

British Council Announces Chinese Recipients of 2016 Education UK Alumni Awards

The recipients of the 2016 Education UK Alumni Awards in China were announced at an awards ceremony hosted by the British Council on the evening of 19 March. Three UK alumni from China were recognised for their outstanding achievements as business professionals, entrepreneurs and community leaders, and for their important contributions to strengthening ties between the UK and China.

After months of searching, nine finalists were selected from a global pool of more than 800 applicants, many of whom were nominated by their host UK universities. Following in-depth interviews with a judging panel, the Chinese recipients were chosen for three award categories: Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurial, and Social Impact.

The Professional Achievement Award, which recognises alumni who have distinguished themselves through exemplary leadership and achievements in their professional field, was presented to Ms LING Yifan. Since graduating from Birmingham City University, Ms Ling has established herself as an award-winning comic artist under the pen name “Buddy”, and is best known for her online manga story ‘Guarding’, which has more than 100 million online readers.

The Social Impact Award, for alumni who have made an exceptional contribution to creating positive social change and improving the lives of others, was presented to Mr ZHENG Jianwei, who has a master’s degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) from the University of Essex. Mr Zheng, who is visually-impaired, works as a private English tutor and is a strong promoter of inclusivity.

The Entrepreneurial Award, for alumni who have launched innovative business ideas, was presented to Mr XIAO Dun. After graduating from the University of Cambridge, Mr Xiao co-founded Dun & Huang, one of the earliest education app development companies in China, and the online homework platform 17zuoye.com, which provides learning solutions to more than 15 million students across 50,000 schools in China.

Upon receiving the award, Mr Xiao said: *“My parents could have given me a house, a car, or some money; but they gave me the opportunity to study in the UK, and that was priceless.”*

Carma Elliot CMG OBE, Minister (Culture and Education), British Embassy Beijing, and Director, British Council China, said:

“The remarkable young people we heard about tonight have taken their UK education as a starting point to excel in many fields, and to share their passion for learning with those around them. This year’s awards ceremony was testimony to the diversity of UK alumni and the transformative impact of a UK education. These alumni are a credit to their universities and an inspiration to international students. With more than 600,000 Chinese alumni of a UK education back here in China, we have a lot to celebrate.”

Now in its second year, the global award, launched by the British Council in 2015, recognises the success of UK alumni all over the world. Due to the large number of Chinese students in the UK – more than 140,000 – China was one of the first countries to be included in the award, which has since grown to cover a total of ten countries, including the US, India, and Brazil. Ms Zhang Xin, CEO of SOHO China, is the British Council’s UK Alumni Ambassador for China and a strong supporter of the event.

Notes to Editors

About the Education UK Alumni Awards

The Education UK Alumni Awards honour the outstanding achievements made by business professionals, entrepreneurs and community leaders across the globe who can demonstrate how their UK education has contributed to their subsequent success.

Awards are presented in three categories:

Professional Achievement Award

Recognises alumni who have distinguished themselves through exemplary leadership and achievements in their professional industry, and who can demonstrate the highest level of integrity and character in their professional career.

Entrepreneurial Award

Successful applicants in this category will be active in initiating, or contributing to, innovative new business opportunities with strong growth prospects.

Social Impact Award

The Social Impact Award acknowledges alumni who have made an exceptional contribution and commitment to creating positive social change and improving the lives of others

For full details on all of the finalists, please visit:

www.britishcouncil.org/education-uk-awards/finalists

For more information about the Education UK Alumni Awards 2016, please visit:

www.britishcouncil.org/education-uk-awards

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publicly-funded grant provides 20 per cent of our turnover which last year was £864 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, such as English classes and taking UK examinations, and also through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

We operate as the Cultural and Education Section of the British Embassy in Beijing and Cultural and Education Section of the British Consulate-General in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing and Wuhan.

For more information, please visit www.britishcouncil.cn/en

About Education UK

Education UK (www.educationuk.org) is the British Council's official website for international students who are interested in a UK education. It offers impartial advice and resources to help students find suitable courses and scholarships, and helps students prepare for and enjoy their UK experience. The website receives around two million unique visitors per year.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Lukas Thibaut
British Council, China
lukas.thibaut@britishcouncil.org.cn

Photos



Martyn Roper, Chargé d’Affaires, at the British Embassy in Beijing, and Carma Elliot, Director China of the British Council, pose with the award recipients and finalists of the 2016 Education UK Alumni Awards in Beijing, China, on 19 March 2016.



Ling Yifan (right) being presented with the Professional Achievement Award by Mr Christian Stanbury, Head of Operations for Unite Students, this year’s sponsor of the award category.



Xiao Dun (right) being presented with the Entrepreneurial Award by Julien Zhang, Managing Director North China and Beijing of Jones Lang LaSalle, this year's sponsor of the award category.



Zheng Jianwei (right) being presented with the Social Impact Award by Sun Tao, Executive Vice President of the New Oriental Vision Overseas Consulting Company, this year's sponsor of the award category.

Full-resolution photos are available on request.