



Yidan Prize
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Making a nomination for the 2026 Yidan Prize

The Yidan Prize is the world's highest accolade in education. Tell us about the individuals and teams with the greatest potential, and we could support them on their way.

In this guide

Thank you for your interest in the Yidan Prize. This guide is for anyone who'd like to understand our nomination process better, whether you're a nominee, a nominator, or a supporter — someone supporting a nomination.

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Scan the QR code to
view our nomination
webpage.



Dates for your diary

Our nominations close on

3 March 2026

at 12 noon HKT (GMT+8)

We'll announce the laureates in

September 2026

And present the awards to the laureates in

December 2026



Getting to know the Yidan Prize

We launched the Yidan Prize Foundation in 2016 to create a better world through education. Where learning flourishes, so does society, and we're here to champion the people making that possible.

An inclusive education accolade

Each year, we award the Yidan Prize to individuals and teams in two areas:



Education Research

Recognizing researchers whose work strengthens teaching and learning through a deeper understanding of learning sciences or effective education policy.



Education Development

Recognizing leaders who are advancing practice through innovative ideas and interventions that make quality education more accessible to all.

A prize that goes beyond project funding

We award each year's laureates a gold medal and a total sum of HK\$30 million — half is a cash prize to recognize their contribution to the sector (shared equally for teams); the other half is a project fund to support the laureate's work. They could use this latter half to expand their reach into a new region, begin a new project, or keep doing more of the same brilliant work. We'll be by their side throughout, supporting them to evaluate how they're progressing and mapping their impact.

We've chosen these awards to inspire change, spark conversation, and bridge disciplines

The prizes — and the events and networks surrounding them — are our way to bring bright minds together to exchange ideas. That's why they work in harmony: to build a network of experts who're as strong in research as they are in practical application, across the world.

For example, we awarded our first Education Research prize to Professor Carol Dweck — whose leading-edge work in growth mindset underpins and inspires practice. And our 2020 Education Development laureates at CAMFED (the Campaign for Female Education), who work with marginalized girls in sub-Saharan Africa, partner with research institutes to track what's most effective, who's benefiting, and the costs.

Where any individual or team's work covers both research and development, we welcome two submissions: one for research and one for development.

Collaboration is key — so we also encourage nominations from teams

Complex problems need bright minds working together to solve them, and our prizes are open to teams of up to three. That could be a research group working on a project together, or even several people contributing to the same idea from separate organizations or locations. If you want to nominate work from a larger team, choose up to three representatives.

We're heartened to see more team nominations every year, and look forward to welcoming more teams to our laureate community.

Our story



The Yidan Prize exists to open education for everyone

From the beginning, our founder, Dr Charles CHEN Yidan, has established the Yidan Prize to serve as a lighthouse to inspire humanity and spotlight role models and possibilities for the future of education. When we recognize and bring together the brightest minds in educational research and practice — and build a global community around them — we can exchange ideas faster, and improve access and quality of learning across the world.

Charles has cherished education since his school days

Today, he recognizes the doors that have opened for him because of his lifelong love for learning. “My grandma was illiterate,” Charles once wrote. “She lived through war, famine, and poverty; she raised my father alone — the first college graduate in the village.”

“She always encouraged me to study, too: boiling red eggs for luck on my first day of school, sitting with me as I did my homework. She was an illiterate educator: she taught me the value of education — and showed me it should be open to everyone.”

We follow this spirit of openness in our nomination process

We take a meticulous approach to choosing laureates fairly: appointing an independent Judging Committee, working to set criteria and welcoming nominations from many different nations and sectors.

About the Yidan Prize judging process

The Judging Committee is made up of a diverse group of independent experts, appointed by invitation from our Board of Directors.

It's their role to review nominations and decide on each year's laureates, and as they do, they hold themselves (and we hold them) to the highest standards of fairness, openness, and non-bias.

Meet the [judges](#) on our website



There are two panels: one for research and one for development

But the final decisions for both awards are made collectively by the whole committee, led by the Chair.

Out of respect for this meticulous process, we ask that you don't contact any judge directly about your nomination; they won't reply to requests for feedback or updates.

Our judges assess work across four [criteria](#)

They look for work that is:

- future-oriented
- innovative
- transformative
- sustainable



There is no particular theme, region, or type of project in mind — our judges review every submission on its own merits.

Across the board, impact matters most

Our judges want to know what difference the nominee's (or nominees') work makes, or could make, to education systems around the world.

Your nominee's work doesn't have to have global reach yet — just tell us how it has potential to be expanded or replicated in other regions.

Who can make nominations for the Yidan Prize?

We welcome all nominations; our process is open to everyone. You don't need to be invited to nominate a team or individual for either the Education Research or Education Development prize.

That said, we do have the following guidelines to make sure nominations stay fair.

Can you speak to what impact the team or person has had?

Officially, you need to be a 'credible witness' to their impact: you need to have a thorough understanding of the work. As such, most of our nominators tend to be members of government bodies, non-governmental organizations, or professional associations. Otherwise, they're professional educators, respected figures in the sector, or work in the same organization or sphere as the nominee(s). But you don't have to tick one of those boxes: we welcome nominations from all.

Can you help find other supporters?

You need to add two supporter letters. To give our judges a holistic view, we ask that you include a mix of different external supporters. They might be partners, collaborators, donors, or colleagues, each with a unique perspective on your nominee(s) work. You can include **at most one** supporter from this person or team's organization.

You are allowed to nominate yourself — you'll just need three supporters instead of two.

Remember: if you're nominating a person or team, you can't also be a supporter of them. That doesn't stop you from also being a supporter of an unrelated nomination.

Can the same nominee appear in more than one nomination?

Yes — they can be nominated more than once in the same category, or they can be nominated in both categories if their work spans both research and development.

Having more than one nomination in one category doesn't increase the nominee's chances. If you know others who are also interested in nominating the same person or team, consider choosing one nominator between you, and asking everyone else to be a supporter. It'll probably make a stronger application overall.

How do I make a nomination?

Here's the process to follow: we just ask for all your documents and descriptions to be in English.

To get you started, we've included sample forms for Education Research and Education Development.

1. Register for a nominator account at nomination.yidanprize.org

We'll need to take your full name, email address, postal address, phone number, organization, and your role at this point.

2. Share your nominee's (or nominees') biography

Or your biography, if you're self-nominating. This should be 200 words or fewer; we'll use it in our announcement if they win.

3. Explain why they deserve this accolade

Write to explain the work of the person or people you're nominating and the achievements or outcomes their projects have created. You can include both the impact their work is having now and what you think they could achieve with the help of the prize funding.

4. Tell the judges how your nominee(s) meet the criteria

When our judges assess nominations, they're particularly looking for nominations that meet our four criteria.

5. Upload a two-minute video from the nominee(s)

Nominee(s) should record a one- to two-minute video (using a mobile phone or video-conferencing app). Please tell us your vision of the future of education, and your role in it.

For our judges, this is one of the most helpful parts of the nomination. And don't worry: they're not swayed by expensive edits or any particular appearance.

The video must be an MP4, MOV, AVI, or M4V format under 200MB, ideally with 1920 x 1080 (1080p) dimensions. If you struggle to upload your video, you can link to it instead. Please make sure the link remains valid until September 2026. And if, for any reason, your nominee(s) would find it difficult to give a verbal presentation, let us know at nomination@yidanprize.org.

6. For Education Research, share the nominee's (or nominees') relevant publications

Please share at least two published papers (or up to five). While we accept books, book chapters, articles, teaching materials, presentations, and digital media (such as videos), you should include at least two peer-reviewed research articles. Most people upload them as PDFs, but we can also accept links.

7. For Education Development, you can share independent reviews

We strongly encourage you to upload any external or internal evaluation that will show our judges the impact and potential of the nominee's (or nominees') work.

8. Upload the [supporters' letters](#)

The maximum word limit for each letter is 5,000 words, but you don't have to reach it; most letters are one to two pages long. You can either scan in these letters (on official letterheads, please), or paste the text into the text box. Either way, we'll need contact details for each supporter.

Supporters give our judges an all-round view of the nominee's work and impact from people outside their organization. You can include at most one letter from the nominee's colleague.

Re-submissions

We'll prompt you when the next round opens so you may log back in and make updates.

You can now opt to keep your nomination valid for three more years from your submission. Once you have indicated your preference, we'll automatically keep your nomination valid for three more years.

You don't have to edit the form for the next few rounds if it's all up to date. Please make sure the supporters are happy with that. We'll send them a confirmation and might get in touch for more information, so you should always check with them.

Using the nomination platform

We only accept nominations submitted online, using our platform. If you've never used it before, here's what to expect:

1. Once you've [created an account](#), we'll send you a confirmation email. Please open this when it arrives — you'll need to click the link to activate your account.
2. Once that's done, you can start your nomination straight away. You can complete the form in any order, and come back to edit as often as you like before submitting. Save as you go, so you don't risk losing any work.
3. When you're ready, press 'Preview'. Check it through and make any edits you need. Once you're happy, hit 'Submit'. You can download a PDF of your nomination, and we'll email you to say we've got it.
4. After submission, you can still make changes if you need to — our judges don't look at anything until after the deadline.

That's everything. If you have a question for us later on, get in touch with our Secretariat at nomination@yidanprize.org, quoting your 'form ID' (it's on your nomination form). But please don't send any extra information by post or email — we can't review it.

Don't forget to have everything to hand before you get started. It's a lot easier and quicker that way. There's a [checklist](#) at the end of this guide to help you.

Tips for your nomination

Individual contributions are important — including in teams

If you're nominating a team of two or three nominees for their collaborative work, share with us how they work together in achieving their goals — each of their unique roles and contributions, how their expertise complements one another, and how their work fulfils our judging criteria as a team.

Provide as much evidence as possible

We're looking for evidence that demonstrates the impact of the nominee's (or nominees') work. In addition to describing their achievements, please insert web links or upload any documents that can help judges understand the scale of their impact.

The online nomination form lets you upload any extra documents that you think would be helpful for our judges to see, so do make the most of this — for example, is there any external press coverage you'd like to share? Are there independent evaluation reports about their work? Or you can add any additional recommendation letters.

If any of these aren't available in English, please include translations (or subtitles on videos).

Making the most of the video upload

This is a chance to speak straight to the judges — it's especially important because we don't have an interview stage.

Remember, they only have two minutes — whether they're a person or a team. If they're a team, we'd like to see all members on screen and speaking to the camera, so we can understand each of their roles in this project.

Don't worry about the production quality or adding visual effects. The judges are interested in the video's content, not style. The nominee is welcome to record in their native language — in fact, sometimes that can make it easier to show passion — we just ask you to add English subtitles or provide a transcript, too.

We only use this video for judging. We won't circulate it or publish it without permission.

Writing a letter of support

If you're writing a letter of support (or asking someone else to), it's up to you how you'd like to explain the impact of the nominee's (or nominees') work — you might have felt that impact personally, or observed it in action. We already ask for details on their idea and work, so think of this as a time to add a human touch. How has this nominee changed lives (or how could they change lives) with their work?

If you're supporting a team, don't forget to describe how their work together — not only their individual achievements — makes them a good candidate for a prize.

You should address the letter to the Yidan Prize Judging Committee.

Make your response easy to read

Our judging panel won't take presentation or formatting into account, but it always helps to present your answers clearly. Avoid jargon and technical terms and break up longer paragraphs with sub-headings to make them easier to read. Signposting changes in your updated nomination can also make it easier for the Judging Committee to know what has changed since your last nomination.

When you're ready, have everything to hand

It's much quicker to upload your nomination if you've already got all the materials and details you need. [Our checklist](#) at the end of this guide will help.

If your internet is unstable, consider drafting your responses first

You can download our nomination form templates for Education Research and Education Development and draft your responses offline. When you have everything ready, simply copy and paste your responses to the nomination platform.

Don't forget you can save as you go

You can fill in your nomination form in any order, and save as you go without submitting. We recommend you save every time you finish a section, just in case.



Sometimes, we won't consider a nomination

It's rare, but we occasionally withdraw a submission from the judging process. That happens if:

- **it includes false information:** such as a fake supporter letter, inaccurate bio, or any results or claims that aren't backed up by evidence
- **the form's not filled out in English:** our judges can only review submissions in English at the moment. That includes the video: it must have an English transcript or subtitles
- **we can't be sure the nominee led the work:** for example, if the work is for an organization, the organization's leader would usually be one of the nominees; if not, they must show they endorse the submission by being the nominator or a supporter
- **there aren't any external recommendations:** we want to hear from supporters outside of the nominee's (or nominees') organization about the impact of their work. You can include at most one supporter from the nominee's (or nominees') organization
- **the nominee(s) are nominated or supported by direct family members:** to avoid any conflict of interest, we don't consider nominations from direct family members, and we disregard letters of support from family
- **you've nominated someone who's on our Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, or Judging Committee:** to make sure we maintain our rigorous, independent judging process, direct members of our organization aren't eligible for our prizes
- **the nominee has sadly passed away since submitting:** we don't award posthumous prizes because our prizes include a project fund towards the next three years of a laureate's work. But if they were part of a team, we'll continue considering the rest of the nominees.
- **the nomination was withdrawn by the nominator/nominee:** the nominator or nominee(s) may choose to withdraw their nomination at any stage of the prize process.

We also strongly discourage you from contacting any of the judges about your nomination during the process.

Sometimes, judges might consider combining nominations

Combined nominations reinforce and multiply the impact of the laureates by recognizing and supporting them all. If a combined nomination wins the prize, the individuals will split the cash prize and project fund. Here's how it works:

1. Judges can combine two or three nominations to create a group of up to three individuals.
2. The cash prize and project fund will be split between nominations, even if one nomination has one individual and the other has two.

Unsure about something?

We understand that there's a great deal of detail to take in when you're nominating someone or being nominated. Here's where to find more information.

To learn more about the Prize's philosophy and processes, visit yidanprize.org

You'll find a wealth of information about our founding story and structures for keeping our nominations fair. You can also find links there to our social media pages where we share videos and articles that might help you understand the prize better, like speeches from previous awards presentation ceremonies and project work from our current laureates.

We often update our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page

So we'd recommend treating that as your first port of call if you have issues with your nomination, or need to check any of the requirements. We cover both the broader responsibilities of the Foundation as well as the specifics — like documents and dates — of submitting a nomination.

If you have any other questions, reach out to our Secretariat

We have a team dedicated to keeping the nomination process ticking along, so if you have questions or concerns about your application, email nomination@yidanprize.org.

Start your nomination

Begin by registering for a nominator account at nomination.yidanprize.org



Don't forget there's a [checklist](#) at the end of this guide to help you get started.

Checklist — what to have ready when you submit a nomination

2026 Yidan Prize

You'll find it quicker and easier to nominate if you have everything to hand before getting started, including a list of items to collect from your nominee(s) and supporters.

Don't forget to check that:

- everything, including the two-minute video, is in English. If it isn't, please include an English translation or subtitles
- all together, the files you upload to support your nomination are less than 40MB in file size; that doesn't include the two-minute video, which can be up to 200MB on its own
- all web links you provided are accessible until September 2026.



Note: if you're nominating a person or team for their work with an organization, the organization's leader should be among the nominees, the nominator, or a supporter (to show they endorse the nomination).

From the nominee(s), we need:

- ☐ Their personal details: full name, date of birth, position, and organization; home address; cell phone number; and email
- ☐ Their CV(s)
- ☐ A biography for each nominee (up to 200 words)
- ☐ A two-minute video (file size under 200MB, in one of these file formats: MP4, MOV, AVI, or M4V). Whether they are a team or a person, we only need to see one video
- ☐ **For the Education Research prize, we also need:**
At least two and up to five most relevant publications. While we accept books, book chapters, articles, teaching materials, presentations, and videos, you should include at least two peer-reviewed research articles. Ideally, they are in PDF format (though we also accept links)

If you submit a link, please make sure the publication isn't behind a paywall and that it goes directly to the piece.
- ☐ **For the Education Development prize, we also need:**
External independent or internal evaluation reports on their work. These are optional, but we encourage them to include any if available.

From supporters, we need:

- ☐ Separate recommendation letters from supporters (up to 5,000 words for each). You need to include at least two. If you're nominating yourself or your team, you'll need three. You can include at most one supporter from the nominee's organization
- ☐ All supporters' personal details: full name, position, and organization; postal address; cell phone number; and email.

From the nominator, we need:

- ☐ A personal statement on why the nominee(s) should be a Yidan Prize laureate
- ☐ A response on each of the judging criteria, explaining how the nominee(s) and their achievements are future-oriented, innovative, transformative, and sustainable. There is no word limit to your response
- ☐ An explanation of the nominee's (or nominees') future plans
- ☐ Any other supporting documents for this nomination. These are optional, but we strongly recommend that you share any other relevant information that will help our judges see why the nominee(s) should be a Yidan Prize laureate.

yidanprize.org



@yidanprize



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