



2022 Yidan Prize—World’s Highest Accolade in Education—Awarded to Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Professor Yongxin Zhu

Hong Kong SAR, September 29, 2022—The Yidan Prize Foundation has awarded Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Professor Yongxin Zhu the 2022 Yidan Prize, the world’s highest education accolade. The award recognizes their innovative work in empowering educators, and promoting inclusive and equitable access to education, ensuring every learner can reach their full potential.

Founded in 2016, the Yidan Prize Foundation has a mission to create a better world through education. Following a rigorous independent judging process, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Professor Yongxin Zhu receive the 2022 Yidan Prize for Education Research and the 2022 Yidan Prize for Education Development, respectively.

“We offer our warmest congratulations to our 2022 Yidan Prize laureates, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Professor Yongxin Zhu. They both play an important role in empowering our teachers and youth with the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. Their work clearly shows the transformative impact that teachers can have on learners. And when students have great teachers, they have great opportunities.” said Mr. Edward Ma, Secretary-General of the Yidan Prize Foundation.

Recognizing excellence to spark real, scalable change in education

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education Emeritus, Stanford University, and President and CEO, Learning Policy Institute, is awarded the 2022 Yidan Prize for Education Research for her work in shaping education policy and practice around the most equitable and effective ways to teach and learn. Her research reveals the diverse ways children learn and how best to teach them—and feeds those insights into robust educator development programs and transformed schools that holistically support teachers to change children’s lives.

“With an unwavering drive to see every learner reach their full potential, regardless of social background, gender and geography, Linda has spent her life building research tools that support policy and practice to create better and fairer educational opportunities. Her influence on public policy has helped policy architects shape positive changes for children on a large scale,” said Andreas Schleicher, head of the Yidan Prize for Education Research judging panel, and director for the OECD’s Directorate of Education and Skills.



With the Yidan Prize funds, Linda will scale up her critical work at [Educator Preparation Laboratory](#) (EdPrepLab): a network focused on supporting student-centered, equity-focused teacher preparation programs, which are grounded in the science of learning and development and prepare teachers to help all students learn in empowering ways. She will expand the reach of EdPrepLab, adding new programs, investing in new research about effective programs, and creating a space where educators, researchers and policymakers can easily share and learn from each other.

Professor Yongxin Zhu, Founder of the New Education Initiative (NEI) and Professor, School of Education, Soochow University, is awarded the 2022 Yidan Prize for Education Development for his work in improving teaching quality and transforming learning outcomes in China. His NEI programs support the well-being and development of teachers, reaching over 8,300 schools, over 500,000 teachers and 8 million students across China—more than half of which are in rural and remote areas. By bringing a learner’s whole community together, NEI transforms home environments into positive learning spaces and fosters a collaborative approach to learning. Teachers, students and families work together towards clear learning goals, deepening education outcomes beyond a focus on teaching-to-test and exams.

“Professor Zhu is successfully addressing some of the most intractable challenges in education: improving equity and inclusiveness. His work encourages an appreciation of the value of learning for personal growth by improving reading, writing and communication. He has succeeded in gradually changing how teachers approach professional development and how students learn in classrooms and at home. Perhaps most importantly, he reminds us of the importance of joy and well-being for every learner,” said Dorothy K. Gordon, head of Yidan Prize for Education Development judging panel, and Board Member of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education.

Professor Yongxin Zhu plans to use the Yidan Prize funds to expand NEI’s reach in remote, rural areas in China and develop a cloud-based learning hub, improving education quality and providing inclusive and equitable access to education for all learners.

“The Yidan Prize champions the most innovative ideas in education and helps scale them so as many people as possible can benefit. Our laureates are therefore crucial to our aim of transforming education worldwide—and through that, unlocking a brighter future for all learners,” said Dr. Koichiro Matsuura, Chairman of the Yidan Prize Judging Committee and the former Director-General of UNESCO.



Yidan Prize Foundation is championing changemakers in education

The Yidan Prize honors individuals or teams that have significantly contributed to the theory and practice of education. Each laureate will be awarded HK\$30 million (approximately US\$3.9 million, shared equally for teams), half of which will serve as a project fund to help them scale their education projects and support more learners globally.

The 2021 Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate, Professor Eric A. Hanushek, is using the Prize funds to set up the Yidan African Fellows Program, a network of local policy fellows with an aim to improve education decision-making across sub-Saharan Africa. In India, 2021 Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureate Dr. Rukmini Banerji is working with Pratham to develop, test and refine early years programs and expand collaboration with local governments. These programs are expected to benefit 35,000 children across 650 communities.

2023 Yidan Prize nominations open in October

The Yidan Prize continues to welcome nominations to honor changemakers in education, who are positively impacting learners across the globe with transformative, scalable, and sustainable learning solutions.

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ABOUT THE YIDAN PRIZE FOUNDATION

The Yidan Prize Foundation is a global philanthropic foundation, with a mission of creating a better world through education. Through its prize and network of innovators, the Yidan Prize Foundation supports ideas and practices in education—specifically, ones with the power to positively change lives and society.

The Yidan Prize is an inclusive education accolade that recognizes individuals or teams who have contributed significantly to the theory and practice of education. It consists of two prizes, working in harmony: the Yidan Prize for Education Research and the Yidan Prize for Education Development. They're designed for impact: laureates receive a project fund of HK\$15 million over three years, helping them scale up their work, as well as a gold medal and a cash prize of HK\$15 million (shared equally for teams).

For more information visit yidanprize.org or contact media@yidanprize.org.