

Heineken Young Scientists Awards 2026 presented



From left to right: Miguel Leung,
Yusuf Çelik, Ayushi Rastogi,
Anne Urai, Hester den Ruijter,
Charlene de Carvalho-Heineken
Photo: Bram Belloni



Amsterdam, 2 October 2026 – Miguel Leung, Yusuf Çelik, Ayushi Rastogi and Anne Urai have received the Heineken Young Scientists Awards 2026. The laureates received the awards for their exceptional scientific achievements. For the first time since the Awards were established in 2010, the laureates were honoured at a dedicated ceremony, held at ARTIS.

The Heineken Young Scientists Awards were presented by Charlene de Carvalho-Heineken, Chair of the Alfred Heineken Fondsen Foundation.

Jury Chair Hester den Ruijter (UMC Utrecht): “As a jury, we look for outstanding scientific talent: what makes someone unique in their field, and what impact does their research have? These four laureates demonstrate that this impact can take many different forms, from fundamental discoveries to applying knowledge in society. Recognising and valuing these different contributions is what makes the Heineken Young Scientists Awards special.”

The four laureates received awards in four different scientific disciplines.

- Miguel Leung (Hubrecht Institute, Utrecht) received the **Heineken Young Scientists Award for Medical/Biomedical Sciences 2026** for his research into the protein structures that are important for the functioning of sperm and egg cells.
- Yusuf Çelik (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) received the **Heineken Young Scientists Award for Humanities 2026** for his research into how religions and cultures have adopted ideas and practices from one another over the centuries.

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- Ayushi Rastogi (University of Groningen) received the **Heineken Young Scientists Award for Natural Sciences 2026** for her research into developing future-proof, reliable and inclusive software at a time when AI is playing an increasingly important role.
- Anne Urai (Leiden University) received the **Heineken Young Scientists Award for Social Sciences 2026** for her research into how previous choices, social context and processes in the brain influence human decision-making, including in relation to sustainable behaviour.

About the Heineken Young Scientists Awards

The Heineken Young Scientists Awards are presented every two years to four promising scientists affiliated with a Dutch university or research institute. The laureates are selected by an independent jury. Each receives an unrestricted cash prize of €15,000 and a specially designed work of art. Since 2010, the Awards have been presented alongside the Heineken Prizes. From 2026 onwards, the two ceremonies will take place in alternate years, with each having its own dedicated year.

More information about the laureates' research

The Heineken Young Scientists Awards are part of the Heineken Prizes.

[Click here](#) for more information about Miguel Leung, Yusuf Çelik, Ayushi Rastogi and Anne Urai and their research.

[Read here](#) for interviews with the laureates, produced in collaboration with New Scientist.

[Listen here](#) to the special podcast episodes featuring the laureates, produced in collaboration with Universiteit van Nederland.