



2026 Yidan Prize recognizes changemakers redefining education and care at the intersection of health, nutrition, and economics

Descrizione

COMUNICATO STAMPA - CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

HONG KONG, Sept. 2, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - The Yidan Prize Foundation, a global philanthropic organization, announced the 2026 Yidan Prize laureates at a press conference in Hong Kong today, marking the prize's tenth year of championing education changemakers worldwide. Chaired by OECD's Director for Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher, the independent Judging Committee has selected Professor Paul W. Glewwe as the 2026 Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate for breaking barriers to learning by shaping effective policies and interventions through rigorous research, unleashing the potential of children in vulnerable communities and unlocking a healthier, more prosperous future. The Committee has also selected Professor Susan P. Walker, Professor Sally Grantham-McGregor, and Dr Susan M. Chang-Lopez as the 2026 Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureates for developing an evidence-based, early childhood model that transforms children's development and life trajectories in low-resource, displaced, and indigenous communities.

Laureates of each prize will each receive HK\$30 million (approximately US\$3.8 million), comprising a cash award of HK\$15 million and an unrestricted project fund of HK\$15 million to advance their work and expand their reach. Since 2017, the Yidan Prize Foundation has awarded a total of HK\$600 million (approximately US\$77 million) to 25 laureates, supporting their work in nearly 60 countries and regions.

"The work and collective impact of our laureates over the past decade have made the Yidan Prize a lighthouse to illuminate pathways forward in global education. Every laureate strengthens this commitment, brings transformative ideas, and expands the ways in which we shape the future of education," said Dr Charles CHEN Yidan, Founder of the Yidan Prize.

The Yidan Prize recognizes changemakers whose work is future-oriented, innovative, transformative, and sustainable. Nominations for the 2027 Yidan Prize will open from 27 October 2026 until 2 March 2027.

Spotlighting what works and breaking down barriers to children's learning at scale

Paul W. Glewwe, Regents Professor in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, is awarded the 2026 Yidan Prize for Education Research for demonstrating how socioeconomic, health, and nutrition factors beyond traditional inputs in school settings shape children's learning outcomes. He was instrumental in introducing literacy, numeracy, and abstract reasoning indicators of both children and parents into the World Bank's household surveys, enabling policymakers to better understand the connection between poverty, inequality, and education. He also pioneered the use of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to evaluate the effectiveness of education programs and policies, helping governments and development organizations direct resources toward approaches proven to improve learning. In addition, he was among the first economists to incorporate social-emotional skills into economic analyses of education and development. His innovative research across more than 15 developing countries has shaped education policy and practice around the world.

Dr Elizabeth M. King, Head, Judging Panel, Yidan Prize for Education Research, highlighted the significance of Paul's work. She said, "Transforming education systems and outcomes happens when uncompromising scientific rigor is coupled with a fierce commitment to make a difference in people's lives. For nearly 40 years, Paul Glewwe has provided that rigor. He has given governments the evidence they need to spend wisely, teachers the tools they need to instruct effectively, and millions of vulnerable children the opportunity to learn, thrive, and escape the trap of intergenerational poverty."

Supporting parents and caregivers in the most critical years of children's development

Professor Susan P. Walker, Professor Sally Grantham-McGregor, and Dr Susan M. Chang-Lopez are recognized by the 2026 Yidan Prize for Education Development for their evidence-based early childhood intervention Reach Up. They are Emeritus Professor of Nutrition of the Caribbean Institute for Health Research at The University of the West Indies; Emeritus Professor of International Child Health and Development at University College London; and Senior Lecturer of the Caribbean Institute for Health Research at The University of the West Indies, respectively. Beginning their research careers in health and nutrition, they discovered the critical role of early stimulation and quality interaction in children's development and life trajectories. Building on this evidence, they developed practical solutions to expand caregivers' capacity to provide stimulation from age 0 to 4. Using low-cost, culturally adaptable activities rooted in everyday routines, Reach Up supports caregivers in building their knowledge, skills, and confidence to talk, play, and respond in ways that nurture children's cognitive development. Today, the program is implemented in over 21 countries across the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East through existing health, social protection, education, and humanitarian systems. Reach Up's curriculum and materials are available for free and are continuously evaluated and adapted to improve the program's effectiveness.

Dorothy K. Gordon, Head, Judging Panel, Yidan Prize for Education Development, applauded the laureates' contribution to early childhood education. She said, "Reach Up equips children with better chances for an equal start in learning, education, and life. The laureates have demonstrated how lasting change can be achieved through a combination of evidence, partnership, and local leadership."

The immense global impact of their work is linked to the quality and rigor of their pathbreaking multi-disciplinary research combined with a toolbox of well-designed interventions.â?•

Shaping the future of learning at the 2026 Yidan Prize Summit

The 2026 laureates will join three days of stimulating conversations at the Yidan Prize Summit in Hong Kong from 3 to 5 December 2026. Building on last yearâ??s discussion on the future of education at a crossroads, the 2026 Yidan Prize Summit will spotlight a shift underway: seeing education not just as a place, but as a driving force for flourishing ecosystems grounded in human connection, creation, and deep learning in the age of AI. The 2026 Yidan Prize Awards Ceremony will take place on the final day, where the 2026 laureates will receive their prizes.

Note to editors

Download images of the 2026 Yidan Prize laureates and Yidan Prize judges here.

Read the full citation from Dr Elizabeth M. King, head of the Yidan Prize for Education Research judging panel.

Read the full citation from Dorothy K. Gordon, head of the Yidan Prize for Education Development judging panel.

About the Yidan Prize Foundation

The Yidan Prize is the worldâ??s highest accolade in education, spotlighting innovators whose research and development work is transforming lives and societies. The Prize comprises two awards: the Yidan Prize for Education Research and the Yidan Prize for Education Development. Each award includes a gold medal, a total sum of HK\$30 million â?? half of which is a cash award of HK\$15 million, and another half is an unrestricted project fund of HK\$15 million to help laureates advance their missions.

Established in 2016, the Yidan Prize Foundation works toward a better world through education. Anchored around its laureates, the foundation brings together a global community of changemakers â?? researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and philanthropists â?? who learn from one another, champion shared standards of excellence, help shape the fieldâ??s agenda, and accelerate change at scale.

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

Find us @yidanprize on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.

View original content to download multimedia:<https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/2026-yidan-prize-recognizes-changemakers-redefining-education-and-care-at-the-intersection-of-health-nutrition-and-economics-302867751.html>

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