



31 March 2010

Dr Phil Daro
ISDDE Prize for Design in Education

Dear Dr Daro

I wish to nominate Isfahan Mathematics House (IMH) for the ISDDE Prize for Design in Education.

IMH has now been visited by a number of Western mathematics educators and stands out as an innovative institution which could provide a model for other countries. It has already provided a model for other cities in Iran.

It is discussed in some detail in the Study Volume of ICMI Study 16, Barbeau and Taylor Challenging Mathematics In and Beyond the Classroom, Springer 2009, particularly on pp 88 to 92.

It is essentially a facility for mathematics teaching for students throughout the city of Isfahan, and is supported financially by the City Council of Isfahan, which essentially provided the land and large new building with many classrooms and display areas.

To answer the dot points briefly.

- Aspects of the design that move the field of education design forward: This is totally innovative. Anyone is welcome to call in and seek help. There is an administrative infrastructure which prepares a regular program of activities, suitable for a range of student interests and needs. It also helps the teachers.
- Achievement of specific goals for improved outcomes. This is no longer a dream. Since I first visited in 2004 this has been a reality, achieving all its stated goals.
- Use of research and the value of resulting insights: I cannot produce specific examples in this initial nomination, but clearly research is taking place of a type to produce new insights.
- Systematic development through trials with people representative of well-identified target groups of users: Again this is clearly happening, but details can follow if required.
- Valuable unanticipated outcomes related to transformative effects in use: I have personally taken classes here. I was interested in the team approach to problem solving. Problems usually solved first by boys individually were systematically solved by girls first when acting as a team. There are practices here which I would regard as experimental, but which can have potentially profound outcomes.
- Surprise and delight – as in all good art: All students appeared to be happy and enthusiastic.

Several others who have seen this in operation are in the list of proposed referees below.

Referees

1. Professor Peter Taylor of Australian Mathematics Trust <pjt013@gmail.com>
2. Professor Petar Kenderov of the WFNMC <vorednek@yahoo.com>
3. Professor Bernard Hodgson of ICMI <Bernard.Hodgson@mat.ulaval.ca>
4. Professor Michéle Artigue of ICMI <artigue@math.jussieu.fr>
5. Professor Allan Rossman of IASE <arossman@calpoly.edu>
6. Professor Jan P. Hogendijk of Utrecht University <J.P.Hogendijk@uu.nl>

Other supporting documents. It is useful to visit

<http://www.mathhouse.org/Visitorpages/default.aspx?itemid=87>

And I also attach some other letters of which I am aware.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.P. Hogendijk', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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