

PLuS ALLIANCE

ARIZONA STATE
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KING'S COLLEGE
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Embargoed for:

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PLuS Alliance Prize 2017 winners announced

The PLuS Alliance today announced the winning candidates of its inaugural PLuS Alliance Prize, which recognises Research Innovation and Education Innovation.

The PLuS Alliance Prize winners were presented with their awards by Sir Malcolm Grant, Chairman of NHS England and Chair of the PLuS Alliance Advisory Board, during a ceremony at the *Times Higher Education* World Academic Summit in London.

The PLuS Alliance is a unique international collaboration between Arizona State University, King's College London, and UNSW Sydney. Launched in February 2016, the PLuS Alliance enables research-led solutions to global challenges while expanding access to world-class learning.

Judging the shortlisted candidates from across the US, the UK and Australia were six industry leaders including former LinkedIn Vice President, Ellen Levy, now Managing Director of Silicon Valley Connect.

Ellen said, "Innovation in research and education is vital to advancing society in a positive direction, whether by addressing some of the biggest challenges our world faces today, or creating new impactful opportunities. It was an honor to review so many inspired proposals and a great privilege to recognise two innovators who are bringing about real and positive change."

NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Mary O'Kane and former VP of GE Medical Europe, Timothy Irish also formed part of the distinguished judging panel. The three Presidents of the PLuS Alliance universities completed the panel of six experts in innovation and enterprise.

The Prize of USD\$50,000 was awarded in two categories; Education Innovation and Research Innovation. Both winners were recognised for the development and implementation of innovative solutions to significant global issues.

PLuS Alliance Prize for Education Innovation winner:

Dr Laura Hosman for *The Solar Powered Educational Learning Library (SolarSPELL)* said, "It's a great privilege to be selected as the education innovation winner for the PLuS Alliance Prize this year. SolarSPELL is making a difference in the lives of thousands of people living in remote areas around the world by removing barriers to learning. This distinguished award will help our team continue this important work."

PLuS Alliance Prize for Research Innovation winner:

Professor Veena Sahajwalla for *The new science of green manufacturing* said, "The work we've been doing to help global industries use green materials over virgin raw materials is vital to sustainability. This recognition from by the PLuS Alliance for the work we've been doing to drive change and impact communities across the world is a real honour."

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Dr Michael M Crow, President, Arizona State University, said: “Dr Hosman and Professor Sahajwalla are contemporaries in research and education innovation. They’re truly impacting their fields and bringing about a positive difference with proven global application. The level of competition for the inaugural PLuS Alliance Prize was awe-inspiring, and we’re already looking forward to the nominees for the 2018 Prize”.

King’s College London President and Principal, Professor Ed Byrne, continued: “The level of innovation displayed in the first year of the PLuS Alliance Prize has been outstanding. Both Dr Hosman and Professor Sahajwalla have surpassed expectations and shown the true value of innovation in education and research. We congratulate them, along with all of the other shortlisted candidates.”

Professor Ian Jacobs, President and Vice-Chancellor, UNSW Sydney, said: “The inaugural PLuS Alliance Prize did not disappoint. The calibre of candidates was impressive but, ultimately, honours went to *SolarSPELL* and *The new science of green manufacturing*”.

Paul Ramadge, Managing Director of the PLuS Alliance, said: “We were impressed with the quality of entries nominated. All the submissions we received are noteworthy and illustrate real innovation from social enterprise to tech and environmental break-through. I send my heartfelt congratulations to the two winners and look forward to seeing their innovation develop over the coming years.

Paul also noted two additional achievements that were celebrated by the PLuS Alliance at the Summit.

“We’re delighted to recognise the achievements of innovators from the PLuS Alliance network. Two additional prizes celebrate the standing and excellence of extraordinary global leaders. The PLuS Alliance Global Leadership Prize recognises outstanding contributions to innovation and education through leadership, and the PLuS Alliance Global Innovation Prize, which recognises outstanding achievement by an established researcher or educator.”

The PLuS Alliance Prize for Global Leadership:

Mr Narayana Murthy said, “To be recognised as a global leader by three great universities today, collaborating under the PLuS Alliance, is an honour. Leadership plays such a vital role in fostering innovation so it’s humbling to be recognised among so many innovators who are bringing about positive change in the world.”

The PLuS Alliance Prize for Global Innovation:

Professor Mojica said, “In a way, I fell in love with CRISPRs in the 90s as a PhD student, when they were just a curiosity in the genome of a weird microorganism. Since then, I have continued to pursue my passion which has led to great discoveries and wonderful collaborations. The scientific community is collegial and collaborative in nature; we are all innovators that share our ideas and join efforts to improve life. To be recognised by the PLuS Alliance today means credit for that from my community. It is such a great honour!”

An announcement on the 2018 PLuS Alliance Prize will be made early next year on the [PLuS Alliance website](#).

–Ends–

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About the PLuS Alliance and PLuS Alliance Prize:

Since its launch in February 2016, the PLuS Alliance has appointed more than 100 Fellows, awarded 20 seed grants, held five international symposia in its core themes, launched the PLuS Alliance Prize for Innovation in Research and Education, and introduced numerous programs at undergraduate and postgraduate level to support students as global citizens. For further information, visit the [website](#).

The PLuS Alliance Prize awards USD \$50,000 annually to highlight innovation in research and innovation in education that:

- addresses a globally-significant issue
- makes a direct and positive impact, and
- helps, or has the potential to help communities globally.

For this inaugural Prize, students, staff and alumni from Arizona State University, King's College London, and UNSW Sydney were eligible to nominate a candidate in each of the categories of Research Innovation and Education Innovation.

The PLuS Alliance Prize is one of the many initiatives from the PLuS Alliance that works to make a positive and lasting contribution to global innovation. The PLuS Alliance focuses on building interdisciplinary collaborative projects in education and research in areas such as sustainability, global health, social justice, and technology and innovation.

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Notes on winners:

Dr Laura Hosman for *The Solar Powered Educational Learning Library (SolarSPELL)*

SolarSPELL is a solar-powered educational learning library designed to deliver curated content to remote, unconnected or off-grid regions. This portable solar-powered digital library broadcasts over a Wi-Fi hotspot, transforming access to educational opportunities in the most resource-constrained conditions.

Professor Veena Sahajwalla for *The new science of green manufacturing*

The new science of green manufacturing is revolutionising recycling to enable global industries to safely utilise toxic and complex wastes as low cost alternatives to virgin raw materials and fossil fuels. This process reimagines the supply chain by 'mining' overburdened landfills for resources.

Mr Narayana Murthy

The values Mr Murthy stand for and his clear vision of leadership have not only resulted in extraordinary growth for his companies but has been integral in bringing a powerful IT wave to India. The Presidents have noted his generosity as a philanthropist and thought-leader, with particular acknowledgment of Infosys Science Foundation, focused on advancing young people in their pursuits of science and research.

Professor Francisco Mojica

The advent of CRISPR gene editing is heralded as one of the most significant advances in the life sciences. As the scientist who first investigated the natural CRISPR-Cas9 systems, Dr Mojica's discoveries underpin the widely acclaimed gene editing technologies which most recently has been linked to accelerating a cure for Huntington's disease and ALS. While there have been recent advances from brilliant scientists such as Jennifer Doudna, Emmanuelle Charpentier and Feng Zhang, we acknowledge that the foundations were laid by Francisco Mojica in Spain and his fundamental research on bacteria.