

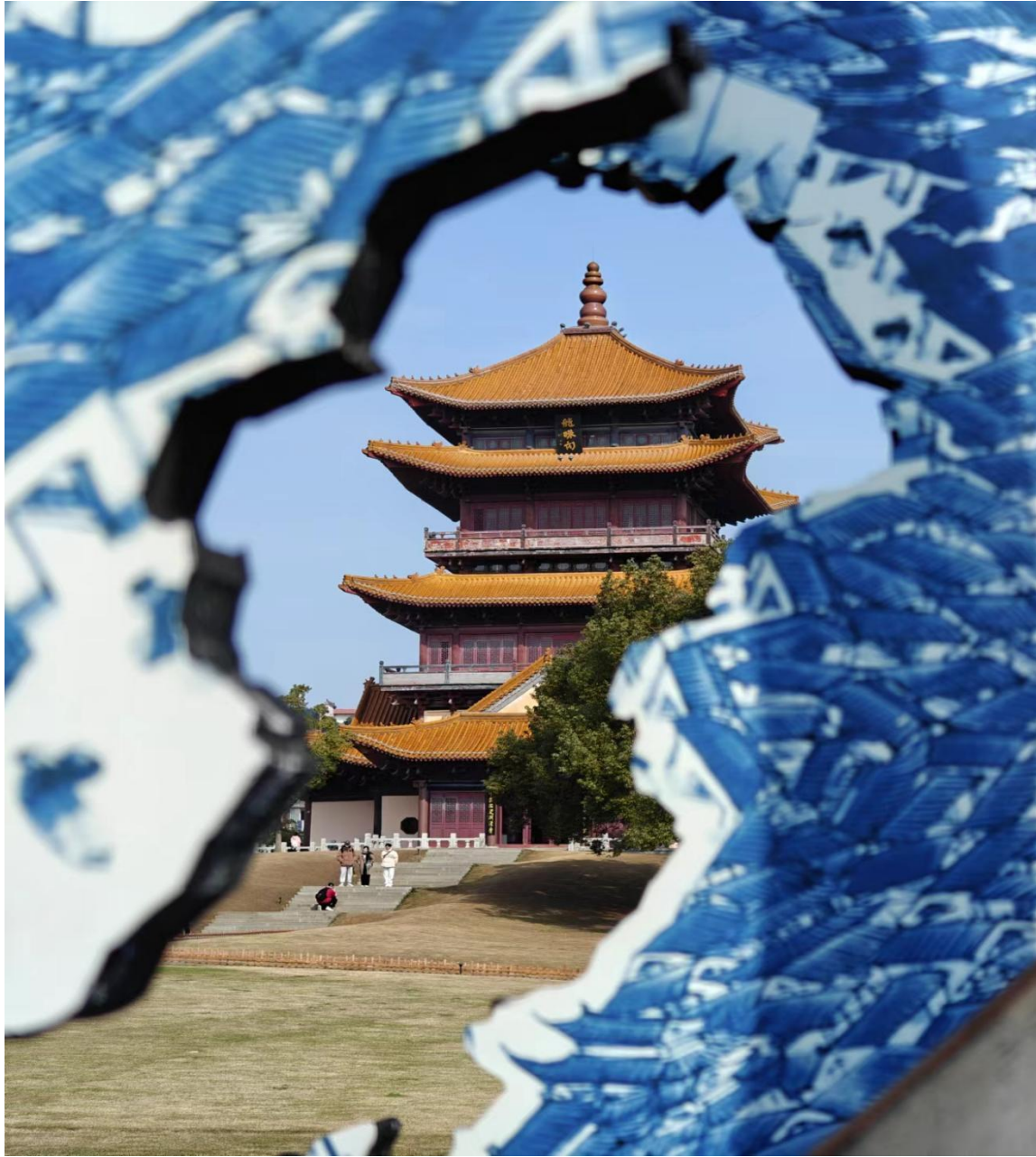


科博国际教育  
HOPE International Education  
— Since 2000 —

# HOPE Updates 2024 No.2



**8th March 2024**  
**Editor in chief: Daniel Zheng**  
**Editor: Liz Zhou**



*Learn China from china in Jingdezhen, the capital of porcelain, where HOPE organized an international education forum end of February. See detail story inside.*

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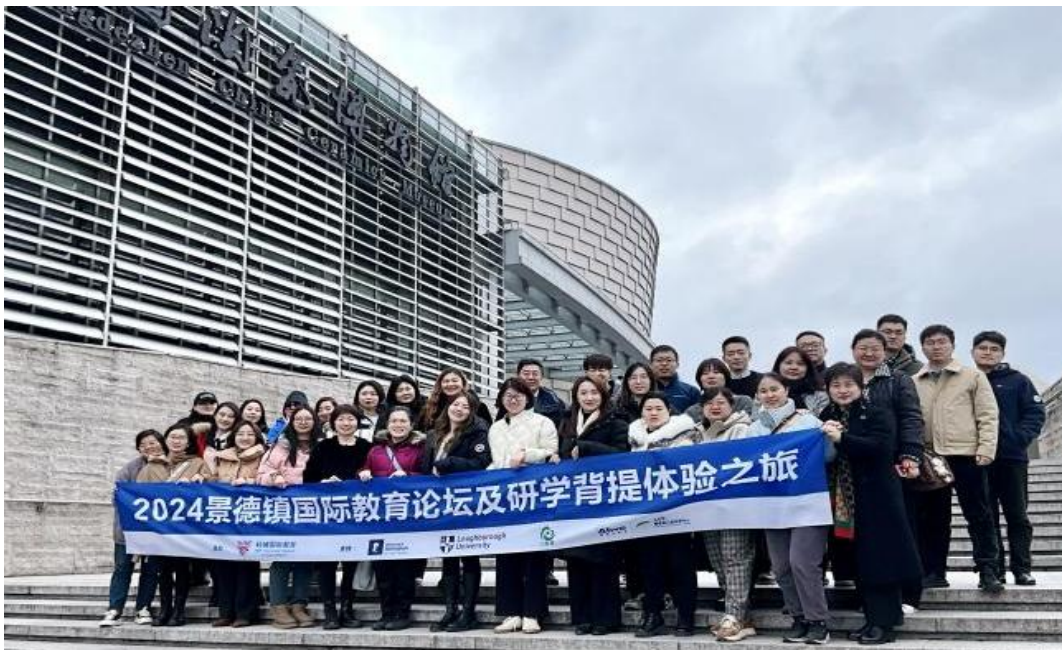
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## Inside HOPE

### **HOPE's Education Forum attended by partners as well as love, hope and collaboration**

It is not Beijing but Jingdezhen which is the capital of china in China! This ancient city famous for ceramics hosted HOPE's international education forum between 29 February and 2 March. The event, supported by Loughborough University and Nottingham University Ningbo, gathered around 30 principals, education counsellors from our partner international schools and agents to discuss hot topics of international education, to explore collaboration and to offer their love and hope to autistic children.



*Participants visited China Ceramic Museum*

The main focus of the event was an education conference on 'how can extra curriculum activities and study tours help school and students development and be beneficial to their university application'. There has been a trend that top universities not only look into students standard academic background and English language proficiency such as GPA and IELTS/TOEFL scores, but also "soft skills" including leadership skill, teamwork spirit, social responsibilities etc.. Therefore various enrichment activities for students and schools are in high demand, and under this background, HOPE invited UK universities representatives, counsellors of international schools, partner agents and summer camp and activities suppliers

to attend this conference.

Daniel Zheng, Director of HOPE, delivered a keynote speech at the conference on 'how to develop and implement innovative, influential and sustainable marketing events and enrichment activities'. Using HOPE's experience and statistics in the past 5 years, he stressed the importance of enrichment activities in regard to students' holistic development as well as to university applications. He also introduced how HOPE developed various summer/winter study tour programme both overseas and at home, and other charity, online tutoring programme catering to students of different age.

In terms of marketing activities, Daniel cited some good examples of what HOPE organized recently, including education forum with charity event, live broadcasting of UK institution campus tour and interviews with admission officer, HOPE alumni and parents' company tour and excursion focusing on career development etc.. All these showcased HOPE's commitment to students services and long term professional assistance with our partner institutions overseas.

'Change is not only a challenge, but also an opportunity to all the professionals in this industry.' Daniel summarized with one sentence to end his very enlightening and practical presentation.



*Daniel Zheng delivering a keynote speech at the conference*

Della Cheng, President of China Institute of College Admission Counselling(ICAC), also the Director of College Counselling of Ningbo Foreign Language School, shared her experiences in recent years of university applications. In American university application process, especially for Ivy League colleges, academic results were not the only criteria. Students' 'soft skills" and participation in various enrichment activities and projects could be equally important to academic records.



*Della Cheng sharing her experiences in university admission of UK, US and Canada*

Chelsie Zha, Project Manager from Loughborough University, Charlie Chen, Business Development Manager, Nottingham University Ningbo, and Gloria Geng, Senior Counsellor and Career Adviser from Shanghai Hongwen International School also furthered on this topic from UK university and Chinese international school's perspectives.



*Chelsie Zha, Loughborough University, Charlie Chen, Nottingham University Ningbo, sharing their advice from UK university's perspectives.*

The panel discussion session invited Ms. Zhang Jingjing, Dean of International College of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, Mr. Ren Ruijie, Principal of Shanghai Clover Autism Children Rehabilitation Centre, and Dr. Liu, Zhilong, Founder of Linnaeus Lab. Chaired by Alex Wen, Marketing Director of HOPE, the panel introduced their programme for students and how they worked with HOPE to assist students and schools' development in terms of summer camp and charity events.



*Panel discuss sharing experience on how enrichment activities enhance school and students development*

The conference was brought to a climax by an auction sale of autism children's painting works. from two schools. The works were all painted by autism children by using their imagination and thoughts. Funding raised will all go to the two autism rehabilitation centre presented at the conference.



*Some winners of the auction sale for paintings from autistic children*



*The climax of the conference, the charity auction sales of autistic children's painting*

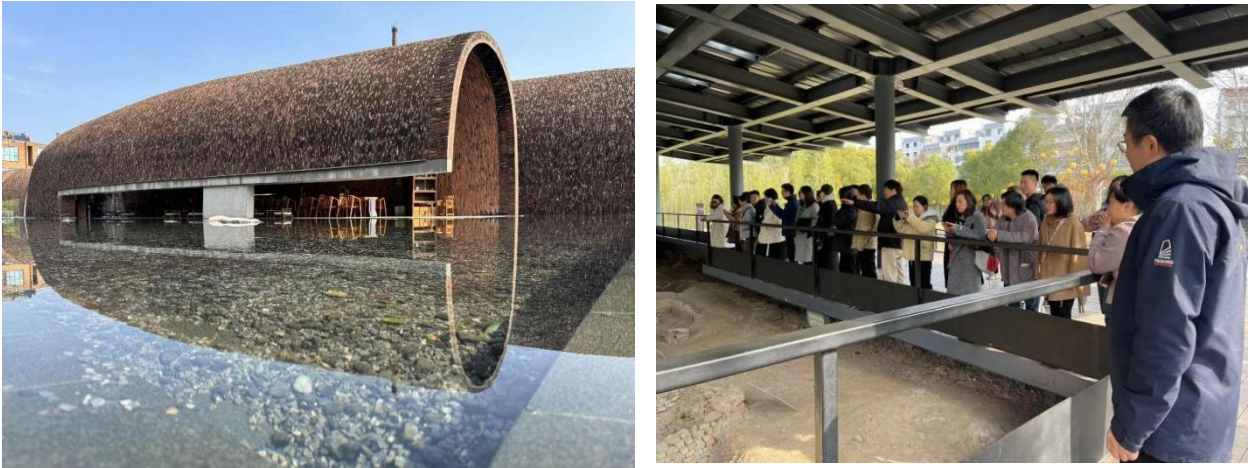


*Another hands-on charity activity during the forum was ceramic cup painting with the theme: 'love and hope'. The finished cups will be donated to autism children in Shanghai and Ningbo!*



*Some of the finished works*

Apart from the conference, the three-day event also took the participants to visit China Ceramic Museum, Jingdezhen Ceramic Industrial Museum converted from the former ceramic production plant, and Imperial Kiln Archaeological site and Museum. The taste programme for visitors enables them to know better the enrichment activities that Jingdezhen can offer.



*Visiting Imperial Kiln Museum and the archaeological site*

The whole trip in Jingdezheng ended with happiness and high comments from the participants.

‘This is another good example of an innovative, meaningful and influential event HOPE organized. Very enlightening indeed’. Said Mr. Bin Fang, Vice Principal of Quzhou Gaotie International School.

‘Grateful for HOPE to organize another meaningful event after Chongzuo and Xiapu which Loughborough University all attended! The visit to Shanghai Clover Autistic Rehabilitation Centre and the charity walk after the visit HOPE organized for our Pro -Vice Chancellor and the visiting management team last year was really a good memory of all the team at Loughborough.’ commented by Chelsea.

Principal Ren Ruijie of Shanghai Clover Autistic Children’s Rehabilitation Centre called this event ‘another meaningful event for international education to meet and merge with special education! Great event to let more people know autism and offer their support and love to the kids and family suffering from this disease.’



## HOPE attend St Alphe Conference to seek more school partners

For the first time after pandemic, HOPE attended St. Alphe Conference focusing on secondary education held in HK from 22-23 February. Over 130 schools from the globe and over 200 agents in Asia joined this two-day event.



*St Alphe HK joined by over 130 schools from the globe and 200+ agents*

Daniel Zheng, Director of HOPE joined the event, meeting over 23 schools representatives across the two days. “It is the time to resume participating in person such international conference now as there are so many changes and trends in the market after pandemic to share with our international partners”. Daniel expressed the purpose of the trip. “What is more, more and more Chinese schools are seeking international partnership as well after almost 4 years’ isolation from the international education exchange, and they are keen on asking us for help”. He added.

During the conference in HK, Daniel formally had 23 appointments with schools from the UK, US, New Zealand, Switzerland and Germany. At the appointments, Daniel first briefed the school representatives on HOPE’s history and main business. He then updated them on the market during the pandemic and afterwards. The school sector, particularly the private sector was heavily stricken by the covid-19

and the good momentum for recruitment was stopped as the number of students going to UK boarding schools dropped 50%-70% from 2020-2022 according to HOPE's own figures. However, 2023 saw a slow recovery. More inquiries on boarding school were received from spring 2023 onward and application numbers have been resumed to almost 60%-70% of that before pandemic.



*Daniel meeting school representatives during the conference*

Daniel summarized the market characteristics and the trends to the school representatives he met: 1. The good news is that parents and students have more confidence to send kids overseas schools after pandemic, and the UK is still regarded as the safest countries with sophisticated boarding school system; 2. however, the destination countries are more diversified. Australia, New Zealand, US, Singapore and Thailand, and even schools in HK region are becoming popular; Certainly, internationalized schools in country are also parents' choices. So the competition is becoming more and more fierce. 3. The most active schools in the China market are usually those type: a) big names with high A level/GCSE/IB results; b) schools regularly visit the market, working closely with agents for various small promotion events; c) schools who has links with Chinese schools and those whose profile have been raised by this long term school partnership.

Daniel advised that now it is also the right time for schools to re-enter the China market. The key is to have both short and long term strategy. For short term, visiting the market regularly, say 2 times a year at least to make exposure to the students by attending mini fairs, or individual events organized by agents. For long term, link with a few schools in China is also important. Students exchange, teacher exchange, summer/winter camp and immersion programme can convert some students into long term students.

If any school is interested in the Chinese market and linking with schools in China, HOPE will be very happy to work with them.

## ‘Come were but the spring’ : UK boarding schools’ visits to HOPE welcomed

Spring is always a time for sowing when everything rising up and shining. More and more overseas partner institutions are visiting China and HOPE after Chinese New Year as “early birds catch worms”.

HOPE Shanghai office has received visits of four UK boarding schools last month, which were namely Royal Hospital School, Ashford School, Westbourne College and Berkhamsted School. Three of the four schools were invited to introduce themselves to students and parents in person as well as via live broadcasting on Wechat platform with hundreds of audiences watching.



*RHS headmaster Simon talking with potential students*

With an increasing number of inquiries on boarding schools in the UK after pandemic, HOPE is inviting more schools to visit China and organizing various kinds of promotion events, including presentations, meetings and interviewing potential applicants, meeting parents of the current students, visiting local schools for partnership, and even attending HOPE’s charity events to raise the profile of the school. HOPE is also planning a school fair and school link forum in Shanghai later this year.



*Berkhamsted Int'l Manager Chris with HOPE team; Ashford School's live broadcasting*



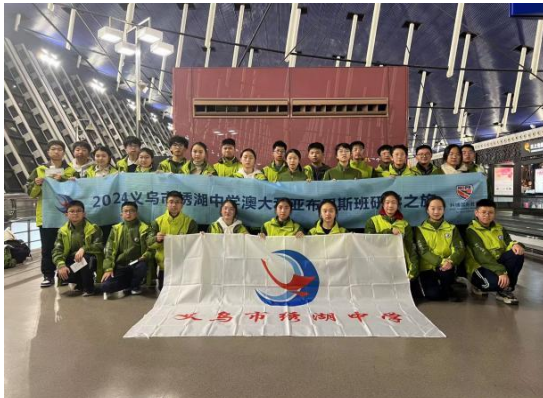
*Maria,CEO (centre) and Susan International Admission Manager (left 3) , Westbourne College, in HOPE Shanghai Office*

In the coming weeks, we will also receive visits from Norwich School and other famous UK boarding schools.

# INSIDE HOPE --- Photo news



HOPE team called at Jinfuju Elder People's Nursery on 6<sup>th</sup> of February to explore opportunity for our students and parents to visit to learn this industry and employment opportunities. The industry has seen opportunities for employment for graduates with China quickly becoming an aging society.



HOPE Winter camps set out to the UK and Australia. Both groups came back with great fulfillment. During the tour, Chinese students and local students celebrated Chinese new year together, cheering for their friendship and exchanging gifts.

## News from local media

### China's 2023 schooling statistics

By Zhao Yimeng | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2024-03-01 11:30



Students take a Chinese class at Wenchang Road Primary School in Jiyuan, Henan province, Feb 26, 2024. [Photo by Zheng Zemin/For chinadaily.com.cn]

China had 498,300 schools of all levels nationwide in 2023, a 3.9 percent decline compared to the previous year, while 291 million students were enrolled in the same year, seeing a 0.52 percent decrease, according to the Ministry of Education.

Guo Peng, head of the ministry's Department of Development Planning, said the number of full-time teachers reached 18.92 million last year, increasing 0.6 percent year-on-year.

There were 274,400 kindergartens nationwide, with 40.93 million children enrolled in preschool education, Guo said when introducing the Nation's development in education sector last year at a news conference on Friday.

The number of full-time teachers in preschool education hit 3.07 million, with a student-to-teacher ratio of 13.32:1, indicating an improvement from the previous year, he said.

The campuses of primary schools nationwide covered an area of 904 million square meters, an increase of 14.89 million square meters compared to the previous year.

Last year, there were 7,085 secondary vocational education schools managed by the ministry, hosting a total of 12.98 million students, Guo said.

The gross enrollment rate for higher education reached 60.2 percent, a 0.6 percentage point increase from the previous year, which means the goals set in the 14th Five-Year Plan have been achieved ahead of schedule.

China had 3,074 higher education institutions, 61 more than the previous year. The total enrollment in higher education was 47.63 million, with a growth of 2.32 percent compared with the previous year.

In addition, the proportion of professional master's degree students had approached 60 percent, Guo said.

"In response to requirements posed by the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation on talent development, universities were guided to optimize their discipline structures, enhancing the cultivation of STEM talent," he said.

In 2023, the enrollment for master's degrees in science, engineering, agriculture and medicine accounted for 60 percent of the total, while that for doctoral degrees exceeded 80 percent, he added.

# Overseas returnees see slight drop in '23

By CHENG SI | CHINA DAILY | Updated: 2024-03-02 07:37



Job

seekers check out a booth at a job fair held in Shenzhen, on April 15, 2023. [Photo/VCG] The number of overseas returnees seeking employment in the Chinese mainland witnessed a slight decline in 2023, due to the fading superiority of talent with an overseas education background in the increasingly competitive domestic job market.

Recruitment portal Zhaopin recently released a report saying that the number of overseas returnees seeking jobs in the Chinese mainland saw a slight drop of 5 percent year-on-year in 2023.

The number of returnees varies among different countries. Last year, about 40 percent of the returnees came back from the United Kingdom, 16 percent from Australia and 10 percent from the United States, the report said.

Over half of surveyed overseas students returned for work last year because of the mainland's more convenient living environment, and 44 percent were attracted by the mainland's better economy.

"I'd wavered before I decided to return to the mainland last year. My family spent roughly 2 million yuan (\$278,000) for my four-year undergraduate studies in the UK and roughly 1 million yuan for my postgraduate studies. I couldn't find a good job there, so I came back," said Xie Mingyue, a 26-year-old from Dongguan, Guangdong province, who now works as an accountant in Shanghai.

He said that larger cities such as Beijing and Shanghai are always the top choices for returnees because of their stronger economies and greater opportunities.



"But that also brings aggressive competition. My current job is not that highly paid, roughly 12,000 yuan pretax."

Some domestic companies, especially those in technology-driven industries such as new energy and modern manufacturing, remain thirsty for talent with knowledge of state-of-the-art technologies and overseas experience, and are offering higher salaries to attract returnees.

According to Zhaopin's report, employers in sectors such as new energy increased the number of job openings for which they prefer to hire overseas returnees by 71.7 percent year-on-year in 2023.

"The resumption of international travel and communication in the post-pandemic era offers more job opportunities to overseas students, while the improving education situation in China and more intensive competition in the job market may lead them to put off their plans to return," said Li Qiang, vice-president of Zhaopin.

He said that though the number of returnees dropped slightly last year, the mainland remains attractive to overseas students because of the nation's fast-growing digital economy, more friendly employment policies and stable economic performance in recent years.

"In addition to some traditional jobs, more overseas returnees are willing to take flexible jobs in short-video creation, online education and livestreaming. For example, 46.5 percent of our surveyed returnees who have taken flexible jobs last year are working as short-video creators," he said.

He added that although overseas returnees have greater advantages in terms of cross-cultural communication and languages, they may have unrealistic expectations with regard to salaries.

## **2024 World Digital Education Conference concludes in Shanghai**

[http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press\\_releases/202402/t20240205\\_1114537.html](http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202402/t20240205_1114537.html)

The 2024 World Digital Education Conference (WDEC) drew to a close on Jan. 31 in Shanghai. Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng attended and addressed the closing ceremony. Vice Minister of Education Chen Jie, who is also Director of the National Committee of China for UNESCO, and Shanghai Vice Mayor Xie Dong, delivered speeches, while Vice Minister of Education Wang Guangyan presided over the closing ceremony and Vice Governor of Hubei Province Shao Xinyu attended the event.

Minister Huai commended this year's WDEC as a fruitful and consensus-building event, an avenue for seeking cooperation and innovation, and a platform for promoting development and trust. Focusing on the theme of "Digital Education: Application, Sharing, and Innovation",

attendees from around the world engaged in extensive discussions on topics such as improving teachers' digital literacy and competence, digitalization of education and the development of a new learning society, artificial intelligence and digital ethics, digitalization of educational governance, and governance of digital education. Through in-depth exchange, they strengthened mutual learning and mutual recognition of experiences, jointly planned how to respond to challenges, and consulted on how to enhance cooperation and exchange in various areas, such as infrastructure construction, development of high-quality resources, sharing and application of platforms, and alignment of policies and standards. The conference heralds a new chapter in the development of digital education for humanity. The digital transformation of education has become a global trend, a necessity of the times, and the desire of all teachers and students. He also said that we need to work together, by unlocking the door of hope and the door leading to the development of digital education for all countries, to gain the wisdom of digital education, lead the development of digital civilization, and inject new vitality into global educational development and transformation.

Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, delivered a video address to the conference. She said that UNESCO has supported more than 17 countries in developing digital education policies, bridging the digital divide, and enhancing national capabilities. She also said that UNESCO will focus on capabilities, content, and connections based on a people-centered vision and will guide the digital transformation of education to benefit students, teachers, researchers, and society at large.

During the closing ceremony, the *Compilation of International Digital Education Cases*, the *Global Digital Education Development Index (GDEI)*, and the *China Smart Education Development Report (2023)* were released, while the inaugural issue of the international journal *Frontiers of Digital Education (English)* was launched, and the Shanghai Initiative of the 2024 WDEC was announced. A handover ceremony also took place during the event.

# China as premier destination for education, attracting global attention

By Muhammad Humayun Asghar | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2024-02-19 16:13



A view of the Huangpu River in Shanghai. [Photo/VCG]

China has made a revolutionary move to the forefront of the global education scene, becoming known as the number one choice for students looking for the best academic possibilities. With its rapidly expanding network of world-class colleges, innovative educational programs and rich cultural backdrop, China is grabbing the interest of aspiring scholars from around the globe.

Based on current data, there has been a notable increase in the number of foreign students visiting China, attracted by the country's exceptional educational opportunities and lively academic atmosphere. China's institutions, which are well-known for emphasizing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects, are at the forefront of innovation and research, giving students access to cutting-edge discoveries and priceless practical experience.

Furthermore, China's numerous scholarship programs and efforts targeted at luring talent from a variety of backgrounds demonstrate its dedication to encouraging international collaboration and cultural exchange. China is actively fostering a vibrant international academic community through institutional partnerships with prestigious universities worldwide and government-sponsored scholarships.

China provides students with an incredibly enriching and transforming educational experience because of its cutting-edge facilities, internationally recognized teachers and dedication to promoting a culture of academic excellence.

Moreover, China's rich history and strong cultural legacy give the educational experience an unmatched depth and provide students the chance to fully engage with a diverse and dynamic country. Students studying in China are exposed to a multitude of cultural experiences that enhance their academic endeavors and extend their global perspective, from touring historic sites to living in contemporary cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chongqing and many more.

China is positioned to continue its trajectory as a beacon of academic excellence and innovation, welcoming students from all over the world to embark on a transformative educational journey unlike any other as the world begins to recognize China's critical role in shaping the future of education.

The author is a Pakistani student at Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT), a leading IT university in China

## UK gears up to celebrate Chinese New Year

By Zheng Wanyin in London | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2024-02-09 21:17



Traditional Chinese dragon dancers perform in front of the London Eye which is lit up in red to celebrate the upcoming Chinese New Year in London on Feb 8. [Photo by Xing Xue/ For China Daily ]

When night falls in London, England, the London Eye, an iconic ferris wheel standing on the south bank of the River Thames, is usually illuminated a shade of fuchsia.

On Feb 8, the wheel glittered in red and gold, two colors that symbolize joy and prosperity in Chinese culture, to count down to Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival as it is also known, which falls on Feb 10.

The year 2024 is the Year of the Dragon, based on the Chinese zodiac. The dragon, long perceived by the Chinese people to be their totemic symbol, represents dignity, prestige, and auspiciousness.

Prior to the transformation of the London Eye, the Chinese New Year mood has built across the United Kingdom.

On Feb 1, an exhibition of zimingzhong, or striking clocks that were collected by Chinese emperors during the 1700s, kicked off alongside a Chinese New Year Lates at London's Science Museum, showcasing more than three centuries of exchanges between China and the UK.

In the display, more than 20 resplendent clocks were brought from the Palace Museum in Beijing and shown in the UK for the first time.

The timepieces reveal the early trade history of the two countries, because many were made by British craftsmen, designed for the Chinese market, and taken to China's south coast to be traded for silk, tea, and porcelain. The exchange of goods led to the exchange of skills, represented by exhibits that were constructed using both Chinese and European technologies.

"We are excited to welcome everyone to join us in celebrating the opening of the exhibition and the Year of the Dragon," said Jane Desborough, keeper of science collections at the Science Museum and curator of the exhibition.

Up north in Scotland, Edinburgh has been in the festive atmosphere since Feb 3, with a wave of activities, including shows of hanfu (a traditional Chinese-style of clothing), Chinese calligraphy workshops, red envelope giveaway games and more.

Since its inception in 2019, the Edinburgh Chinese New Year festival has become the largest celebration of its kind in Scotland, according to Rob Lang, chair of Edinburgh Tourism Action Group's China Ready Initiative.

"Chinese New Year is a fantastic opportunity to encourage our people of Edinburgh to learn more about Chinese culture and history, and it is something that is at the core of the entire city," Lang said.

"It is also a vital time for us to make sure we can engage with the Chinese communities," he added, noting that there is a large number of Chinese people who are working or studying in the city.

"We want Edinburgh to be their home as well."

As the Lunar New Year dawns, the festive ambiance will only become more intense.

In Birmingham, the 12th Didi and Friends Chinese New Year Concert was held on Feb 8 at the Elgar Concert Hall.

With a packed hall, pipa player Jenny Zhan opened the concert with traditional Chinese folk piece Flower Market. Yellow River Piano Concerto, a Western classical music composed by Chinese composer Yin Chengzong, was played by classical pianist Xiao Di, conducted by Daniel Rosina in the accompany of the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra. Their performance brought tears to many eyes and won enthusiastic applause from the audience.

The annual celebration, which was started in 2012 by Xiao with support of the China Institute of the University of Birmingham, has become a signature event in the West Midlands Lunar New Year calendar. The concert invites artists from a spectrum of artistic genres, from classical music, folk music to pop music every year. "It aims to celebrate Chinese culture, build friendship and generate mutual respect between Chinese and British people," said Xiao.

In Bristol, the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery will also provide people with a feast of Chinese culture from Feb 17 to Feb 18. The weekend will feature martial arts performances, crafts workshops, educational activities about Chinese heritage and inventions, and more.

The museum has been hosting Chinese New Year events since 2003 which have ushered in a sense of "freshness and optimism" during the cold winter days for hundreds of thousands of visitors, said Karen Garvey, the museum's programming officer and Spring Festival coordinator.

As the festivity highlights Chinese traditions, Garvey also emphasized the educational roles of the celebration: "It is important that we create opportunities for visitors to learn about the diverse communities who shape our city and the world...we have a responsibility to educate and inspire people."

Back in London, tens of thousands of people are expected to join in a carnival on Feb 11 organized by the London Chinatown Chinese Association, or LCCA, that will include a lively parade, stage performances, and food stalls surrounding Trafalgar Square.

The celebration, which the organizer claims is the largest Chinese New Year event outside Asia, is aimed at uniting people — Asians and non-Asians alike — and removing anything bad or old while welcoming the new and the good, all to the resounding sound of Chinese drums and gongs.

"The event is not only an occasion for welcoming the New Year but also serves as a bridge of friendship, connecting people from different backgrounds to celebrate this important moment in Chinese tradition," said Huang Ping, secretary-general of LCCA.

As 2024 is the Year of the Dragon, a group of dancers performing the Chongqing Tongliang dragon dance will join the Trafalgar Square celebration to send wishes of auspiciousness to people in the UK.

The Tongliang dragon dance, as one of the cultural symbols of Southwest China's Chongqing, was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006.

Another national intangible cultural heritage — Puning Yingge dance — will also help build up the festival mood at the Trafalgar Square. The traditional folk dance, originating from the Chaoshan region of South China's Guangdong province, merges opera, dance and martial arts, and is considered a symbol of promoting good, suppressing evil, and bringing peace.

16 Yingge dancers from Chaoshan will perform at Burlington Arcade in London on Feb 10 as well. In addition to the dancing, many heritage British brands at the arcade have also launched special collections for the Year of the Dragon to pay tribute to Spring Festival.

"In this joyful and reunion-filled Year of the Dragon, may the friendship between China and the UK, like the flying dragon, span across the miles and sail forward," Huang said.