



Press release

Dakar to host the first Yidan Prize Conference in Africa to champion and celebrate innovation in education

Dakar, 12 June 2026 – From 29 June to 1 July 2026, Dakar will host the first-ever Yidan Prize Conference in Africa, themed “Unleashing Africa's potential: the role of education in a new era of development.” Held under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education of Senegal, the Conference is co-convened by the **Yidan Prize Foundation**, **Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED)**, and the **Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)**. Over 200 delegates, including ministers, researchers, practitioners, and funders from across Africa and beyond, will gather to showcase innovative research and practice in education. The Conference will announce major commitments to advance education in Africa.



The Honorable Moustapha Mamba Guirassy, Minister of National Education, Senegal, and Mamadou Amadou Ly, Executive Director of ARED and Yidan Prize laureate, shared their anticipation for the 2026 Yidan Prize Conference during a press briefing on 11 June



A gathering to accelerate Africa's education agenda

The 2026 Yidan Prize Conference builds on the growing momentum in strengthening learning, skills development, and systems transformation across Africa. Education ministers from Senegal, the conference host country, The Gambia, and Ghana, along with a representative of the education ministers of Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania, and the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, will open the Conference and share their insights on leading change in education for development.

The Honorable Moustapha Mamba Guirassy, Minister of National Education, Senegal, said, “We are pleased to host the 2026 Yidan Prize Conference. It is an opportunity to celebrate a champion for Senegal — Mamadou Amadou Ly. It also brings together institutions that can support our growth into the education hub we envision — here in Africa and in Senegal.”

Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary of ADEA, said, “This Conference builds on previous conversations and dialogues to advance Africa’s education priorities. Including the 2024 Africa Foundational Learning Exchange, the 2025 ADEA Triennale on Education and Training, and the forthcoming 2026 edition of the Africa Foundational Learning Exchange. It provides the platform to strengthen collaboration and exchange among countries, across institutions and regions, and to advance African-led solutions to shared challenges facing education.”

Language as a bridge to learning and inclusion

A key focus of the Conference will be foundational multilingual education, recognizing language as a powerful bridge to learning, identity, and dignity. Sessions will highlight how the use of national languages can promote learner engagement, build confidence, and create pathways to further education, employment, and civic participation.

Countries such as Senegal, The Gambia, and Mauritania have been advancing multilingual education at the systems level, supported by ARED. **Mamadou Amadou Ly, Executive Director of ARED and 2025 Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureate**, said, “For over 25 years, ARED has worked alongside teachers, communities, governments, and development partners to integrate national languages into education systems. At the 2026 Yidan Prize Conference, we look forward to sharing lessons and demonstrating how foundational multilingual learning can drive meaningful and lasting change.”

Education at the heart of a new era of development

The Conference will highlight the central role of education in driving sustainable development across Africa. “Education transformation is a shared endeavor that depends on our willingness to learn from one another across sectors and borders. The Yidan Prize Foundation serves as a platform to spotlight changemakers and impactful innovations and



connect people and ideas globally. This Conference will showcase Africa as a driving force for its development and share its education innovations with the world,” said **Dr Charles CHEN Yidan, founder of the Yidan Prize.**

Supporting organizations of the Conference include **Echidna Giving, the Global Partnership for Education, Imaginable Futures, International Education Funders Group, Mastercard Foundation, and UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning.**

– ENDS –

Note to editors

Download images of the press conference [here](#).

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 the world’s highest 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 of each prize receive an unrestricted 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. The project fund and cash prize are shared equally for teams.

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

Find us @yidanprize on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#).



About the Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED)

ARED is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Dakar, Senegal. Founded in 1990, ARED works to promote quality education rooted in national languages. The organization is dedicated to teacher training and capacity building for education stakeholders, the development of curricula and learning materials, and the publishing and distribution of books in national languages. ARED aims to strengthen foundational learning, promote local languages and cultures, and contribute to more inclusive, equitable, and effective education systems across Africa.

About the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) is a pan-African forum for policy dialogue and the leading voice of education in Africa. We are hosted as a special project by the African Development Bank Group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. ADEA empowers African countries to transform schooling into meaningful learning — pooling evidence, experiences, and knowledge across globally connected partnerships to drive systemic change at national, regional, and continental levels.

Our vision is a high-quality education and training system for the accelerated sustainable development of Africa. Our mission is to serve as an open and flexible pan-African organisation that informs and facilitates the transformation of education and training systems for resilience, human capital development, and youth empowerment, working through a skilled Secretariat and a network of country-led Inter-Country Quality Nodes (ICQNs).

Press contact

Fredy Wida Biye, Global Mind Consulting
projets.com@globalmindconsulting.com