



CHARTER
BUILT ENVIRONMENT
EDUCATION FOR
CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

2019 EDITION

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS

UIA CHARTER
Built Environment Education for Children and
Young People
Architecture and Children Work Programme
2019 Edition
International Union of Architects

co-signed by:



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

PREAMBLE



Education about the built environment takes on critical importance in today's world as a vital component of cultural, social, economic and political development. It has the potential to function as a pillar of capacity-building within communities, for the consolidation of harmonious co-existence, sustainable development, democracy, human rights and peace.

We, as architects, strongly believe that in a fast-changing world the achievement of a humane quality of life is heavily dependent on the quality of our built environment. This cannot be planned, designed and made solely by architects; it is the product of us all - citizens, professionals, businesses, lawmakers - working together.

Therefore, the future quality of our lives relies on the coming generations understanding the processes that shape the built environment, and having the knowledge and tools to take wise decisions which take account of their repercussions for the cultural, social, economic and political well-being of their community and of the environment it inhabits.

It is our responsibility - architects together with authorities and law makers - to direct our efforts toward initiating, encouraging and facilitating Built-Environment Education on a global scale.



AIMS



The aims of this Charter are that it be used for the creation of a widespread network of built environment education for schoolchildren and young people within which individual initiatives and achievements can be shared by all.

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS



- 1 Architecture and the built environment – our buildings, villages, towns, cities and landscapes – provide the framework for all human activity and interaction. We give it form and it forms us. It affects mind, spirit, body, the ways we move from place to place and the people that we meet. It involves collective, social and critical action. Through symbolic, significant, public and private structures and spaces it represents the values of a community in a concrete form.
- 2 The creation of architecture is an exercise of the imagination which draws on humanity, culture, heritage, history, environment, economy and a critique of what exists.
- 3 Good architecture and a good environment, produced in genuine dialogue with the community, contribute to a more harmonious society where citizens feel empowered and where heritage and creativity are reconciled.
- 4 The future quality of our environment will be determined by the children of today. Their ability to make sound, informed decisions will depend on the knowledge, skills and abilities they gain in the course of their education.
- 5 Our ‘environmental education’ begins at the moment of birth. We get our first spatial and social impressions in the circle of parents and family, in our houses, schools, shops, parks and neighbourhoods. We learn to see, to hear, to feel, to understand and to communicate.
- 6 Home, school, neighbourhood and community send to children a message about their place in the world. For good or ill the environment provides the context, the ‘cadre de vie’ which so affects the physical and psychological quality of their lives, and in which they start to grow into their future roles as citizens.
- 7 Architectural education for young people should be an element of any new Government Policies on architecture and Architects professional bodies in each country should endeavour to ensure that this is so.
- 8 Built Environment Education will help children and young people to understand architectural design and the process by which the environment is shaped, so that as adult citizens they will be able to participate effectively in the creation of high quality architecture that is humane, sustainable and respectful of its context.

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS



- 9 Analysis of the built environment allows young people to orient themselves in space, to re-appropriate their environment, understanding that in a short time it will be they who will have the right and the responsibility as active citizens to take initiatives to create a sustainable future.
- 10 Educators and architects should work together to provide children around the world with knowledge that will help them become caring participants in the environment. They should help children to grow up aware of their heritage and valuing respectful and sustainable action within the built environment.



II. OBJECTIVES OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

- 1 The goal of built environment education is that the pupils acquire a set of values which enable them to form their own opinions with increasing independence. This will help them to participate in building a harmonious and safe society for all.
 - 2 Built environment education should be an integral part of the educational formation of the child, regardless of whether it is carried out in schools, through public platforms or joint institutional initiatives.
 - 3 The injection of built environment education into the mainstream school curriculum should be encouraged. This will have long term effects on a society's understanding of good architecture and a good environment.
 - 4 Because of its scope, Architecture presents endless possibilities for learning experiences for students of all ages, from the very youngest to those who are about to enter the adult world.
 - 5 Built environment topics make excellent vehicles for educating and motivating pupils in a wide range of subjects, and present exciting possibilities for collaboration between teachers from different disciplines.
 - 6 Critical thinking, spatial awareness, imagination, responsible citizenship, cultural literacy, social relevance and environmental sustainability can all be addressed using built environment issues to teach both new and traditional school subjects.
 - 7 Architecture uses the knowledge of history, geography, sociology, psychology, sciences, mathematics, semantics, literature, arts and technology, and in turn irrigates and vivifies these disciplines.
 - 8 Architectural thinking is integrated, visual and non-linear. Working on architecture-based tasks contributes to generic skills such as communication, problem solving and research which pupils use in other areas of their studies.
 - 9 Built environment education should aim to give children and young people:
 - 9.1 Sensory awareness of the spaces – public/private, interior/exterior - that they move and live in
 - 9.2 Awareness of roles, rights and responsibilities in the creation of the built environment
 - 9.3 An appreciation of their architectural heritage and of contemporary architecture
 - 9.4 An understanding of the relationship between the built and natural environment and of the link between sustainable development and quality of life
 - 9.5 The vocabulary they need to discuss the qualities of buildings and places and how they relate to the life of a community
 - 9.6 Experience of the analytical and problem-solving methods of the design process
 - 9.7 The capacity to work in a team, to observe, to identify problems and find creative solutions
 - 9.8 The opportunity to experiment with techniques, forms and materials
 - 9.9 The capacity to exercise sensitivity and imagination, taste and critical judgment
 - 9.10 The discovery that architecture is a creative intellectual task of research and design that draws on humanity, culture, heritage, nature and society

II. OBJECTIVES OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION



10. Those engaged in built environment education around the world should try to connect with each other - to produce, share and disseminate materials, film, databases, pedagogical tools and websites - and to form networks for ongoing cooperation.
11. Research in this field should be encouraged, and shared worldwide. Architectural institutions together with pedagogical institutions and schools should join forces for the scientific development of built environment education.
12. Close partnership amongst all stakeholders - national and institutional policy-makers, governments and parliaments, the media, teaching and related staff, researchers, students and their families, the world of work, community groups - is required in order to set in train a movement for in-depth built environment education for children and young people.



III. CONDITIONS FOR PRACTICING BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION >>>>

1. Architects, teachers and all actors participating in conceptualizing, organizing or executing built environment education must take steps to ensure that the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and that all laws, codes and guidelines for the protection and safety of children are observed at all times.
2. All activities pertaining to built environment education should be conducted in an ethical manner and with respect for the cultural identity of the community within which the children live.
3. Ideally architectural education for children should be part of the central, formal education system and Architects' associations should work with the authorities to achieve this.
4. Since the participation of architects in school-based projects is not always possible, architects and the educational authorities should strive to educate teachers who are well-trained in built environment education and produce suitable resources for them to use.
5. Architects engaged in built environment education should have an interest in education, the ability to relate to children and young people, and be willing to collaborate with teachers and parents.
6. Teachers involved in built environment education should be open to the field of architecture and strive to make the interdisciplinary collaborations embedded in built environment education successful.
7. Architects' professional associations should seek to engage with educational authorities and with training organisations, and offer their support in the development of suitable training strategies.
8. The successful addition of architectural topics to teacher training is best achieved by professional collaboration between teachers and architects, and may involve discussion and agreements with many partners: state or local governments, universities, academies, organisations responsible for teacher training, and teacher's associations.
9. People involved in built environment education should be open to discovering common ground with other areas of interest, working together with teachers from other fields, and so implicitly teach children about the importance of working together.
10. The educational framework adopted by teachers and architects should be open to change and to diverse cultural settings. It should aim to ignite creativity and critical thinking and to open new perspectives for our future adults and citizens.

IV. CONCLUSION

This Charter was created on the initiative of UNESCO and the UIA Architecture and Children Work Programme, to promote and support urgent action and development in built environment education worldwide.

The Charter constitutes a framework providing direction and guidance to governments, authorities, institutions, architects and teachers involved in founding, creating and implementing built environment education.

The Charter formulates the basis for dedicated action by architects and educators committed to providing built environment education to children and young people all over the world. It is rooted in our awareness of the responsibility that we, as professionals, owe these future participants in the creation of the built environment we share.





2019 Edition

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The 2019 Edition of the charter will be revised regularly; it is conceived as an evolving document that will be adapted to new challenges, needs and transformations in the world.

The authors of this charter are experts in the field of architecture and built environment education and members of the International Union of Architects (UIA) Architecture and Children Work Programme:

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- Suzanne de Laval, Sweden, present Co-Director of the UIA WP Architecture and Children Ann McNicholl, Ireland, former director of the UIA WP Architecture & Children Acknowledging the contribution of all the members of the UIA Architecture and Children Work Programme.

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