



Wenhui Award 2020

“Educational Innovation in Response to Pandemic and Other Emergencies”

Concept Note

Background and Rationale for the Choice of the Theme

Education, an essential human right, can be thrown into disorder by emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters, displacements and epidemics. Between 2014 and 2018, attacks on education in 87 countries were reported.¹ At the end of 2019, 50.8 million people were internally displaced due to conflicts and disasters, and more than half of them are school-aged.² Despite its enormous benefits to children and societies, education is often the first service suspended in emergencies and the last to be restored, and thus requires particular attention.³ The spread of COVID-19 further exacerbates the situation, posing a severe threat to the access to continuous quality education. More than 1.5 billion or over 90% of enrolled learners around the world have been affected by school closures because of the pandemic.⁴ In many countries, especially lower-income countries, insufficient digital infrastructure impedes distance teaching and learning. Substantial adaptations are required for pedagogy, curriculum, learning materials and methods, assessment, school management, and the role of families and communities, which has put tremendous pressure on educators, learners and caregivers.

In the Asia-Pacific region the challenges are even more acute. According to the World Disasters Report 2018, Asia accounts for 80 percent of the people affected by disasters from 2008 to 2017 and a large number of people affected by conflicts.⁵ Most of the new displacements triggered by disasters in 2019 were recorded in East Asia-Pacific and South Asia.⁶ The high risks of dropout have been embedded in this region even before the coronavirus outbreak. In 2019, about 16 million primary school-aged children and 34 million lower secondary-aged adolescents in the Asia-Pacific region were out of school, two-thirds of whom were in South Asia.⁷ Besides, in 2019, 56.5% of the households in the Asia-Pacific were not equipped with

¹ UNICEF, “Education in Emergencies,” 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>.

² UNESCO, “Conflict-Affected, Displaced and Vulnerable Populations,” 2020.

³ UNICEF, “Education in Emergencies.”

⁴ UNESCO, “Education: From Disruption to Recovery,” 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.

⁵ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), “World Disasters Report 2018,” 2018.

⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), “Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020,” 2020, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2020>.

⁷ Lateisha Ugwuegbula, “The Asia-Pacific's Education Crisis,” *The Diplomat*, November 21, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/the-asia-pacifics-education-crisis>.

computers, and 51.6% of individuals did not have Internet access.⁸ Such circumstances have rendered education in the region more vulnerable to pandemic and other types of emergencies.

Innovation is vital for the survival and progress of almost all industries and fields, and education is not an exception. Innovative approaches are indispensable for achieving equity and quality of education in all contexts, particularly in emergencies and crises. COVID-19 has become a catalyst for innovations in different sectors, including education, in a very short period of time. Recent UNESCO data revealed that the percentage of enrolled learners affected by coronavirus worldwide dropped from over 90% in April 2020 to approximately 60% in July,⁹ an improvement to which educational innovation has contributed effectively. In the Asia-Pacific region in particular, innovative technologies and techniques have been widely utilized in different education systems and at all levels during the pandemic outbreak; new platforms and creative measures have been employed to deliver distance learning, conduct assessments, support teachers and families, and work towards the safe return to schools. Many such innovative solutions involve diverse stakeholders such as governments, education professionals, technology providers, and communities. This emerging trend makes educational institutions, educators and learners more adaptable and resilient to crises and exerts far-reaching impacts on future education.

Against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and in view of the crucial importance of innovation for education in emergencies and crises, this year's Wenhui Award is themed "Educational Innovation in Response to Pandemic and Other Emergencies".

The Wenhui (文暉) Award was jointly created by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) and the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO in 2010, to recognize and reward individuals or institutions that have made outstanding contributions to educational innovation in the Asia-Pacific region. Wen (文) in Chinese encompasses the meaning of culture, knowledge, wisdom, moral and ethics, and the desire for learning. Hui (暉) symbolizes the creative and radiant force of education that enables civilization and culture to flourish. Taken together, the name of the Award personifies the power of educational innovation in enabling individuals, institutions, societies and cultures to thrive.

The Award shall be conferred on two individuals or institutions in the Asia-Pacific region for their outstanding efforts and achievements in educational innovation with regard to this year's theme. The two winners will receive a Certificate of Excellence and a prize of US\$ 20,000 each. Apart from the winners, Honourable Commendations may be granted to individuals or institutions that have demonstrated

⁸ International Telecommunication Union (ITU), "Global and Regional ICT Data," Statistics, 2020, <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>.

⁹ UNESCO, "Education: From Disruption to Recovery," 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.

commendable innovative educational practices. Over the past decade, 51 Awards and Honourable Commendations have been granted to individuals and institutions from 17 countries.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Individuals or institutions from UNESCO Member States in the Asia-Pacific region¹⁰ that meet the following conditions are eligible to apply for the Wenhui Award:

- Have demonstrated their ability to initiate innovative practices that help to increase access to information, promote learning and generate new knowledge in the education sector;
- Have verified the positive impact of their contributions to improving the access to education and the quality of teaching and learning processes;
- Have proven their commitment to enhancing the popularity and quality of education, and promoting the concept of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning; AND
- Have confirmed that their innovative practices are current and relevant to the key trends of education in the 21st century.

All applications for the Wenhui Award will be assessed equally against the following criteria:

1. Relevance (to Sustainable Development Goal 4 aiming to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; to the key trends of education in the 21st century; to the Asia-Pacific region; AND to the specific theme of this year's Award)
2. Timeliness (initiated within the last 3 years, completed or ongoing by the time of application)
3. Scale of benefit and impact (evidenced on the basis of specific indicators such as number of beneficiary countries in the Asia-Pacific region, number of beneficiary schools, number of beneficiary students, teachers, school leaders, and community members)
4. Originality (how unique the innovation is)
5. Engagement of partners from different sectors (public and private), if applicable
6. Sustainability (i.e. the benefits and impacts can be sustained beyond the completion of the innovation project) and replicability (to other countries, educational institutions, and/or relevant stakeholder groups)

Application Procedure and Supporting Documents

Applications for the Wenhui Award are open to governments, educational institutions, international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals in the Asia-Pacific region. All applicants need to follow the procedures stated below:

¹⁰ List of UNESCO Member States in the Asia-Pacific region: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/asia-and-pacific>.

Step 1: Express interest by submitting the **online registration form** <click the link here> by **11 October 2020**; the registered applicants will receive a link to the online application form (if the link above is not accessible, please use <https://rb.gy/piejwu>).

Step 2: Complete the **online application form** and submit the required supporting documents listed below by **25 October 2020**:

1) **Summary of the Innovation Project**

(Using the template provided on: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/wenhui-award-2020>)

2) **CV** (for individual applicants) or **organizational profile** (for institutional applicants)

Step 3: Nomination

All applications need to be supported by a **Nomination Letter** commenting on the applicant's eligibility for the Award and other relevant information. The letter should be provided by the Nominator directly to the Wenhui Award Secretariat no later than **30 October 2020**.

The **Nominator** must be one of the following three types: 1) the [National Commission for UNESCO](#) in the applicant's country; 2) [UNESCO Field Office](#) operating in the applicant's country; OR 3) **other international organizations** relevant to UNESCO and particularly active in the field of education. Applicants need to choose their preferred type of Nominator in the online registration form (Step 1) and indicate the specific Nominator in the online application form (Step 2).

If an applicant opts for a National Commission for UNESCO or UNESCO Field Office as the Nominator, the online application system will automatically send the applicant's application package to the selected National Commission or Field Office, who will review and decide whether to nominate the applicant for further selection. The Nominator will directly upload the Nomination Letter onto the online system.

Information on National Commissions for UNESCO:

<https://en.unesco.org/countries/national-commissions>.

Information on UNESCO Field Offices:

<https://en.unesco.org/countries/field-offices>.

Applicants who choose another international organization (IO) as the Nominator need to provide the contact details of the IO in the online application form. After the form is completed and submitted, the system will automatically send the IO an email about the nomination letter, which is to be sent by the Nominator directly to the email address of the Wenhui Award Secretariat: wenhui.award@unesco.org. It is the applicants' responsibility to make sure that their selected IO Nominator submits the letter before the deadline.

Kindly note that applications sent by email will NOT be accepted.

Assessment of Applications

The final assessment of nominated applications is conducted by a Jury of multiple members who come from different countries and organizations in the Asia-Pacific region and have extensive expertise and experience in the education sector.

The winners of the Award and the recipients of the Honourable Commendations will be announced in due course after the Jury Meeting, and the winners will be invited to the Award Ceremony to be held virtually or in China.

Contact Information

For inquiries about Wenhui Award and/or the application, please contact the Secretariat at wenhui.award@unesco.org.