



Chess in  
Education  
Commission

# FIDE EDU 2023 End of Year Report

## Introduction

All of the following programs and activities are aligned with the Strategy Action Plan (SAP) developed by FIDE and FIDE EDU in 2021-2022 as a result of the global Chess in Schools Survey conducted in 2021 as a partnership with FIDE and the ECU. This report highlights the work of the Commission in 2023.

## FIDE EDU Mission

To make chess an essential tool for educating students around the world.

## FIDE EDU Objectives – 2023 - 2026

- Position FIDE as the Global Leader in Chess in Education
- Double the number of teachers delivering chess-related instruction (from 92,500 to 200,000)
- Double the number of students involved in scholastic chess (from 25 to 50 million)
- Increase the number of participants in FIDE EDU courses (teachers and lecturers) by 20% each year.

## FIDE EDU General Strategies

- Access Key Stakeholders
- Build the CIE Community
- Provide Training & Resources
- Encourage & Enable CIE-related Research
- Increase Quality Professional Development Opportunities
- Assist Federations & Organizations to Expand CIE

## EDU Commission Meetings

The London Conference provided the opportunity for EDU Commission and EDU workgroup meetings. Workgroup meetings included the International Advisory Board, Research, and Strategy Workshops. Topics discussed during the Commission meeting included research, revision of the EDU Preparation of Teachers (PoT) course, a recommendation to create a certification for schools that feature chess, collection of additional CIE resources for teachers, CIE Ambassadors, online strategy workshops, and social media efforts.

The Commission held two other meetings online during 2023. The first one was on February 11th and the second on August 26th.

## London Chess Conference Report

The London Chess and Education Conference has been running annually since 2013 and has established itself as the leading global conference. This year more than 100 people from 32 countries shared information about how we can improve the teaching of chess education.

The first day of the conference was a special preschool session organized by FIDE. It was a hybrid event, with seven online and four in-person presentations heard and streamed through the FIDE YouTube channel. We have learnt about how to improve preschoolers' literacy skills, spatial coordination, memory, and motor skills through chess. Emotional well-being, loss of fearfulness, and improved concentration are among other positive effects of the early introduction of chess into children's lives.

We also wish to provide standards for training and program credibility within the Chess in Education community. Educational chess is thought to improve problem-solving skills that are necessary for STEM subjects. Day two and three of the conference had two ambitious goals. The first was to seek out specific ways in which chess and chess-related activities in the classroom could improve students' performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The second was to showcase examples of using the chessboard and the chess pieces as educational tools in the teaching of STEM subjects. We met an impressive line-up of STEM experts and pedagogues at the conference.

One conference session focused on the latest chess research. FIDE EDU is particularly interested in innovative ways to measure the impact of educational chess instruction.

On Sunday several examples of national CIE projects from Catalonia, Romania, Pakistan and India already launched were presented.

The partnership of FIDE EDU and the London Conference (ECU and ChessPlus) created positive public relations for FIDE with organizers and participants. The partnership was cost effective for FIDE, saving significant funding while increasing visibility. In addition, FIDE and FIDE EDU gained important content for both websites.

## Development of New Preparation of Teachers Course

The International Advisory Board of the EDU Commission undertook the task of reviewing the old PoT course. Rita Atkins, Anzel Laubscher, Tamara Sargsyan and Boris Bruhn were members of the team that revised the old course to bring it in line with the concept of educational chess: using chess as an educational tool to teach academic and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The course aims to equip educators with the necessary skills to teach educational chess effectively. The target audience includes teachers and trainers with some understanding of chess and experience working with children.

While still covering the introduction of chess rules and development of basic chess skills through playing chess, also incorporated in the new course are chess-like minigames and exercises as well as important pedagogic elements, such as classroom management, teaching to different learning styles, differentiation techniques, safeguarding, and lesson planning. Examples of chess used as an interdisciplinary or as a transversal tool are also discussed. [Transversal tool: when it is used in a field that cuts across all subjects, such as for developing emotional intelligence. Interdisciplinary tool: when it is used to facilitate the learning of a specific subject, such as mathematics or languages.]

## Social Media and Website

FIDE Chess in Education has been making remarkable strides on social media, with a significant increase in followership across platforms. On Facebook, the official account boasts an impressive 22% growth, now with a total of 4,371 followers, primarily comprising passionate chess enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, the Twitter account has experienced a remarkable surge of 45%, reaching 1,295 followers, with a diverse audience that includes chess players, journalists, and federations. The engagement on Facebook is equally noteworthy, with a consistent effort of publishing 5 posts weekly over the last 90 days. This has resulted in an impressive reach of 51.6K and an engagement level of 7.7K users. The net gain in followers stands at a commendable +373, reflecting the growing influence and impact of FIDE Chess in Education on social media.

The community's enthusiastic response (sold out PoT courses) underscores the organization's success in fostering a vibrant and engaged online chess community.

The new EDU website will be running by the end of this year. It will be an information sharing website where everybody comes to in matters of chess in education. A world map is presented on the home page. When a country is selected, items that are appropriate for that country will be displayed.

## Conferences in Astana, Chicago, and Bologna

A "Chess in Education" conference was sponsored by [FIDE - International Chess Federation](#) and Kazakhstan Chess Federation in Astana on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Experts from the EDU Commission that included Chairman Jerry Nash from the USA, Secretary Rita Atkins from Hungary, Senior Adviser Leontxo Garcia from Spain, and Member of the EDU Commission Vahan Sargsyan from Armenia, shared their insights. Educators from all over Kazakhstan learned how to use the game for teachings children mathematics, problem solving, creativity and other important skills. A few days later Leontxo Garcia and Rita Atkins represented FIDE EDU at a press conference, where they talked about the benefits of chess in education and answered questions from the audience.

On April 25<sup>th</sup> Rita Atkins held a hands-on workshop for fifteen local teachers. Together they solved mathematical problems on the chessboard and played chess-like games, all of which were suitable for use in primary schools.

The "Chess for Freedom" Conference in Chicago, USA, May 18-20 was organized by the FIDE Social Commission and the Cook County Sheriff's Office (Chicago, USA). More than 40 participants, including FIDE officials, representatives of national chess federations and experts involved in programs that introduce chess to inmates went to Chicago to discuss concepts and approaches to using chess as a rehabilitation tool for incarcerated people. The conference included representatives from the Education Commission. Chairman Jerry Nash and Member Boris Bruhn attended, and Mr. Nash delivered a presentation on chess as a diversionary strategy for juvenile offenders. Both commissions are in discussions on how to collaborate on the project going forward.

Chairman Jerry Nash also represented FIDE EDU at the "Chess: A Game to be Spread in Schools" (CGS) conference in Bologna, Italy, May 27-28. The presentation provided an overview of the activities and vision of the Education Commission.

## Chairman's Visit to Qatar

Qatar Chess Association organized a "Chess in Schools" seminar in cooperation with FIDE EDU. The event was held on 3-4 of May 2023 in Doha as the first step of an implementation agreement between the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Participating in the project are 10 Qatari primary public schools.

The lecture was presented both in Arabic and English by the Chairman of FIDE EDU and his assistant, IM Ismail Karim, newly enrolled coach of Qatar Chess Association. The project will be implemented in schools with the start of the academic year 2023-2024 next September.

## Chairman's Visit to India

Organized by the All India Chess Federation (AICF), the 10-day visit from May 30 – June 11 included the cities of Delhi, Bikaner, Ahmedabad, Indore, Nagpur, and Bhubaneshwar. The schedule was a combination of presentations to educators and chess trainers as well as meetings that included participation from the highest levels of government, sport, and education in each state.

The FIDE brand is strong in India. One reason for the visibility of the visit and the extent of the welcomes and meetings is due to the fact that FIDE is a global organization that carries credibility within the Indian culture. The visit revealed the deep interest in both competitive and educational chess that currently exists. Their chess trainers are as interested in EDU training as they are in sportive chess training. An initiative announced during the visit was a sport university that plans to offer a specialty area for chess.

The Indian culture has inherent ties to the origins of chess and now chess as a means of teaching academic and 21st century skills is a logical next step in the future of the game in the country. The realization of this potential will be determined both by finding creative solutions to training teachers and chess trainers as well as identifying the human and financial resources needed for a project of this scope. Discussions are already underway to determine the next steps for project development.

The long-term benefits for FIDE (and FIDE EDU) for a partnership with AICF in a Chess in Education initiative cannot be overstated. The numbers are overwhelming. For just one state in India the leaders set their minimum goal for the number of teachers to be trained at 10,000. The Chairman for Chess in Schools for the AICF, Adjeet Verma, stated that to achieve a significant presence for chess and CIE in India, they needed to reach "a million teachers." Of course, the realization of this potential will be determined both by finding creative solutions to training this many participants as well as locating the funding sources which can support the project. Discussions are already underway to determine the project details and how AICF and FIDE can establish a mutually beneficial partnership.

## Strategy Workshop

The EDU Commission hosted its first Strategy Workshop online on July 8th, 2023. Over sixty representatives from twenty African Chess Federations participated, each bringing their expertise to the table. Senior FIDE officials and EDU Commission members were also present. The aim of the workshop was to promote chess as an educational tool. Commission Councilor Mr. Thabano Mothokomedi took care of the organisation.

EDU Commission Secretary Rita Atkins hosted the workshop, highlighting the vision of educational chess and aiming to make it an essential tool for educating students worldwide. Differentiating between educational chess and competitive chess, the Secretary pointed out that the ideal CIE program would be inclusive of all students and not just a few who play in chess tournaments. Coping with defeats and analytical thinking would help improve future competencies in the youth worldwide. It is the vision of the EDU Commission to make FIDE the global leader in CIE. The goal is to double the number of educators and the number of students involved in CIE in the next three years. The International Advisory Board and the CIE Development team are established within the EDU Commission to drive progress towards this ambitious goal.

GM Abhijit Kunte, Member of EDU Commission, encouraged all federations to introduce CIE in their countries, stating the importance of formulating strategies that individual countries can target. He moderated a discussion in which participants recognized the need to engage policymakers and ministers to advocate for chess in primary education, and to secure financial support from multinational companies and social entrepreneurs. Providing chess equipment, training educators, establishing chess

clubs and coaches in schools to promote competitiveness and active association with media are key points that were discussed.

The workshop then unveiled the new Preparation of Teachers course. Esteban Jaureguizar, Councilor of the EDU Commission together with Leontxo Garcia, Senior Advisor of the EDU Commission emphasized the potential of chess being a therapeutic and social tool in education. They advocated for engaging governments, influential journalists, and research groups to promote CIE, stressing the need to integrate chess into the curriculum and make it an interdisciplinary tool or a standalone subject.

Adriana Salazar, Member of EDU Commission, showcased successful examples of teaching mathematics through chess, illustrating its effectiveness in engaging students and enhancing learning outcomes. Dr. Uvencio Blanco, Member of EDU Commission, introduced a collection of books that could be used in a curriculum for a CIE program.

Concluding the workshop, WGM Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Managing Director of FIDE, repeated and further emphasized the goal of the EDU Commission to double the number of teachers and children engaged in educational chess worldwide. In her opinion the workshop was a testament to the immense potential of CIE. The interest we see globally towards the game is at its peak. With continued efforts and collaboration, chess can truly unlock the potential of young minds across the globe.

## The IOC Africa Project

FIDE EDU, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the national federations of Zimbabwe and Nigeria organized an initiative to introduce chess in education to those countries. The visit in July 2023 of FIDE EDU Commission Chairman Jerry Nash and Commission member Anzel Laubscher represents a collaborative opportunity to establish a strong foundation for chess in education in the countries and to assist the national federations in building upon that foundation.

The schedule of activities in each country included presentations to stakeholders and potential sponsors as well as a Preparation of Teachers (PoT) course for the School Instructor (SI) title. This course not only trained teachers and chess coaches, but also provided a concrete demonstration of the ideas and values of chess as an educational tool to existing and potential stakeholders.

The course and the other activities encouraged media attention. This allowed potential sponsors to recognize the power of being a partner in education. The visit also helped the federation to generate new ideas in their context of how the organization could grow, create new leadership, and to establish lasting relationships with business, government, and education leaders. The combined presence of the national federation and FIDE generated both visibility and credibility for both organizations.

This project lays the groundwork for extensive work in both countries as well as in neighboring countries. A special thanks is due to the leadership of FIDE, the IOC, and the national federations for their support in this project. In addition, EDU Commission Secretary Rita Atkins and Commission member Anzel Laubscher are to be commended for their detailed work to accomplish the needed logistics for the two-country tour. GM Nigel Short played a valuable role in the promotion of both FIDE and Chess in Education in Zimbabwe.

## Global Chess Festival and Education Summit

Judit Polgár's Global Chess Festival, organized by the Judit Polgar Chess Foundation, is an annual event celebrating the diversity of chess, held in Budapest, Hungary. The festival was inaugurated in 2015 and connects fans and chess organizers worldwide through a range of chess-related activities. The festival took place on October 14th and 15th. The venue for the past few years has been the exquisite building

of the Hungarian National Gallery.

Chess activities tailored for both adults and children encompass professional tournaments, simultaneous exhibitions, educational conferences, learning platforms, art exhibitions, and various enjoyable programs for families. Lately, the festival has expanded its reach by broadcasting select programs in English, such as the Educational Chess Summit, diverse talks, and chess tournaments on online platforms. The festival's motto is: "Chess Connects Us."

The Educational Chess Summit is an essential part of the festival. This year's theme is "Chess and decision making". This is one of two major conference events that FIDE EDU regularly supports and is in line with our activities as per the Annual EDU Strategic Plan.

This prestigious event was frequented by many hundreds of students and teachers from Hungary and also from the international community, and thus it was an ideal place to promote chess as an educational tool. Plenty of personal and media attention was given to FIDE EDU in three ways:

- FIDE Managing Director, Chair and Senior Adviser of the EDU Commission plus two commission members gave presentations about chess and decision making. These presentations were live streamed and recorded.
- We showcased our scholastic chess activities by holding a workshop for children titled "Explore school subjects through chess".
- The festival organisers gave us professional assistance to conduct interviews with four people who are at the forefront of CIE. We have prepared a promotional video for EDU using these interviews, which is available on the FIDE EDU YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/uVMoPKMP5pM?si=TRRUlyl1GKYfv95O>

## FIDE Americas Chess in Education Conference

FIDE Americas Chess in Education online Conferences were held on October 28-29 in English and on November 11-12 in Spanish. FIDE EDU Chairman gave a presentation on chess and critical thinking skills, while FIDE EDU Secretary lectured on teaching arithmetic with chess.

Other report highlights from FIDE Americas about strategic outcomes and achievements:

Successfully hosted FIDE America's inaugural webinar, establishing a blueprint for future educational initiatives. The vibrant learning atmosphere provided the experience necessary for expanding subsequent webinars, including a Spanish-language series that engaged an additional 253 participants. This growth shows the great interest in this kind of formation in the continent and the value of the experience at the first conference. Key outcomes include endorsing chess as a multidisciplinary educational tool and forming a supportive community of chess educators to dozens of teachers with a reach of thousands of students.

## Participation summary of the Preparation of Teachers (PoT) courses delivered in 2023

During the year of 2023 the Education Commission has successfully conducted a series of online and in-person courses in English aimed at preparing teachers to introduce chess as an educational tool in the classroom. In total, 18 POT courses were conducted during 2023, involving 473 participants and 284 SI title holders. 9 courses were conducted online and 9 conducted in person. The courses involved participants from 79 countries. The following countries hosted in person PoT courses: Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Guyana, Namibia, Tanzania, and South Africa.

The following leaders were instrumental in the successful delivery of the courses:

- Nash, Jerry - Developmental Instructor, Chairman of the FIDE Chess in Education Commission (USA)
- Atkins, Rita – WIM, Secretary of the FIDE Chess in Education Commission (Hungary)
- Bruhn, Boris - FIDE Arbiter, FIDE EDU commission member (Germany)
- Laubscher, Anzel - WIM, FIDE Instructor, FIDE EDU commission member (South Africa)
- Sargsyan, Tamara - Teachers' trainer-mentor, Researcher, FIDE EDU commission member (Armenia)
- Salazar, Adriana - WIM, FIDE EDU commission member (Colombia)
- Jaureguizar, Esteban - FIDE EDU commission councilor (Uruguay)

The Education Commission's efforts in preparing teachers through both online and in-person courses have yielded substantial success. The positive feedback from participants underscores the value these courses bring to the chess in education community.

## Plans for 2024

The EDU Commission plans to continue its efforts to advance chess as an educational tool globally through the following activities:

- Offer Preparation of Teachers and Preparation of Lecturers courses.
- Collaborate with federations to build scalable and sustainable chess in education initiatives.
- Offer FIDE School Awards for successful implementation of educational chess in schools.
- Outsource the Preparation of Teachers (PoT) course organization to interested parties and create a selection process for suitable lecturers for these courses.
- Develop a CIE Course Certification framework and make the list of FIDE endorsed courses available on the new EDU website.
- Expand the visibility of chess in education by supporting CIE conferences.
- Collaborate in the development of resources for CIE. Collect, create and disseminate such resources through the new EDU website.

We recognize the many ongoing efforts of individuals, organizations, and federations to advance chess in education. One of the goals of FIDE EDU is to continue to highlight and support such endeavors whenever possible. Our collaboration will be essential to reach the full potential of chess as an educational tool.

### **Report Submitted By**

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