



THE 2022 WISE AWARDS FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

FOUR AMERICAN PROJECTS SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2022 WISE AWARDS

Doha, Qatar, May 23, 2022 – **The VIP.fund, Opportunity International, Remake Learning and School the World** are part of the 15 finalists for this year’s WISE Awards. The projects have been selected for their innovative and impactful approaches in tackling today’s most urgent education challenges. Each year, the WISE Awards recognize and promote innovative projects from around the world that are addressing global educational challenges. WISE is the education flagship initiative of Qatar Foundation.

Youth across the economic spectrum are at risk of alienation and disconnection. Low-income and displaced youth are particularly at risk because of limited access to guidance, education, job opportunities, access to technology, and stable social and familial environments. **EdSeed: Crowdfunding for Higher Education: a VIP.fund platform** serves displaced scholars by mitigating the negative effects of marginalization and securing their future with sustainable development pathways. This is done through e-learning programs, crowdfunding for higher and continued education, guiding students and employment candidates through mentorship and practical experience, preparing them for work in the private sector and partnering with private-sector businesses in the U.S. for employment opportunities.

Rama Chakaki, co-founder of the VIP.fund, holder of “edSeed: Crowdfunding for Higher Education” project commented: *“Being a WISE finalist is a reminder of how far we have come, and how much further we can go to support youth impacted by conflict through higher and continued education and innovative digital employment solutions. We are excited about the exposure, connections and learning opportunities WISE can facilitate. We are grateful and humbled to be within the WISE community”.*

Children affected by conflict are not the only ones facing alienation. Before COVID-19, 617 million children worldwide were out of school or in school but not accessing quality education. This represents 6 out of 10 children not learning, which perpetuates poverty and global inequality generation after generation. **Opportunity International EduFinance** is working to get more children into better quality schools with social finance in low- and middle-income countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Opportunity EduFinance first partners with financial institutions to provide technical assistance to launch and grow Education Finance

Portfolios. It then invites partners' school borrowers to join EduQuality, a three-year holistic training program designed to equip school leaders to run sustainable schools and increase the quality of education over time.

Andrew McCusker, Head of Education Finance at Opportunity international stated: *"While it is a great honour for Opportunity EduFinance to be recognised in this way, I am most grateful for the improvement in learning attainment that we will see as a result of more widespread understanding of the role that local school owners play in educating low income communities around the world."*

Another innovative project is **School the World**. Using a grassroots model, it unites community leaders, parents, and teachers to transform local school systems into drivers of positive social change. Their holistic program, targeting marginalized and indigenous communities, begins with early childhood, ensuring children start school ready to learn; continues to primary school, emphasizing literacy and social-emotional learning; and extends through secondary school, equipping young people with the digital and life skills needed to chart a path out of poverty. The project is present in rural Guatemala, Honduras and Panama.

Kate Curran, Founder & CEO of School the World said: *"It is of the utmost honor that School the World has been selected as a WISE 2022 Finalist. WISE recognizes innovative projects that address global education challenges and transform communities. And School the World works to do just that. We are so honored to be considered in this esteemed group of finalists!"*

Another selected finalist this year is **Remake Learning**. With the belief that the traditional school setting and curriculum is no longer enough to equip children with the necessary skills to thrive in the future, Remake Learning was developed to connect students with learning experiences that cultivate creativity and imagination not only in the classroom but anywhere in the community. It is a peer network of over 1,200 teachers, artists, librarians, designers and more. Remake Learning brings educators and innovators together to create learning opportunities that are engaging, relevant, and equitable for students -- and then supports them as they navigate rapid social and technological change.

Tyler Samstag, director of the Remake Learning commented: *"Over the last fifteen years, Remake Learning has built a network of people, projects, and organizations committed to*

collaboratively rethinking when, where, and how young people learn in the Greater Pittsburgh region. Our work has transcended individual efforts, and our selection as a WISE Award finalist validates the vision, commitment, and boldness of many across our community. We are humbled and grateful for this distinction."

Stavros N. Yiannouka, CEO of WISE, an initiative of Qatar Foundation, commented on the announcement: *"The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the intrinsic value of education to individuals and society as a whole. It also further highlighted the urgent need for innovation in education. Despite the best (often heroic) efforts of educators and policymakers around the world, school closures and the shift to remote learning resulted in significant learning loss and increased incidence of mental health issues for both learners and teachers alike. Moreover, challenges old and new, from geopolitical conflicts to the climate crisis, loom on the horizon and demand innovative solutions where education is expected to play an integral part.*

In this context, the work celebrated by the WISE Awards is critically important in highlighting the possibilities offered by innovation in education. Each of the 2022 finalists have developed and implemented effective, proven solutions that address key challenges. Whether ensuring access to quality early childhood education, imparting skills and practices for the jobs of tomorrow, or empowering youth through climate action, each project is transforming lives and reaching those most in need."

This year's finalists are: [Youth Climate Change Leaders and Green Workforce Readiness through public problem solving](#) - Reap Benefit (India), Teachers and Grandmothers Join Hands to Promote Values Education - Grandmother Project – Change through Culture (Senegal), [Educating for Wellbeing](#) - AtentaMente (Mexico), [Campus Safety Initiative](#) - Gender Mobile Initiative (Nigeria), [MyCenta: International Professional Community for Teachers](#) - CENTA (India), [The Internet Free Education Resource Bank](#) - Education Above All (Qatar), [Rocket Learning: Early Childhood education through digital parent-teacher communities](#) - Rocket Learning (India), [Connected North](#) - TakingITGlobal (Canada), [Addressing the Global Skills Gap](#) - Skills Builder Partnership (UK), Childcare Social Franchising - [Kidogo](#) (Kenya), MaGrid - Letzmath (Luxembourg).

The submissions were evaluated on strict criteria, based on innovation, scalability, sustainability, and their impact on individuals, communities, and societies in their own contexts



or globally. Projects also need to be financially stable, have a clear development plan, and be scalable and replicable.

The winners of the WISE Awards will be announced in September 2022. In addition to visibility and networking opportunities, each project will receive \$20,000 (US).

For further information, visit <http://www.wise-qatar.org/wise-awards>

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About the WISE Awards:

Each year, the WISE Awards recognize and promote six successful innovative projects that are addressing global educational challenges. Since 2009, WISE has received more than 4,500 applications from over 150 countries. Up until now, 78 projects have won the WISE Awards, from a wide variety of sectors and locations for their innovative character, their positive contribution and their potential for scalability and adaptability. These projects represent a growing resource of expertise and sound educational practice. Year by year, WISE is building a community of educational innovators which offers a fertile environment for groundbreaking collaborations. Today the WISE Awards network comprises pioneering projects that are helping bring real change to societies and communities.

For further information, visit <https://www.wise-qatar.org/wise-works/wise-awards/>

About WISE:

WISE was established by Qatar Foundation in 2009 under the leadership of its Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. WISE is an international, multi-sectoral platform for creative, evidence-based thinking, debate, and purposeful action in education. Through the biennial summit, collaborative research and a range of on-going programs, WISE is a global reference in new approaches to education.

For more information on WISE you can visit: www.wise-qatar.org.

**About Qatar Foundation:**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF's world-class education system offers lifelong learning opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation's development.

QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, please visit: www.qf.org.qa

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