



The winning project will improve the lives of elderly people in parts of China.

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Northumbria Professor wins prestigious Newton China Prize

A project which uses smart devices and big data to improve the lives of elderly people in parts of China has been named the winner of the prestigious £200,000 Newton China Prize 2019.

The project entitled *Transforming service design and big data technologies into sustainable urbanisation* is led by Northumbria University in the UK and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in China.

It was among 20 projects shortlisted for the 2019 Newton Prize – an annual award developed to showcase how UK science and innovation partnerships are helping to solve global development challenges.

The project's UK team is led by Shengfeng Qin, Professor of Design at Northumbria University. Following the announcement, he said: "Countries around the world are struggling to meet the challenge of rapid urban expansion and ageing populations.

"In developing countries economic progress places even greater pressure on vital but under-resourced services such as healthcare and transportation. There is a need for smarter, more accessible services which improve people's wellbeing and ability to contribute to society and the economy.

"Winning the 2019 Newton China Prize means our UK and Chinese partners can continue to work together to develop our Newton Prize project to promote sustainable healthcare and social care policies, services and technologies in china for villagers and the vulnerable."

The winning project applies big data and service design principles to the difficulties people face in villages and cities, leading to improved transportation services and better access and suitability of core services for the elderly.

A major part of the project has been to bring together more than 40 early career researchers from the UK and China; inspiring the next generation of scientists to work together for global good.

Presenting the award, Dame Barbara Woodward, British Ambassador to China, said: "The Newton Fund brings together the best UK and Chinese scientists to tackle global challenges and to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It is a key part of the over 40 year-long partnership on science and innovation between the UK and China."

The UK-China Research and Innovation Partnership Fund (the Newton Fund) was established in 2014, with more than 1,000 partnerships jointly supported across 120 UK, and 260 Chinese research institutions and businesses since then.

The annual Newton prize is awarded for the best research or innovation promoting the economic development and social welfare of Newton Fund partner countries. Eligible prize countries for the Newton Prize 2019 were China, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Partnerships have worked to tackle global challenges including food security, antibiotic resistance, environmental degradation, climate change, sustainable urbanisation and energy. This year, the Newton Prize is also a part of the Green is GREAT campaign, building new partnerships to come together to tackle the challenges we are facing as a planet.

Professor Loughhead, Chief Scientific Adviser, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) said: “These shortlisted projects demonstrate how efforts to tackle global development challenges can change lives. As well as making a valuable contribution to global goals, these partnerships also develop new and fruitful networks between researchers and provide vital career opportunities to researchers and innovators.”

Professor Wang Hongan, Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Software Design said: “With Newton Fund support, we have brought together an interdisciplinary research team, combining the UK’s strength in service design and China’s strength in big data analysis and natural interaction technology to provide intellectual and human support to resolve the issues of global sustainable urbanisation. We hope to use our technology to provide personalised services to vulnerable groups in cities such as the elderly and disabled.”

The project has been supported by the British Council and National Natural Science Foundation of China.

Find out more about the winning ‘[Transforming service design and big data technologies into sustainable urbanisation](#)’ project.

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