



Award Ceremony

2021 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education

15 October 2021, 10:00-11:15 CET



Background

Established in 2015 by UNESCO's Executive Board, the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education rewards outstanding innovations and contributions made by individuals, institutions and organizations to advance girls' and women's education.

Funded by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Prize is conferred annually to two laureates and consists of an award of US \$50,000 each to help further their work in the area of girls' and women's education.

UNESCO will celebrate the 2021 laureates in an award ceremony held online on Friday 15 October between 10 – 11.15 CET. The ceremony will be attended by Professor Peng Liyuan, First Lady of the People's Republic of China and UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education, and Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO. In addition to the formal announcement of the 2021 laureates, the ceremony will celebrate the first 10 laureates of the Prize's inaugural cycle (2016 – 2020).

Projects from the first five-year cycle come from all corners of the globe – Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Peru, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Zimbabwe. They cover a wide range of themes, including early childhood education, education and training for migrant girls and women, ending gender-based violence, closing gendered access gaps to education, gender mainstreaming in formal education, digital skills for girls, and the advancement of girls’ participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Held as part of UNESCO’s celebration of 2021 International Day of the Girl, the formal ceremony will be followed by the launch of a new China-Africa collaborative project on ‘Promoting School Health Education for Girls in Africa in the COVID Era’, funded by Peking University and supported by UNESCO, and a panel discussion featuring a representative from Peking University and four Prize laureates who will discuss their work to advance education, health, protection and rights for girls during COVID-19 school closures. The panel will also share highlights from a [new global study on the gender dimensions of COVID-19 school closures](#) published by UNESCO’s Global Education Coalition’s Gender Flagship.

Objectives

The event seeks to:

- Celebrate the first five-year cycle of the UNESCO Prize for Girls’ and Women’s Education (2016-2020) and showcase the efforts and good practices the Prize’s first 10 laureates;
- Recognize and promote the success of the 2021 laureates, highlighting their innovative contributions to girls’ and women’s education;
- Highlight the important work of the People’s Republic of China in the promotion of girls’ and women’s education as part of their commitment to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5;
- Launch a China-Africa Collaborative project on ‘Promoting School Health Education for Girls in Africa in the COVID Era’, funded by Peking University, People’s Republic of China;
- Highlight the importance of the Prize and the work of its laureates during COVID-19, and launch [new evidence](#) on good practice to address the gender dimensions of COVID-19 school closures.

Format and Language

This online event will consist of a formal award ceremony attended by Professor Peng Liyuan, First Lady of the People’s Republic of China and UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls’ and Women’s Education and Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, to be followed by a panel discussion.

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French, Spanish and Chinese.

Registration

Join us for the event. Please register [here](#).

Programme

10:00-10:30

Award Ceremony of 2021 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education

Chairperson: Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

- **Opening and welcoming remarks**
- **Broadcast of short video featuring the five-year cycle (2016-2020) of the Prize**
- **Remarks by representative from the Jury (2016-2020)**, Ms Aïcha Bah Diallo, Founding Member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Former Minister of Education of Guinea
- **Remarks on the 2nd cycle (2021-2025) of the Prize**, Mr Tian Xuejun, Vice-Minister of Education, Chairperson of Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, the People's Republic of China
- **Remarks and announcement of the 2021 laureates**, Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO
- **Introduction to the 2021 laureates** (video)
- **Congratulatory remarks**, Professor Peng Liyuan, First Lady of the People's Republic of China, UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education
- **Remarks by the 2021 laureates**, Ms Mariel Reyes Milk, Executive Director, {reprograma}, Brazil and Mr Luis Amaral, co-founder, Girl MOVE Academy, Mozambique
- **Closure of the award ceremony**

10:30-10:45

Launch of project 'Promoting School Health Education for Girls in Africa in the COVID Era'

Moderator: Ms Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa, Director, Division for Education 2030, Education Sector, UNESCO

Speakers

- Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO
- Mr Hao Ping, President, Peking University, the People's Republic of China
- H.E. Mr Albertus Aochamub, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Namibia to France, Permanent Delegate of Namibia to UNESCO, Chairperson of the Africa Group
- Mr Tian Xuejun, Vice-Minister of Education, Chairperson of Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, the People's Republic of China

10:45-11:15

Panel: Advancing education, health, protection and rights during COVID-19 school closures

Moderator: Ms Justine Sass, Chief, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, Division of Education 2030, Education Sector, UNESCO

Panelists

- Ms Denise Matsule, Medical Doctor, Girl MOVER, Girl MOVE Academy, Mozambique, 2021 laureate of the Prize
- Ms Evernice Munando, Director, Female Students Network Trust, Zimbabwe, 2016 laureate of the Prize
- Ms Perihan Abou El Ela, Senior External Relations Manager, Misr El-Kheir Foundation, Egypt, 2018 laureate of the Prize
- Ms Mercy Musomi, Executive Director, Girl Child Network, Kenya, 2020 laureate of the Prize
- Ms Ma Yinghua, Professor, School of Public Health, Peking University

Closing remarks

Biographies of speakers and moderators

Peng Liyuan



Peng Liyuan, First Lady of the People's Republic of China, was appointed UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education in March 2014. This title was bestowed upon her in light of her support of girls' and women's empowerment through quality education, as well as her outstanding contribution to the fight against inequalities in education. In her capacity as a UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education, she contributes to promoting gender equality and enhancing the access of women and girls to inclusive, equitable and quality education.

Audrey Azoulay



Audrey Azoulay is the Director-General of UNESCO. Having worked in the cultural sector since the beginning of her professional career, Audrey Azoulay has, among other things, worked on the financing of the French public audiovisual sector and on the reform and modernisation of French film support systems. In 2014, as an advisor on culture to the President of the French Republic, she notably initiated the development of a protection plan for heritage in danger, which she was able to implement in 2016 as Minister of Culture and Communication. According to her, "none of the great challenges of today's world can be solved by one country alone and without relying on the fundamental pillars of science, education and culture."

Aïcha Bah Diallo



Aïcha Bah Diallo is a founding member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and is known as a champion for girls' and women's education. She is the Chair of the Africa Network Campaign for Education for All and of Trust Africa, among other key roles she has taken to lower barriers related to education for girls and women. As the Minister of Education in Guinea (1990-1996), she pioneered a programme that boosted the enrolment of girls in schools from 113,000 to 233,000.

Tian Xuejun



Tian Xuejun is the Vice Minister of Education, Chairperson of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Chairperson of National Language Commission of China. Mr Tian was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Hellenic Republic (2004-2007) and the Republic of South Africa (2012-2017). He started his career in Chinese Embassy in Kuwait in 1985 and then moved to the Embassy in Bangladesh. During his long career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he served as Second Secretary, Counselor, and then Director General of the Department of Personnel.

Mariel Reyes Milk



Founder and CEO of {reprograma}, Mariel Reyes Milk is a social entrepreneur who works to bring more diversity to Brazil's IT sector. She believes that everyone should be creating technology, and that training women and girls in computer programming not only empowers them and transforms their lives, but also makes business sense. Before becoming a social entrepreneur, Mariel worked at the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation for ten years, on social and environmental development projects in Latin America and Asia. Mariel is dedicated to building a more diverse and inclusive world.

Luis Amaral



Luis Amaral is a traveller, a visionary, an entrepreneur, investor, father, grandfather, a businessman, and the co-founder, together with Alexandra Machado, of Girl MOVE Academy. He has a distinguished career in business, working at Unilever Portugal, Jerónimo Martins Poland and other companies. He is fully aware that, women in Africa have less opportunities to study and lead, meanwhile they are the main educators, the real doers, and the working force of the society. This inspired him to co-found the Girl MOVE which aims to empower adolescent girls and young women in Mozambique.

Stefania Giannini



Stefania Giannini has served as Assistant Director-General for Education for UNESCO since 2018 and also serves as Advisor to the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation. She served in the Senate of the Republic of Italy from 2013-18 and as the country's Minister of Education, Universities and Research from 2014-16. She began her career as a professor of linguistics and was Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia from 2004-12. She has also served in the Selection Committee of the Erasmus Mundus programme in Brussels, the Committee of The Conference of Italian University Rectors and the National Commission for the Promotion of Italian Culture Abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Firmin Edouard Matoko



Firmin Edouard Matoko currently is the Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations of UNESCO. Prior to this, he was Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), as well as UNESCO Representative to Ethiopia. He served as Director in Quito and Bamako UNESCO Cluster Offices and as Chief of the Education for peace, Human rights and Democracy Section, in the Division for the Promotion of Quality education in the Sector of Education as well as Senior Programme Specialist for Culture of Peace National Programmes in UNESCO's Paris Headquarters.

Hao Ping



Hao Ping has been President of Peking University since 2018. He served as President of Beijing Foreign Studies University during 2005-2009. He was Vice Minister of Education of China from 2009 to 2016, and was President of the 37th session of the General Conference, UNESCO, from 2013 to 2015. HAO Ping is also a respected writer and scholar and has published a number of academic papers and books on the modern history of China, history of Sino-US relations, and history of higher education in China.

Albertus Aochamub



Albertus Aochamub serves as the Namibian Ambassador to the French Republic (with Concurrent accreditation to Spain, Italy, and Portugal) and Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, OECD, CPLP and UNWTO since 2018. Mr. Aochamub also holds the Chairpersonship of the Africa Group at UNESCO for 2021. In 2015 the President of Namibia appointed Mr. Aochamub as his Press Secretary and Media Advisor until 2018. Between 2000 and 2019, he served on various private and public sector boards, and at present, is a Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO and the Executive Council of the UN World Tourism Organization.

Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa



Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa is the Director of the Division for Education 2030 at UNESCO Headquarters. Maki has extensive experiences of over 25 years with UNESCO, UNICEF and JICA, in managing global, regional and country level programmes on inclusive education, gender and education, ECCE, learning assessment and teacher education as well as coordinating partnerships in education. Currently, she oversees UNESCO's global programmes on Gender and Inclusive Education, Higher Education, Education in Emergencies and leads the reform of the global SDG4 coordination mechanism.

Denise Matsule



Denise Matsule, 25-years old, is a Medical Doctor, and Girl MOVER, at the Girl MOVE Academy in Mozambique. What makes her a real Changemaker is being a woman who believes in the impossible, confident and with a positive attitude when facing obstacles. She challenges herself in the unknown and believes in the potential of people. With the belief there must be so much more she could tackle to effectively change the world, she became a mentor in Girl MOVE Academy. She wants to multiply the opportunities she had and with her sisters become pioneers in creating a world where young girls are free to dream and make their own decisions.

Evernice Munando



Evernice Munando is the founder and the Executive Director of the Female Students Network Trust (FSNT) which advocates for the rights of female students in tertiary institutions. She is passionately interested in the emancipation of women and girls' advocacy work towards fair and equal treatment at all levels. She became the first female President of the Students Association with Arrupe Jesuit University. She is also the National Chairperson for the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, an umbrella body of women's rights organizations in Zimbabwe.

Perihan Abou El Ela



Perihan Abou El Ela is Senior External Relations Manager in Misr El Kheir Foundation-MEK. Perihan has been working for 19 years in international funded programmes, USAID and the European Union Delegation to Egypt, whereas the last five years has been in MEK. Perihan is also the Egypt and MENA Chapter President for Association of Fundraising Professionals. She is also a gender advocate with MA in Gender and Development, where she works on supporting and mentoring women to become better versions of themselves, achieving their goals in challenging societies.

Mercy M. Musomi



Mercy M. Musomi is the Executive Director of the Girl Child Network, which was established in 1995 with its initial objective to facilitate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Kenya. Mercy has over 30 years of excellent experience in NGO programme management specifically in design, budgeting, financial control, donor reporting and implementation. Mercy championed the campaign on provision of sanitary towels to all menstruating girls in 2005 when many professionals thought it was a taboo subject. Under her leadership, the Girl Child Network has reached and changed the lives of over 320,700 girls and over 182,300 women.

Ma Yinghua



Prof. Dr. Ma Yinghua is the Deputy Director of the Institute of Child and Adolescent Health of Peking University. She is the deputy leader of the National Consultative Task Force on HIV Education in School, chairperson of the School Health Branch of the Chinese Association for Student Nutrition and Health Promotion, and vice president of Physical and Health Education Branch of the Chinese Society of Education. She is committed to advocating school life skills education and has developed a book series on life skills-based health education and HIV prevention, including teachers' guide and student textbooks.

Justine Sass



Justine Sass is currently the Chief of the Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. Over the past 25 years, she has championed gender equality, girls' and women's empowerment, and the right to education and health. Within UNESCO, Ms Sass has worked as the Asia-Pacific Regional Advisor for Health Education in the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, and as Senior Programme Specialist in the Health and Education Section at UNESCO HQ. Prior to UNESCO, she worked for other international organizations, NGOs and government agencies in Asia, Sub-Saharan and North Africa, and Eastern Europe.