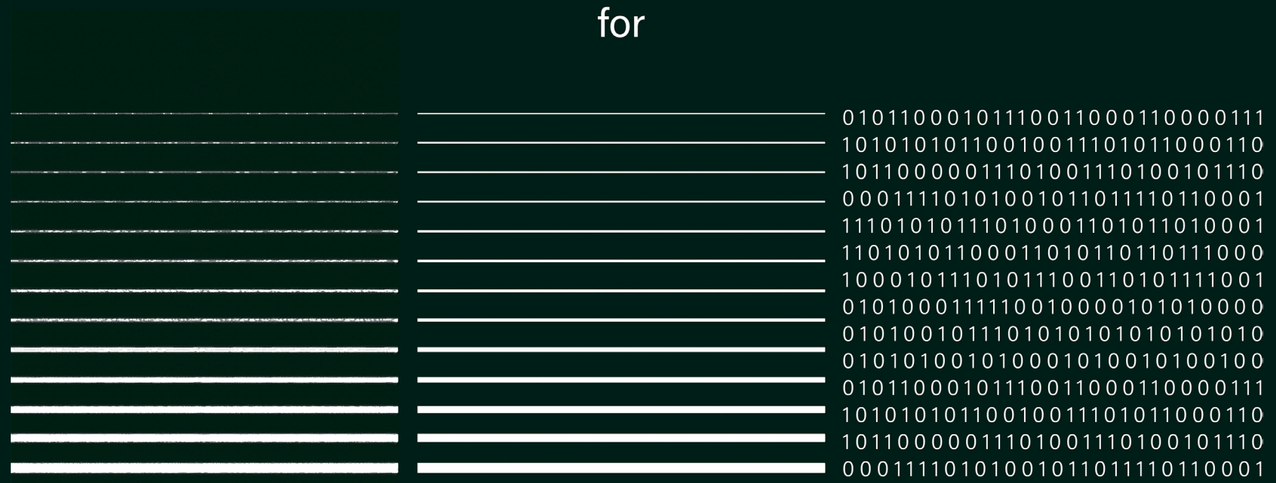
JURY REPORT

The UIA Award

for



INNOVATION

in

Architectural Education

(3rd edition)

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 General Information

Organised on a triennial cycle basis, the Award was founded by Ashraf Salama under the auspices of the UIA Architectural Education Commission in 2019 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 International Union of Architects (UIA) is pleased to announce that 32 entries from 22 countries across the five UIA regions were shortlisted out of over 70 registrations for the Third Edition of the UIA Award for Innovation in Architectural Education (2026), excluding 4 ineligible entries.

Welcoming submissions from colleges, schools, departments, and programmes of architecture around the world, the Award seeks to identify and celebrate outstanding approaches to architectural and urban design education that advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In doing so, it draws on the full breadth of pedagogical practice across the five UIA regions. Guided by the principles of the UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education (updated July 2023), the Award underscores the critical contribution that architecture education makes in responding to pressing societal and environmental challenges, and in revealing the opportunities that such challenges present.

This edition recognises the multitude of factors influencing the development of sustainable environments, which include focus areas ranging from climate action to health; from inclusivity and migration to community development; and from resource efficiency to heritage conservation, post-industrial contexts, and diverse people needs and abilities.

I.2 Evaluation Criteria

Architectural education in the 21st century demands creativity and innovation; research and investigation; collaboration and civic engagement; environmental awareness and technical competence. The Jury assessed entries on the basis of two key criteria:

- Excellence in Pedagogical Practice based on evidence of pedagogical innovation and enhanced learning outcomes.
- Excellence in Addressing Sustainable Development Goals based on evidence of innovation in content and teaching delivery, identifying challenges, and development of solutions.

In demonstrating excellence, entries were expected to consider evidencing and documenting how the pedagogical programme addresses and delivers across the following areas:

1. Innovative Pedagogy: by adopting and implementing pedagogical approaches that respond to current global debates in areas that may include health, heritage, digital tools, collaboration, transdisciplinarity, specific user groups, community and civic engagement, or a combination of one or more such areas.
2. Impactful Inquiry: by demonstrating students' inquisitiveness in ways that inspire a commitment to addressing social and environmental challenges.
3. Inclusive Learning: by discerning and effectively enhancing the diversity of student learning needs, thus offering multiple learning opportunities.
4. Research-Driven Design Education: by integrating findings from architectural research, scholarship, and professional practice in ways that add value to the learning environment.
5. Interdisciplinary Engagement: by engaging with and potentially contributing to the established body of knowledge through working effectively across disciplines.
6. Contextual Responsiveness: by articulating strategic and operational priorities of the context or region in which the school/programme operates.

I.3 Eligibility

- The Award addresses university level professional education in architecture which could be any recognised study programme for professional architectural education worldwide. This includes university level independent schools/programmes or schools/programmes within public or private universities.
- The school/programme must have been established for at least ten years.
- The school/programme must offer a professional degree in architecture, which is recognised by its local higher education authorities and/or local validation/accreditation body.
- UNESCO-UIA validation is not a requirement for entry.

I.4 Jury Members

Jury Chair
- **Jana Revedin** (Germany)

Jury Members
- **James B Brown** (Sweden)
- **Karine Dupre** (United States)
- **Lindy Osborne Burton** (Australia)
- **Jolanda Morkel** (South Africa)

Jury Alternate
- **Andrii Markovskyi** (Ukraine)

Award Manager and Curator (non-voting)
- **Ashraf M. Salama** (United Kingdom/Egypt)

Technical Committee (non-voting) members:
- **Selma Harrington** (Ireland), **Kevin Bingham** (South Africa), and **Kaname Yanagisawa** (Japan).

Jana Revedin

James B Brown

Karine Dupre

Lindy Osborne Burton

Jolanda Morkel

Ashraf M. Salama

Selma Harrington

Kevin Bingham

I.5 Profiles of Eligible Entries

Region	Countries represented	#
Region I (Western Europe)	Ireland ×2, Switzerland ×2, UK ×2, Spain, France (La Réunion)	8
Region II (Central & Eastern Europe, Western Asia)	Turkey ×2, Poland, Iran, UAE	5
Region III (The Americas)	USA ×2, Argentina, Peru	4
Region IV (Asia & Oceania)	China ×5, Singapore, Australia, Bangladesh	8
Region V (Africa)	Egypt ×2, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda	6
Cross-regional (Regions III & II)	USA & Palestinian Territories	1

II. RESULTS

The Jury awarded 5 entries for their excellence in pedagogy and addressing timely and pressing challenges and commended a further 4 entries for their distinctive qualities and merits. The awarded and commended entries are as follows:

II.1 Awarded Entries

- Region I: Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Republic of Ireland — Building Change — Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) Curriculum Reform
- Region III: University of Lima, Peru — Inclusive by Design: International Online Workshop on Universal Design and Inclusive Architectural Education
- Region III: University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Argentina — (Inter)Urban Actions — Intro duction to Design Knowledge II
- Region IV: South China University of Technology (SCUT), China — Proof of Design-Led Subtropical Sustainability: Dialogue, Build, Innovate
- Region V: University of Pretoria, South Africa — From Awareness to Co-Implementation: A Staged Pedagogy for Climate Justice, Spatial Justice, and Circular Material Practice

II.2 Commended Entries

- Region I: Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), Spain — Arquitectes de Capçalera: City and Childhood International Workshops
- Region II: Silesian University of Technology, Poland — Project Laboratory: An Interdisci plinary and Circular Approach to Post-Mining Site Regeneration
- Region III: Virginia Tech, United States of America — Blind Design Workshop: Advancing Curricular Transformation with Collaborative and Inclusive Pedagogy
- Regions III and II: Arizona State University, United States of America; and An-Najah National University, Palestinian Territories — Building Futures Exchange

III. AWARDED ENTRIES

III.1 Region I: School of Architecture, Building and Environment, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Building Change — Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) Curriculum Reform

The jury awarded this entry for a nationally significant curriculum reform initiative that operates at a scale and policy reach that distinguishes it from most other entries in this cycle. Funded by the Irish Higher Education Authority and led by TU Dublin as national project lead, the Building Change project coordinated the transformation of architectural education across all six Irish schools of architecture, exemplifying a systemic, government-backed programme well beyond a single studio or institutional reform. Within TU Dublin, key innovations include a vertical studio model mixing year cohorts, an Architects in Residence programme, student-devised contracts for change, and a staff unlearning framework that treats climate change as a problem with no expert solution. The development of the Whole Life Design CPD course for educators, and the project team's direct contribution to revising Ireland's national Competency Standard for Architectural Education, extend the programme's impact across the entire Irish architecture profession. The Architects in Residence initiative makes the programme particularly distinctive by bringing practising professionals directly into the learning environment as "critical friends," bridging the gap between academia and real-world practice. Their ongoing engagement through workshops, reviews, and lectures enriches the curriculum with current industry knowledge and fosters a culture of continuous dialogue and reflection. The jury commends this entry for promoting integrated climate-responsive design and ethical practice, and for its attention to changing architectural curricula across an entire country through collaboration between schools, collaboration with the professional body, and serving as an exemplary leader for change.

III.2 Region III: Faculty of Architecture, University of Lima, Lima, Peru

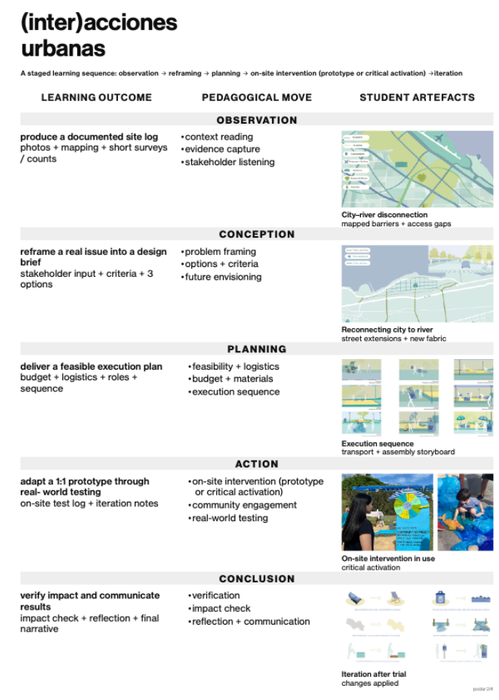
Inclusive by Design: International Online Workshop on Universal Design and Inclusive Architectural Education

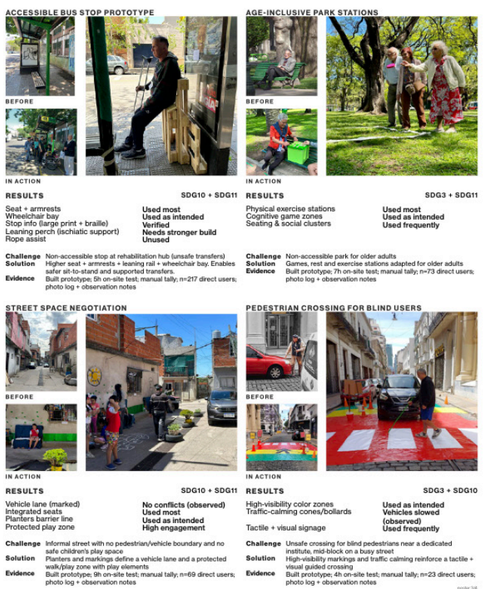
The jury awarded this entry unanimously for a focused and well-argued contribution to one of the most underdeveloped areas of architectural education: the direct engagement of people with impairments as co-participants in the design process, rather than as subjects of speculative accessibility projects. The two-week international online workshop brought together 170 students and faculty from seven universities across five UIA regions. Its defining feature was the direct participation of students with intellectual disabilities from CEU San Pablo, Spain, shifting design thinking from projection to dialogue and repositioning Universal Design as an epistemological driver rather than a compliance requirement. The workshop applies Universal Design not only to its design briefs but to its own pedagogical structure, using multiple modes of representation to accommodate diverse cognitive approaches within international teams working across all of the UIA regions. What stands out is how the project embeds inclusion as a lived, collaborative process rather than a design requirement, by directly involving diverse users, including students with intellectual disabilities, in shaping design decisions. Its international, co-creative model, supported by expert input and real-world contexts, demonstrates a powerful and transferable way to integrate multiple perspectives into architectural education. The jury commends this entry for promoting Universal Design as a source of inquiry and for advancing cross-cultural pedagogy.

III.3 Region III: Architecture Programme, FADU, University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina

(inter)acciones urbanas [Urban (Inter)Actions] – Cátedra Najmias, Taller de Proyectos – Introduction to Design Knowledge II

The jury awarded this entry for a structurally original and operationally convincing pedagogical model that converts a compulsory first-year foundational course, serving 400 to 600 students per term at one of Latin America's largest public universities, into a city-scale design laboratory. Since 2023, more than 2,000 students have executed over 300 real public-space interventions across Buenos Aires, reaching an estimated 150,000 users. The programme's defining contribution is its insistence that a project is complete only when real effects are observed and documented, not when it is represented. SDG outcomes arise from method rather than from retrospective mapping, evidenced by specific, user-counted interventions addressing disability access, pedestrian safety, and age-inclusive public space. The jury identified the municipal adoption of a student street prototype, with permanent infrastructure installed within two weeks of the student intervention, as the most compelling cross-sectoral impact outcome in this cycle. This programme is particularly well suited to first-year students, as it uses a novel, embodied, hands-on approach that builds agency from the outset through real-world action rather than abstract learning. The model also achieves significant impact at scale, engaging large cohorts of students over time in meaningful, community-based interventions. The jury commends this entry for promoting a shift from image-making to project reasoning under real constraints, and for taking responsibility for consequences.

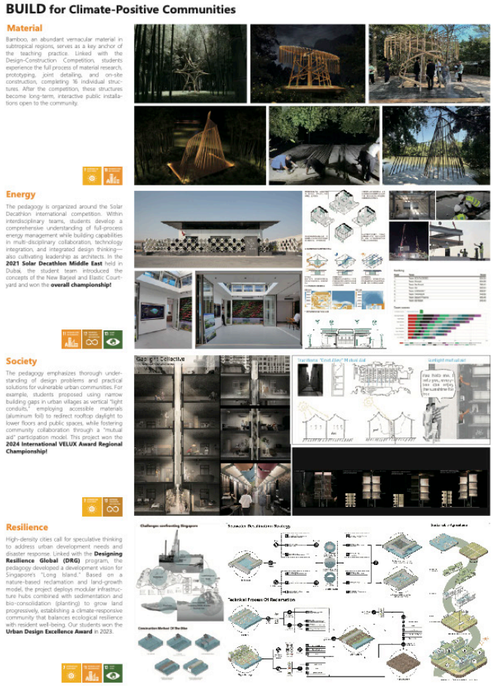




III.4 Region IV: Sustainability Studio, School of Architecture, South China University of Technology (SCUT), Guangzhou, China

Proof of Design-Led Subtropical Sustainability: Dialogue, Build, Innovate

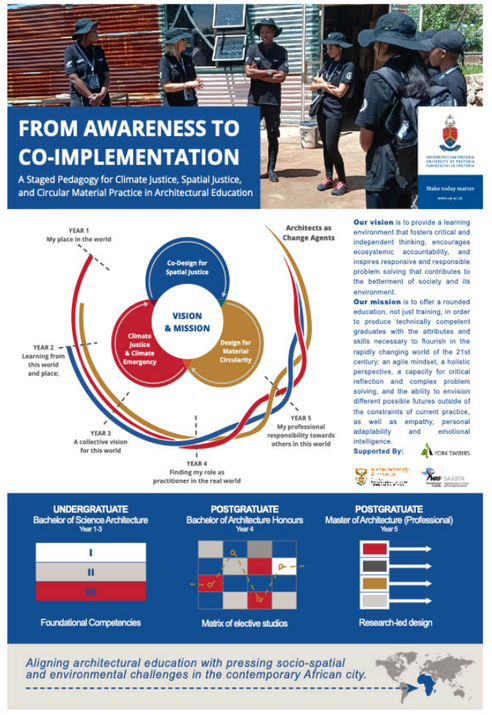
The jury awarded this entry for a technically rigorous and institutionally embedded approach to sustainability pedagogy, grounded in the humid subtropical conditions of the Pearl River Delta. The Dialogue–Build–Innovate framework structures learning as a continuous cycle: global co-creation identifies climate and social challenges; construction validates sustainable concepts through physical making; and an innovation pathway translates design research into documented technology outcomes. The programme's defining contribution is its insistence that sustainability be demonstrated through realised physical outcomes and measured performance data. Sixteen permanent bamboo community installations, multiple Solar Decathlon completions including the 2021 Middle East championship, published research, and registered patents confirm a programme where pedagogical claims are substantiated by verifiable evidence. A network of over 30 partner universities across Asia, Europe, and Oceania extends the programme's reach well beyond a single institutional context. It moves beyond theoretical sustainability teaching and requires students to validate ideas through dialogue, construction, and measurable performance. It also offers a coherent and transferable pedagogical model that integrates global collaboration, digital technology, and real-world climate-responsive design. The jury commends this entry for developing a multiscale model based on proof.



III.5 Region V: Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

From Awareness to Co-Implementation: A Staged Pedagogy for Climate Justice, Spatial Justice, and Circular Material Practice

The jury awarded this entry for a theoretically grounded and institutionally sustained model of full-curriculum transformation. The five-stage developmental trajectory — awareness, philanthropy, activism, solidarity, and collaboration — functions as a deliberate curriculum architecture, progressively expanding students' ethical, methodological, and professional capacities across both the BArchHons and MArch programmes. Three thematic lines — climate justice, co-design for spatial justice, and design for material circularity — are woven throughout the curriculum rather than assigned to individual years, producing cumulative learning and long-term community partnerships. The programme operates within the specific conditions of the post-apartheid South African city, where spatial injustice, climate vulnerability, and constrained resources are not design parameters but sites of ethical and professional accountability. The jury noted this programme's rare achievement of whole-programme transformation, sustained over multiple years, within a university directly confronting its own historical admissions legacy. This entry offers a coherent, whole-school pedagogical model that systematically develops students from awareness to co-implementation through real-world, justice-oriented engagement. Its integration of climate justice, spatial justice, and circular material practice, combined with participatory co-design and research-led studios, positions architectural education as a public, accountable, and impactful endeavour that is both scalable and transferable to other contexts. The jury commends this entry for developing an overarching pedagogical vision with strong guiding principles, addressing an entire five-year programme.



IV. COMMENDED ENTRIES

The Jury further identified the following entries to be commended for their distinctive qualities and merits.

IV.1 Region I: International Workshops Programme, Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB), Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona, Spain

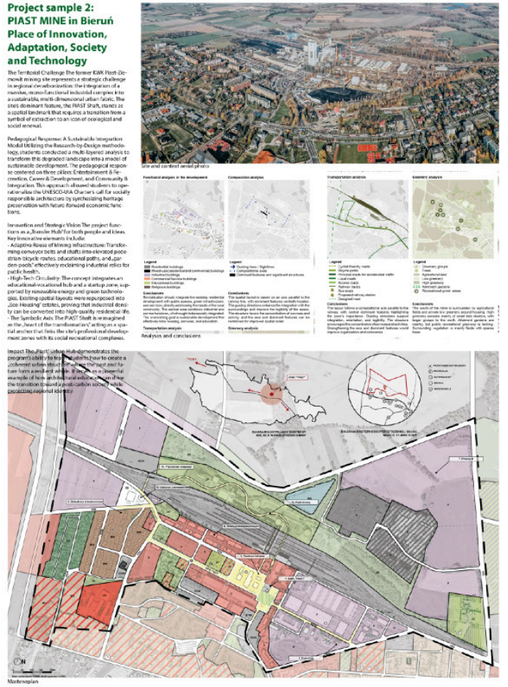
Arquitectes de Capçalera: City and Childhood International Workshops

The jury commended this entry for its child-centred approach to inclusive participatory practice, running since 2010 and documented here across 2023 and 2025 workshop editions delivered in Oaxaca, Mexico. The programme's defining contribution is the treatment of children as primary design stakeholders. Children's drawings of their fears, including kidnapping and darkness in public space, were used directly as design evidence, making safety a core requirement rather than an afterthought. The 2023 edition transformed 930 square metres of neglected public space in front of a primary school for approximately 900 euros in local currency, using donated and reclaimed materials. Post-occupancy documentation confirmed the community continued to use, maintain, and care for the space months after students departed. The jury recognised this programme's exceptional depth of contextual responsiveness and its honest, proportionate account of what architectural education can achieve with civic intent and minimal resources. The jury commends this entry for promoting collective responsibility, collective situated inquiry, and built outcomes.

IV.2 Region II: Faculty of Architecture, MArch in Architecture and Urbanism, Silesian University of Technology, Gliwice, Poland

Project Laboratory: An Interdisciplinary and Circular Approach to Post-Mining Site Regeneration

The jury commended this entry for a rigorous and deeply contextualised approach to post-industrial design education in one of Europe's most pressing territorial transformation contexts: Upper Silesia's decommissioned coal-mining region, navigating the social, environmental, and economic pressures of the European Just Transition. The programme's defining structural innovation is the mandatory Urban and Business Lab, which integrates architecture and economics students into unified project teams to negotiate spatial quality and socio-economic viability simultaneously. Three distinct student roles — Analyst, Mediator, and Visionary — provide multiple legitimate pathways to professional competence. Real clients, including municipal governments and the Mining Property Restructuring Company, ground the work in genuine accountability. Student proposals have been integrated into the Regional Observatory of Transformation Processes policy framework, a concrete demonstration of impact well beyond the studio. The jury commends this entry for facilitating students in becoming agents of change.



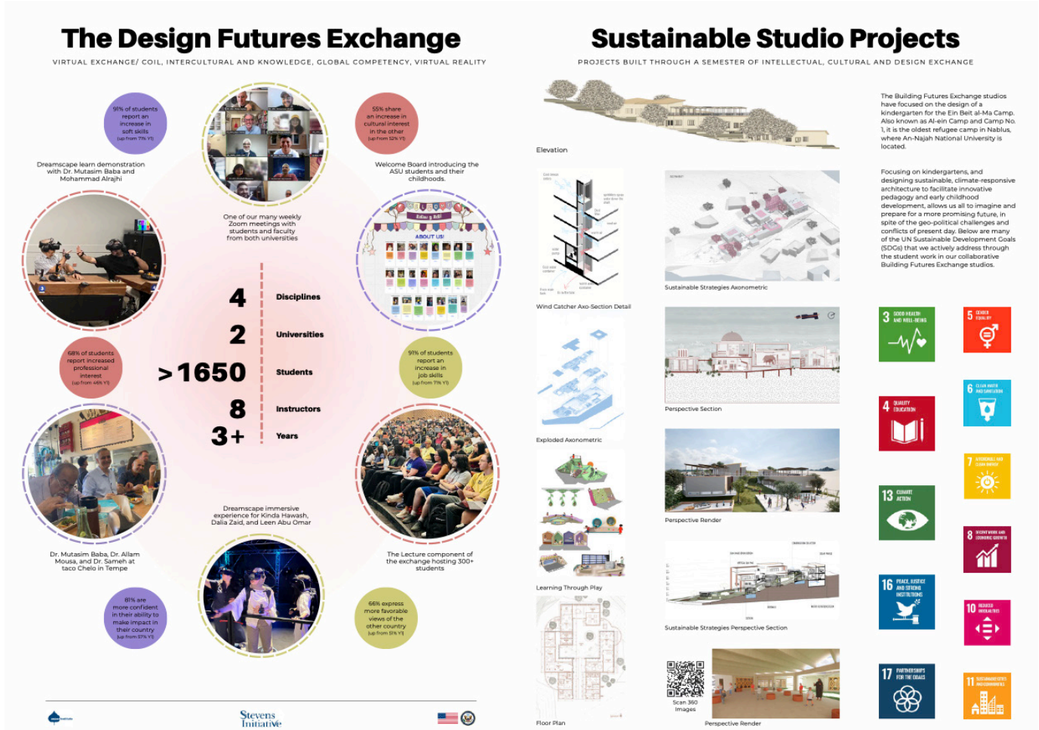
IV.3 Region III: School of Architecture, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, United States of America

Blind Design Workshop: Advancing Curricular Transformation with Collaborative and Inclusive Pedagogy

The jury commended this entry for a sustained, strengths-focused pedagogical initiative that positions vision-impaired participants as co-designers, critics, and knowledge-holders whose expertise is treated as indispensable to the profession. The annual five-day workshop, running since 2022 in partnership with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, inverts the visual hierarchy of architectural education by placing tactile, acoustic, and haptic experience at the centre of design inquiry. All participation costs are externally funded, making access unconditional. The programme has generated documented curricular ripple effects across design studios, thesis projects, and school-wide research, including an AI-powered spatial navigation system tested publicly with white-cane and smartphone navigation. The jury recognised this programme as one of the most directly aligned with the principles of active, inclusive pedagogy in this assessment cycle.

IV.4 Regions III and II: Architecture Programme, Arizona State University, Tempe, United States of America; and Architecture and Civil Engineering Department, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestinian Territories
Building Futures Exchange

The jury commended this entry for a purposeful and structurally sound Collaborative Online International Learning exchange connecting more than 1,650 students across two institutions, two countries, and conditions of active geopolitical adversity, demonstrating that architectural education can sustain cross-cultural dialogue when physical exchange is constrained or impossible. The two-semester programme moves from a foundational lecture exchange building intercultural understanding, to an upper-level studio designing a kindergarten for the Ein Beit al-Ma refugee camp in Nablus. VR tools support spatial communication across geographic distance. The programme's continuation and deliberate deepening of exchange after October 2023 is among the most contextually grounded and humanly significant decisions documented in the 2026 Award entries. The jury recognised this programme for its purposeful use of immersive technology to internationalise architectural education without travel. The jury commends this entry for promoting Collaborative Online International Learning based on sustainability and exchange.



V. CLOSING STATEMENT

The jury is encouraged by the breadth and ambition of the entries received for this third edition. Across the shortlisted entries, the jury observed a consistent willingness to bridge longstanding divides — between architecture and allied disciplines, between academic institutions and the communities they serve, between conceptual thinking and physical making, and between the campus and its broader urban, regional context, and digital, online learning. The entries offer a compelling spectrum of how architectural education is evolving to confront the complex realities of sustainable development, moving well beyond narrow environmental or technical framings to encompass social justice, civic engagement, heritage, health, and inclusion. Unlike the previous two editions, the jury notes the active participation from Region V-Africa.

The jury notes that the awarded and commended entries span a wide range of pedagogical scales, from individual workshops and studio courses to comprehensive whole-programme transformations. This diversity is a strength of the award, but it also presents challenges for comparative assessment. The jury therefore recommends that future editions of the Award consider introducing two distinct submission categories: one recognising innovation at the level of an individual course or studio, and another recognising systemic innovation across a full programme or curriculum. Such a distinction would allow future juries to evaluate entries more equitably and to give appropriate recognition to the different kinds of ambition and impact that each scale of intervention represents.

The jury further observes that among the six evaluation criteria, Inclusive Learning was the least consistently addressed across submissions in this cycle. While several entries demonstrated exceptional commitment to inclusivity, the criterion as a whole appeared to be either narrowly interpreted or insufficiently evidenced in many entries. The jury encourages future applicants to engage more deeply with the diversity of student learning needs and to document how their programmes create multiple pathways to learning. The jury also suggests that the Award organisers consider providing additional guidance on this criterion to ensure it is fully understood and meaningfully addressed in future submissions. The jury recommends that the Award organisers consider drawing future jury members from the pool of awarded and commended entries, inviting lead academics from recognised programmes to contribute their first-hand expertise to the evaluation of subsequent editions.

The sharing of pedagogical best practices and approaches to situated learning across regions and cultures remains one of the Award's most valuable contributions to the global discourse on architectural education. The jury encourages schools and programmes worldwide to participate in forthcoming editions, not only to seek recognition but to contribute to a growing body of knowledge about what works, what is transferable, and what demands continued experimentation. The exchange of experiences, narratives, and reflections, including candid accounts of what requires further improvement, strengthens the collective capacity of architectural education to respond to the pressing challenges of our time.

This third edition of the Award (2026) is aligned with the UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education (updated July 2023). It reaffirms the central role of architectural education in confronting the societal and environmental challenges facing the built environment, and in articulating the opportunities those challenges create. The breadth of focus areas represented in the entries, from climate action to health, from inclusivity and migration to community development, and from resource efficiency to heritage conservation, confirms that the next generation of architects is being prepared to work across these interconnected domains with creativity, rigour, and ethical commitment.

End of Report
20th March 2026