International Call for Projects

UIA Atlas of Learning Environments

a global catalog of best practices in educational architecture

The International Union of Architects (UIA) Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme invites built environment practitioners and researchers to submit educational projects or practice-based research for the Atlas of Learning Environments.

The open-access digital catalog will feature contemporary built works and practice-based research for architectural projects that are places of education. The projects must demonstrate a significant social, cultural or environmental benefit to the communities and regions they serve.

Project selections will be exhibited at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects and will recognize architectural projects and practice-based research that has improved access to education and educational outcomes in their region.

Project submission deadline: Monday 30th March 2026, 15.00 PM (CEST)

For questions or to apply email:

(Email: atlas-le@uia-architectes.org)

About the Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme

The UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme observes the evolution of educational spaces in connection with the educational experience, as well as their social impact and role.

The Programme analyses how architecture may respond to specific conditions, cultural needs and education systems, with a focus on the methodology of the design of schools in different countries and conditions.

For more information go to:
https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/workprogram/education-cultural-spaces_uia/

UIA Atlas of Learning Environments

a global catalog of best-practices in educational architecture

1. About the UIA Atlas of Learning Environments

The UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme is conducting research on how the built environment profession can engage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when designing and delivering educational architecture. The UIA Atlas of Learning Environments will compile a global catalog of architectural best-practices that work towards understanding complex educational needs and relevant design and engagement processes providing quality, lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The open-access digital catalog will feature contemporary built works and practice-based research for architectural projects that are places of education. The projects must demonstrate a significant social, cultural or environmental benefit to the communities and regions they serve.

Selected projects will be exhibited at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects and will recognize architectural projects and practice-based research that have improved access to education and educational outcomes in their region. The catalog will also be presented as a practical toolbox of architectural best-practices that work towards understanding complex educational needs and relevant design and engagement processes when discussing the UN 2030 Agenda.

Learning environments are dynamic ecosystems where pedagogy, architecture, technology and human interaction intersect to support diverse learning modalities and educational philosophies. Central to this understanding is the recognition of children and learners as protagonists of their own learning journey, acknowledging their competence, creativity, and their right to participate in shaping the spaces where they grow and learn.

Selected projects will align with one of three critical themes of the Atlas, and show how the planning, design, delivery, handover and/or post-occupancy experience has improved the quality of human and environmental health. Including multiple project perspectives from project stakeholders, user groups and relevant community leaders is essential to justifying the project's impact and local contribution.

Built environment professionals are asked to critically reflect on the project's processes and how the learning environments are designed and developed to foster knowledge acquisition, skills development, collaboration and personal growth. Projects demonstrating positive impacts beyond a 'contractual' site boundary will be highly regarded.

A project selection process with invited Regional Nomination Boards will evaluate the suitability of each project for inclusion into the digital catalog. All selected projects will be included in the digital catalog as architecture and research best-practices. The selection process ensures the atlas represents the highest standards of innovative, sustainable and pedagogically sound design. The selection of best practice architecture and research projects will be exhibited at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects in Barcelona. These projects will showcase exceptional design thinking and action that responds to complex socio-ecological qualities in learning environments.

With the Global Education 2030 Agenda concluding in only five years, the Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme invites the industry's reflection on its progress and responsibility to support quality, lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2. Exhibition of educational architecture and practice-based research at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects

The UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program will recognize built environment practitioners and researchers' projects and how they have improved access to education and educational outcomes in their region. A selection of projects by the invited Regional Nomination Boards and International Selection Panel will be exhibited at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects in Barcelona.

Selected projects will showcase exceptional design thinking and action based on the atlas' three critical themes:

Learning environments supporting quality education, human health and human dignity
(Completed / built works category)

Project scales: Urban Campus and Educational Neighborhoods, New Schools, Restorations, Building Additions and Alterations, Small Projects, Interiors, Landscapes

Learning environments for a just global climate system
(Completed / built works category)

Project scales: Urban Campus and Educational Neighborhoods, New Schools, Restorations, Building Additions and Alterations, Small Projects, Interiors, Landscapes

Innovation in practice-based research and the design process
(Practice-based research category)

3. Conditions

Eligibility

The international call for submissions is open to architects, built environment practitioners and practice-based researchers anywhere in the world.

Architectural practitioners are eligible to apply. Interior designers, landscape architects, urban designers, planners, governments and institutions wishing to apply must have worked on an architect-led project. Researchers who work with or are architects on projects are eligible to apply. All applicants may be individuals, groups or partnerships.

Members of the working body organizing the selection, the UIA Secretariat, Council, the Selection Panel Members as well as their current business partners, employees, students and close relatives are not allowed to submit entries.

Requirements

Applicants may only submit educational projects completed between 2015 and 2025.

Submissions must be in English.

The submission of educational projects must satisfy one of two project categories:

- architectural built (completed) work.
- practice-based research projects. The project must engage with architectural practice and provide tangible outcomes. The research must be implemented in at least one architectural educational project.

Submissions must fully respond to the mandatory written and graphic criteria in the **Deliverables**.

One key function of the mandatory written requirements is for built environment practitioners and practice-based researchers to justify the project's impact on the local community. To do this, applicants must interview and transcribe one non-built environment project perspective such as project stakeholders or focus/user groups. Applicants must include the experiences, perceptions and stories of individuals or communities affected by the project. Written permission to publish these perspectives must be obtained from each stakeholder or focus/user group.

Architectural built (completed) projects or practice-based research projects must select the correct country or territory in which the project is located. The UIA will assign each submission to the corresponding UIA Region for the Regional Nomination Boards assessments.

Submissions for educational projects can be architectural projects, interior projects, landscape projects, restoration projects, small projects, project interventions and project improvements. Research content including engagement processes and technical or design guidelines that have been architecturally implemented is acceptable.

Applications must be submitted on or before Monday 30th March 2026, 15.00 PM (CEST). Submissions after this time will not be accepted.

Submissions must be in digital format. Refer to the **Deliverables** for further details on submission requirements and formats.

Authors and publication rights

By entering the call for submissions, the applicant confirms they have author and publication rights to all material submitted and have obtained their client's written approval to enter and for any publicity. If the application contains any content that is not owned by the applicant, the submission will be excluded from consideration. If it is later known that rights have been violated, the project will be extracted from the catalog.

Specific information about project budgets is not released for publication unless approved by the applicant through the application process.

By entering the call for submissions, the applicant agrees to absolve the UIA from any liability relating to confidentiality or intellectual property issues that may be raised by any party.

The UIA reserves the right to exhibit or publish any or all of the entries. By entering the call for submissions the applicant gives permission to the UIA to publish, exhibit and promote the content of the submission (except for project budgets unless approved by the applicant), including by partners or sponsors of the catalog and exhibition, where their use of submission content is specifically related to their promotion of their involvement in the catalog and exhibition. In all promotion, the UIA will always mention authors and, where the UIA is made aware of their names and to the extent that the UIA can exert editorial control, photographers will be acknowledged. All applicants of selected projects must be prepared to submit further material for exhibition and publication if required, such as additional photography, drawings and other information. The applicant acknowledges that the UIA has the right to reproduce materials in whole or part without payment of release or licensing fees to the holder of publication rights or copyright.

4. Timeline

- Launch the International Call for Submissions - Wednesday 18th February 2026 13.00 PM (CEST)

- Deadline for Questions - Sunday 1st March 2026, 13.00 PM (CEST)

- Deadline for Answers - Monday 9th March 2026, 13.00 PM (CEST)

- Submission closing date - Monday 30th March 2026, 15.00 PM (CEST)

- Regional Nomination Boards - Wednesday 1st April 2026 to Sunday 19th April 2026

- International Selection Panel - Monday 20th April 2026 to Monday 25th May 2026

- Exhibition at the 2026 UIA World Congress of Architects in Barcelona, from 28th June to 2nd July 2026.

5. How to Enter

- Read the Conditions to confirm eligibility, publicity and copyright.
- Download the Application Form.
- Submit the completed Application Form and a cloud link containing the required graphic and written attachments to the Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme: (email: atlas-le@uia-architectes.org)
- Questions will be answered until 1 March 2026, 13:00 PM (CEST) by the Selection Manager, via email: atlas-le@uia-architectes.org.
- There are no limits on the number of project submissions. Each project must be submitted as a separate application.

6. Deliverables

(download Application Form and submit to UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme. Email address: atlas-le@uia-architectes.org)

Section 1 - General project information

- **Project name:**

- **Name of lead architectural practice, architectural research organisation or individual architect:**

- **Applicant contact person:**
    - Contact name:
    - Email address:

- **Name of project partners, institutions, practices and community groups / representatives involved in the project's development:**

- **Project Theme:**
    - ☐ Learning environments supporting quality education, human health and human dignity
    - ☐ Learning environments for a just global climate system
    - ☐ Innovation in practice-based research and the design process

- **Type of educational project:**
    - ☐ New School
    - ☐ Restorations
    - ☐ Urban Campuses/Educational neighborhoods
    - ☐ Building Additions and/or Alterations
    - ☐ Small Projects
    - ☐ Interiors
    - ☐ Other:
      Provide description (maximum of 15 words)

- **Level of education:**
    - ☐ Pre-School or Pre-Basic school
    - ☐ Primary School or Basic school
    - ☐ Secondary or Professional school
    - ☐ University or Post Graduate school
    - ☐ Adult education
    - ☐ Multi-level school
    - ☐ Other:
      Provide description (maximum of 15 words)

- **Location:**
    - Country or Territory:

- ○ City or Town:

- **Year of completion:**

  _____
  (between 2015 - 2025)

- **Project cost**
  ☐ Approve sharing the project cost

- **Description of the learning environment's key spatial functions***
  (maximum of 15 words)

  _____
  _____
  _____

  *Writing Guide: standard classrooms, variety of spaces, open plan, other models of spatial organization

Section 2 - Critical written response

2.1 Select the project's alignment with one of three critical themes

Built (completed) works Project Category
☐ Critical Theme 1: Learning environments supporting human health and human dignity
☐ Critical Theme 2: Learning environments for a just global climate system

Practice-based research Project Category
☐ Critical Theme 3: Innovation in practice-based research and design processes for learning environments

2.2 Architectural practice or practice-based researcher's critical reflection of the project, purpose and impact:*
(maximum of 250 words)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Writing Guide:
- *Introduce the local context, conditions, educational needs and project aspirations;*
- *Describe the key design, social, cultural and environmental issues and the design methodology used to attempt to address the issue*
- *Describe the key actors and types of knowledge that informed the design and delivery process*
- *Describe how the project was handed over to the community*
- *Professional reflection on the perceived benefit to the end users, community and/or ecosystem*
- *Professional reflection on any perceived gaps and remaining challenges for the project and region*

2.3 Provide one non-built environment project perspective, experience or story to justify the project's impact on the local community. Applicants are to submit original copies of the interview and transcript and provide a max 150 word extract of the transcript.
(maximum of 100 words per perspective)

Project Perspective 1

- Name of group or individual:
- 100 maximum word extract of the transcript:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Attachment: interview transcript

Project Perspective 2 (optional)
- Name of group or individual:
- 100 maximum word extract of the transcript:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Attachment: interview transcript

Critical Themes

Built (completed) works Project Category

Critical Theme 1:
Learning environments supporting education, human health and human dignity
Learning environments can nurture holistic development and well-being, recognizing that learning environments should honor the dignity of all users.
Sub-themes may include (guide only):
- Intersection of pedagogy, architecture, technology and human interaction to support diverse learning modalities and educational philosophies
- Children and learners as protagonists of their own learning journey
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Indigenous perspective
- Gender perspective
- Occupant or user perspective
- Youth perspective
- Human health and wellbeing
- Local knowledge and context - culture and society
- Contemporary vernacular
- Community engagement methods
- Other

Critical theme 2:
Learning environments for a just global climate system
Learning environments can model sustainable practices and connect all people with the natural world to deepen their respect and care for the land, skies and seas.
Sub-themes may include (guide only):
- Climate justice and environmental protection
- Indigenous perspective
- Gender perspective
- Occupant or user perspective
- Health and wellbeing (beyond human life)
- Best practice design principles such as: nature-based design, biophilic design, carbon footprint, sustainable development, sustainable usage/operation
- Local knowledge and context - geography, climate, ecology
- Contemporary vernacular
- Community engagement methods
- Other

Practice-based research Project Category

Critical theme 3: Innovation in practice-based research and the design process
The Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Programme is interested in practice-based research projects that are transforming the way built environment practice responds to educational design and engagement processes, project delivery, and perceptions of the user experience.

Sub-themes may include (guide only):
- Child or youth centred design methodologies
- Participatory design with children and youth
- Post-occupancy evaluation focusing on user experience
- Integration of play-based learning principles
- Flexible and adaptable space solutions
- Other: applicant/specialist nominated topics

Section 3 - Graphic content

All submissions must include high quality graphic documentation that clearly communicates the project. This documentation must be included in one or two A1 panels.

3.1 Photographs of architecture
Professional architectural photography showing the spaces in use, including both exterior and interior views. Images must be high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) and demonstrate the relationship between the users and the space.

3.2 Floor plans
Clear, fully detailed architectural plans in vector format, properly labelled with scale bars and a north arrow. Must include site context and landscape elements.

3.3 Diagrams or elevations/sections
Analytical drawings that illustrate the project's key concepts, spatial relationships and technical solutions.

3.4 Spatial analysis
Color-coded diagrams highlighting functional areas and key spatial relationships (learning spaces, social spaces, library, administration, technical spaces) with corresponding area calculations and percentages. These should demonstrate the project's spatial organization and programmatic distribution.

3.5 Design process photographs
Architectural photography showing unique design processes to engage stakeholders, user or focus groups and professionals. Images must be high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) and demonstrate the relationship between the users and the space.

All graphic content should be submitted in one or two high-resolution A1 panels, in JPG (for web display) and vector based PDF format (for publication purposes). File specifications and templates will be provided upon registration.

8. **International Selection panel**

1. José Freire, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Portugal
2. Pedro Barrán, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Uruguay
3. Silvia Giandoriggio, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Italy
4. Elena Stoian, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Romania
5. Nicole Mechkaroff, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Australia
6. Lawrence Leung, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Hong Kong
7. Adel Hidar, UIA Educational and Cultural Spaces Work Program, Tunisia

Project selection process

All Nomination Boards and International Selection Panel members must declare perceived conflicts of interest regarding an application. Where there are conflicts of interest, the member presenting a conflict of interest will not assess the project to ensure the assessment process is fair.

At the panel's discretion, submissions may be recognized for demonstrating exemplary standards beyond those outlined in the requirements, or to reflect the changing nature of built environment practice and research.

The Regional Nomination Board will nominate up to 30 projects per UIA Region for the International Selection Panel's assessment. The regional project selection will include projects across all three themes and will ensure there is diverse representation of countries and projects.The Regional Nomination Board reserves the right to select fewer than 30 projects, or none at all, if it considers that no project adequately responds to the mandatory criteria.

The International Selection Panel will undertake a final global selection of up to 30 projects from among the nominated submissions. The selected projects will span the three thematic areas and will reflect a balanced and diverse representation across the five regions. The Panel reserves the right to select between 20 and 30 projects, at its discretion.

Boards and Panel decisions are final.

All selected projects will be published in the Atlas of Learning Environments.