of the discipline as systematically as we would have wished. We have, by force of circumstance, operated with resources that were thin for the ambition of the programme, and there are

workstreams, including sustained engagement with secondary education on architectural literacy, structured working groups on inclusion and decolonisation, longitudinal research partnerships, which we left for the next Commission to take up. The next co-directors will, we hope, treat these as opportunities rather than as unfinished business.

A personal note about the conditions of the work. Architectural education is, like all education, an act of trust extended across generations. The teachers and students whose work this Commission has documented and recognised, through the surveys, the Award, the webinars, operate within institutional conditions that are rarely commensurate with the ambition of what they are trying to do. They work against student-to-faculty ratios that constrain studio dialogue, with research infrastructure that is unevenly distributed, in disciplinary cultures that do not always reward the work of teaching. They do it anyway. The most consistent impression we take from three years of this work is of the seriousness, the care, and the persistence of the people doing it. The Commission's task is to make their work more visible, more transferable, and more institutionally supported. We hope we have moved that work forward.

Finally, our thanks. To the membership of EDUCOM 2023–2026, drawn from across the five UIA regions, whose voluntary contribution made the programme possible. To Jana Revedin, in her capacity as UNESCO Delegate and Adviser, whose counsel on the Charter and whose chairing of the third Award jury were indispensable. To Regina Gonthier, UIA President, and to the Council, for their support of an ambitious roadmap. To the more than thirty speakers of the webinar series, the 345 schools that were covered in the global survey, and the seventy-plus institutions that registered for the third Award edition. To the colleagues at allied organisations, including EAAE, ACSA, AASA, IFLA, ISOCARP, ACE, FPAA, and the Canberra Accord, who engaged with us in genuine dialogue. And to our home institutions for the institutional space within which this work was carried out.

The promise of architectural education for the 21st Century is not a slogan. It is a substantive commitment that the discipline has made to its students, to the societies they will serve, and to the planet they will inherit. We hope that the work of this Triennale represents a serious attempt to deliver on that promise, and that the work of the next does so with greater reach, greater depth, and greater effect than ours has been able to achieve.



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