



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

# HOPE Updates 2024 No.6



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Editor in chief: Daniel Zheng  
Editor: Jessica XU, Liz Zhou



**Porcelain mugs of love DIYed by a group of international schools' principals for the autistic children in Shanghai and Nanjing during a recent study tour to Jingdezhen, capital of china, organized by HOPE**

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# Inside HOPE

## **How to promote enrollment in China for universities ranked after QS 100?**

Due to the large population of university graduates, employment environment is becoming more and more competitive in China. Besides, with the preferential residence settlement policies in first tier cities set by the central and local government for graduates from the world top100 universities, Chinese students with relatively high academic scores aim only at world top 100 universities when they apply. Though they have their own merits and the commercial rankings cannot fully represent the quality of an institution, universities after top 100 still face various challenges in China recruitment market. Therefore, how to promote enrollment in China for these universities is becoming a hot topic among the industry. As an agency with 24 years' history, HOPE has the following thoughts to share with you based on its recent experience:

### 1. Graduation Rate

For those students who do not have high grades, they usually pay more attention to the graduation rate and percentage of the first class and higher second class. If the university can release these two official statistics and explain how university can support students for academic study, it will give students and parents a visual reference as well as confidence to apply.

### 2. Employment Rate

A good number of students who study abroad actually want to stay in foreign countries for employment. At this moment, they tend to choose universities with high employment rates or courses with internships. Universities can stress the career services they offer to international students during the marketing or conversion events. Some occasions, a representative from university career office or a successful alumni speak even louder than a recruitment or admission officer at a promotion event.

### 3. Recruitment-focused link with Chinese universities

Developing and promoting collaboration with Chinese institutions is a more effective and direct way to enroll a sustainable number of students, particularly those recruitment driven links. Although it takes some time to identify a partner and to process the formalities, once established and maintained well, the link can not only recruitment a stable number of students each year, but also raise the profile of the university in China market. This type of link can work particularly well if assisted by a professional agency as it can play a role as match-maker, facilitator, promoter and service provider. HOPE has so far successfully assisted over 10 UK universities for such links leading to recruitment.

Some popular models of collaboration include:

#### a) 1+1+1 at postgraduate level.

Students study one year master in the UK during the 2nd year of their 3 years' master programme in a

Chinese university (1st year and 3rd year in China). Students get both Chinese and British master degree after three years.

b) 3+1 Chinese bachelor degree and UK master degree.

4 year undergraduate students in China completed the 4 year programme within 3 years, and going to study master degree during the 4th year. After 4 years, students get Chinese bachelor degree and UK master degree. This module of collaboration requires strong academic background of students and flexible policy from Chinese university.

c) 3+1 undergraduate study abroad year or semester with credit transfer.

Students study 1 year or 1 semester in an overseas university with credit transfer (no overseas degree), usually during their 3rd or 4th year of their undergraduate programme.

All the above models are encouraged by education authorities in China as part of university's "internationalization" campaign and some link can even get funding from the MoE to support students' partial tuition overseas. More importantly, the above models usually do not have to be approved by MoE and can be directly under university MoU or MoA, therefore relatively quicker to achieve the results.

If you are interested in discuss further about the link, please contact Alice Zhang, International Partnership Manager at HOPE, [a.zhang@hope-studyabroad.com](mailto:a.zhang@hope-studyabroad.com)

4. Offering short-term summer/winter courses preferred by Chinese students

A 2-4 weeks short winter or summer programme on subjects popular with Chinese students are also a good way to attract more UG and PG applicants. Target students shall be both senior high students and UG students in China. Popular subjects include business and finance, business analysis, media/new media and communications, AI and chat GPT, computer science and data analysis, engineering, education and psychology.

Although many colleges and universities in the UK offer summer programmes, the content of the courses does not match Chinese students' preferences or international market. Chinese students are likely to choose some courses that are helpful for their employment or are practical. It would be better if the courses could be integrated with the local companies visits and offer a reference letter if students perform well during the course.

5. Student Counsellor in campus who can speak Chinese

For students with weak language skills or poor foundation, their biggest worry is that they don't know how to ask for help when they encounter anything in foreign country. Some students are shy or can't speak English well so that they don't know how to deal with complicated issues. For such groups, they hope that there will be a Chinese-speaking teacher/counselor in student office who can guide them how to handle emergencies.

## A good example of Sino-UK sister schools partnership

Sister school programmes have been highly welcomed by Chinese schools and the link with a Chinese school has also been used as a good strategy by more and more overseas schools to recruit as well as to raise the profile in China market. HOPE has facilitated many Chinese schools to establish this mutually-beneficial partnership with UK, US, Australian, Singapore colleges and schools in the past 20 years.

A good example of such partnership is between Shanghai Zhiyuan Junior Middle School and Brockenhurst College, UK. From June 24 to June 28, 2024, a group of 35 students and 6 teachers from this forward-thinking Chinese school attended a week summer immersion programme in their UK sister school. This was the 3rd time, Zhiyuan sent students and teachers group to the UK partnership school since the link was established in 2018 supported by HOPE.



**Teachers at Brocks introducing themselves during the welcoming ceremony**

Brockenhurst College, a state college over 100-year history has been in partnership with HOPE for more than 10 years, during which HOPE has help the College establish its profile in east China and formed sister school relationship with 5 Chinese schools. The college offered bespoke summer and winter immersion programme for over 300 Chinese students from its sister schools. The college also sent 2 groups of teachers and students to its Chinese partner schools during Easter and summer holidays for exchange. Besides, the College's commitment to China market also includes attending international conferences/school fairs organized by HOPE and local education authorities, online activities with Chinese schools, regular visits to China and HOPE by its principal/vice principal, International Managers and Officers, and academic staff. A healthy and sustainable relationship has been well established with the China market and all stakeholders.

This summer, Brockenhurst College also carefully designed the summer programme for Zhiyuan students and teachers. The programme includes English courses, business courses and drama courses plus activities, excursions as well as host family accommodation in order to enhance students' experience of what a UK school is like.





**Teaching students English without using textbooks**

In English course, Brockenhurst College teachers put aside the traditional way of teaching English by using textbooks. Instead, they used games to guide every students to think in English, and then practice correct pronunciation and grammar.

In the business course, the teacher asked students to plan the companies they hope to establish in the future. This also include designing their own company logo and slogan. Many students have expressed that business courses are not available in China's in junior middle school, but this course is very interesting. It help them understand what a business entity is and what it is like under a British context.



**Students rehearsal for Shakespeare's play**



**Final show time!**

Shakespeare's plays have to be a necessity during the visit in the UK! Brockenhurst College invited local students who major in English drama to organize a drama afternoon, allowing students to immerse themselves in playing "Midsummer Night's Dream". The children searched for inspiration outdoors and performed indoors after rehearsals.

At the farewell ceremony, students also demonstrated Chinese traditional culture in front of the teachers and students from Brockenhurst College. Gifts were exchanged during the ceremony. The UK students and teachers really enjoyed the performance and showed their gratitude to the students.



**Zhiyuan students demonstrating Chinese culture at Brockenhurst College**

One of the students said that what impressed him a lot was the width and depth of curriculum in the UK , with teachers focusing on inspiring their own thoughts. This was very different from education in China. Some students said that they will highly recommend the summer school to their friends. They wish that this kind of experience could be extended for another two weeks!



**Group photo of Zhiyuan students and teachers at Brockenhurst College**

To assist more overseas school to enter China market after the pandemic, HOPE is going to organize a school link forum and summer course/school fair in Shanghai from 18-19 October. Any school interested in the events, please contact Alice Zhang, International Partnership Manager of HOPE, [a.zhang@hope-studyabroad.com](mailto:a.zhang@hope-studyabroad.com).

## Workplace Experience Seminar for students in a fortune 500 Company

As a company specializing in International Education Exchange and collaboration as well as students' recruitment for foreign institutions for more than 20 years, HOPE pays attention not only to the student's academics, but also to the students' future career path. After market exploration, HOPE has built cooperation with Mercer to help students make better career choices and plans. Mercer is part of Marsh McLennan, the world's leading professional services firm in risk, strategy and people. Mercer works with clients in 130 markets around the world, helping them continue to make the future brighter for their employees.



On June 4th, HOPE invited 15 students to experience a workplace seminar in Mercer company in CBD of Shanghai. Most students from a wide range of backgrounds attended the event with great interest. The entire seminar consists of three parts: ice-breaking, career knowledge sharing and group mock interview. During the first phase, the leader from Mercer asked the students to introduce themselves and to memorize the details of the three other students, and the discussion atmosphere began to get lively. Then, the leader from Mercer used her own personal experience to share with everyone her initial and specific principles of career choice, and at the same time, explained in detail the current employment trend of the investment banks.





The third part, group mock interview, was also one of the highlights of this seminar. Students were asked to write a resume to the interviewers. Alex Wen, General Manager of HOPE Shanghai, together with two staffs from Mercer, acted as mock interviewers and asked a lot of targeted questions about each student's resume, which are common questions asked by Fortune 500 companies and investment banks during campus recruiting. They also summarized the performance of each student. The students benefited a lot from this activity and realized that it is very important to understand their career path and their strengths and weaknesses when they are looking for a job, and they have a clearer plan for their future.

Hope will do more exploration in the area of students' careers, develop more channels of cooperation, and provide more comprehensive counseling for our students.

# INSIDE HOPE --- Photo news



On June 7th, the principal from Mount School in UK visited Hope Education Shanghai Office and made a fantastic speech about the school.



On June 11<sup>th</sup>, the International Director from Tettenhall College in UK visited Hope Education Shanghai office and gave us a vivid introduction for this college.



On June 24th, the Chief Commercial Officer from Epsom College in Malaysia visited Hope Education Shanghai office and made exchanges on the future cooperation.





On June 26th, Hope Education and CICC Wealth Hangzhou successfully held a unique customer value-added activity. The event focused on the current concern of overseas study and cross-border asset allocation, and attracted the active participation of many customers. Mr. Zhang, Director of Hope Education, gave a speech about "What kind of students do famous universities need? An Analysis of the Assessment Dimensions of Oxford University". With her rich experience in the field of international education, Ms. Zhang unveiled the mystery of the enrollment of the world's top universities for the guests.

# News from local media

## Foreign students navigate challenges of yanggaokao

By Xu Xiaomin in Shanghai | China Daily | Updated: 2024-06-24 09:41

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202406/24/WS6678cedba31095c51c50a6e7.html>

Over 200 foreign students from Tongji University's International School in Shanghai sat a rigorous final exam over the weekend, a crucial step on the path to receiving a Chinese government scholarship. The exam, nicknamed yanggaokao or "foreigner college entrance exam", assesses the students' progress after a year of preparatory coursework at the school. Passing is a prerequisite for continuing their studies in China on the scholarship program established by the Ministry of Education.

The exam format mirrors China's national college entrance exams, or gaokao. Students tackled subjects such as Chinese language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, all delivered in Mandarin on computer. A listening test further evaluated their language proficiency. Recognizing the unique challenge of taking exams in a foreign language, the international school faculty organized activities aimed at relieving stress, echoing traditions associated with the gaokao, such as offering encouraging messages and wearing red T-shirts.

"It's definitely difficult," said Guncha Atabayeva, a student from Turkmenistan. "Taking the exam in Chinese is a whole other challenge compared to my native language." Atabayeva aims to continue her studies in gynecology at Guangzhou Medical University. "We understand the pressure these students face, studying abroad and taking exams in their second or even third language," said Zong Qian, vice-president of the international school. "Our teachers are dedicated to their success, staying late to offer additional



support and guidance."



[Photo/chinadaily.com.cn]

Zong, wearing a traditional qipao dress, symbolizing victory, personally greeted students and offered words of encouragement before the exam. The qipao has become a popular symbol of good luck for students facing important exams.

Claire Maria Kanga Moukendi, a student from the Republic of Congo, received a personalized Coca-Cola can with her Chinese name on it, a small token of support from the school. "I trust my teachers and myself," she said confidently after completing the exam. "They've prepared us well, and I believe I did well."

Since 2009, Tongji University's preparatory program has welcomed over 3,300 international students from over 100 countries. The program offers a valuable gateway for international students to pursue higher education opportunities in China.

Xia Miao contributed to this story.

## Initiative to boost ties in education with France

By Zhao Yimeng | China Daily | Updated: 2024-06-24 09:25

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202406/24/WS6678cb15a31095c51c50a6be.html>

China has launched an initiative to attract more French students and young people to study and exchange programs, aiming to deepen educational cooperation with France. The initiative was announced during the Sino-French Education Development Forum held in Paris on Friday. It follows President Xi Jinping's pledge in May to increase the number of French students studying in China to over 10,000 and double the scale of European youth exchanges within the next three years.

Vivien Deroche, a student at Ecole Centrale de Lyon who applied for a place in a master's degree program in environmental engineering at Tsinghua University, will be one of the first 16 students to come to China under the initiative. "I believe that students from the two countries can learn a lot from each other," the 22-year-old said. "This study program will allow me to enhance my skills and maintain an open-minded perspective on the world, particularly on environmental issues where international cooperation is crucial."

Before departing for China in a few days, Deroche said he is excited about meeting new people and discovering a rich culture. "China is a country with a millennia-old history and rapid development, which I will begin to explore over the next two years," he said. Education Minister Huai Jinpeng said China is committed to expanding high-quality exchanges with young Europeans. This includes supporting joint summer schools between Chinese and European universities, sharing course resources and increasing opportunities for young people from France and Europe to learn Chinese.

The initiative also emphasizes collaboration on projects addressing shared concerns such as digital education, environmental sustainability and developing vocational skills."We are willing to work with educational authorities in France and other European countries to advance high-quality exchanges among young people," Huai said at the opening of the forum.

Calls were also made at the event for stronger Sino-French collaboration in fundamental scientific research. Peking University President Gong Qihuang highlighted the importance of fostering talent and uncovering scientific breakthroughs during a parallel session. Universities from both nations signed several agreements during the forum, covering areas such as engineering training, nuclear energy research and social sciences. Additionally, a commemorative album celebrating 60 years of Sino-French student exchanges was presented to guests.

## **Working together: Prioritizing education development and transformation for a better future**

Source: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) June 15, 2024

[http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press\\_releases/202406/t20240616\\_1136019.html](http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202406/t20240616_1136019.html)

Chinese President XI Jinping pointed out that education is the fundamental way for mankind to pass on civilizations and knowledge, bring up new generations, and create a better life. Today, human society is facing unprecedented challenges. The implementation progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is far below expectations, and a new technological revolution is sweeping across the world. Taking the view that education is the bridge to a better future, we must prioritize the development of education and take initiatives to transform it, to empower individuals, reshape societies, and lead the way into the future.

**Looking forward, we must make education development a top priority.**

As investing in education is investing in our futures, giving priority to the development of education is an inevitable choice for creating a better future. China gives high priority to the development of education in its strategic planning, financial investment, and allocation of public resources. The proportion of national fiscal education expenditures in GDP has been kept above 4% for 11 consecutive years, and significant achievements have been made in implementing the Education 2030 Agenda.

As of 2023, the gross enrollment rate at the preschool level has reached 91.1%, the completion rate of nine-year compulsory education 95.7%, the gross enrollment rate for high school 91.8%, and the gross enrollment rate for higher education 60.2%. Access to education has been effectively ensured for all. Education has become more equitable and inclusive, and the quality has been significantly improved. The

proportion of the illiterate population has dropped to 2.67%, while the average years of education for new entrants to the labor force have reached 14 years, which has underpinned rapid and sustained socio-economic development.

**Looking forward, we must take the initiative to transform education.**

At present, with the accelerated unfolding of a new round of technological and industrial revolution, education is the best converging point to promote talent cultivation, knowledge production, and technological innovation. Looking into the future, we must take the initiative to transform education and make a meaningful impact.

**To transform education, we should pursue a people-centered approach**, since education is fundamental to improving the well-being of the people. With the aim of promoting the all-round development of the people and meeting their increasing needs for education, China is dedicated to developing a comprehensive education system, integrating moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education, to enhance students' core competencies in humanistic values, spirit of science, ability to learn, healthy living, sense of responsibility and practical innovation, among others.

Active efforts have also been made to foster students' sense of community of a shared future for mankind as well as the awareness of ecological civilization, to enable them to develop themselves, contribute to society, and benefit mankind. We have strengthened the linkage between education and poverty alleviation and established a financial assistance system covering education at all levels and of all types, also provided dedicated support to students with disabilities, and achieved a dynamic zero dropout rate in compulsory education.

**To transform education, we should leverage digitalization**, as it is a future development trend and plays a pivotal role in advancing education transformation. China has implemented the national strategy for the digitalization of education, upholding the principles of application-oriented and "integrated, intelligent, international". We have pooled high-quality, systematic, and enriched digital resources to set up a public service platform entitled Smart Education of China, which provides non-stop, all-weather, and supermarket-style services for students and the public. Students and teachers in remote areas thus could have access to quality education resources. Individualized learning, teaching, school governance, and education reform and innovation have been facilitated and supported as well. Furthermore, China adheres to the principle of "Digital for Good", reinforcing the protection of learners' privacy and strengthening the ethical use of AI to ensure its development is in service of mankind.

**To transform education, we should focus on teachers**, who are the agents of education transformation. China regards the development of the teaching force as a task of fundamental importance. Guided by the ideals of great educators, and with the engagement of normal and comprehensive universities, a teacher education system and an in-job teacher training system have been established, in which artificial intelligence and digital technologies are used to empower teachers. Policies are implemented to allocate qualified teachers to rural and remote areas. Measures are taken to improve teachers' remuneration and

social status and to promote a social atmosphere of respect for teachers and teaching. We are committed to helping the 18.92 million teachers become a high-quality, professional, and innovative teaching force.

**Looking forward, we must strengthen international cooperation and exchanges in education.**

Humanity is an interconnected community of a shared future that shares weal and woe. Faced with crises, challenges, and uncertainties, we need to strengthen cooperation and solidarity more than ever before.

With opening up as a fundamental national policy, China has been ardently promoting international cooperation and exchanges in education and steadfastly supporting UNESCO's global priorities. Invited by UNESCO, Professor PENG Liyuan, the wife of Chinese President XI Jinping, has served as UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls' and Women's Education. China and UNESCO have jointly established the Prize for Girls' and Women's Education for its global development. China has been collaborating with UNESCO to implement three phases of the China-UNESCO Funds-in-Trust to boost education development in Africa, benefiting 30,000 teachers and a large number of students in higher technical and vocational schools in 12 African countries.

China provides funds and favorable conditions to support the establishment of UNESCO International Institute for STEM Education as a new channel for cooperation to elevate STEM education in developing countries. China has also taken the initiative to organize the World Digital Education Conference and the International Forum on AI and Education to provide platforms for international educational cooperation and exchanges and promote the digital transformation of global education.

Human societies have come to a crossroads in history. We must put education at the core of the agenda of the UN Summit of the Future and take collective actions to promote education development and transformation, to build the community of a shared future for mankind, and to pave the way for a better future!

(Note: This is a signed article by Minister of Education HUAI Jinpeng titled "Working together: Prioritizing education development and transformation for a better future", published on UNESCO's official website.)

## Visa-free policy helps promote global exchanges

Nation committed to making it easier for expats to live and work in China

By Mo Jingxi and Xu Wei | China Daily | Updated: 2024-06-18 07:00

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202406/18/WS6670c018a31095c51c5095d6.html>



Spanish businessman Jesus Perez Aguilar arrived in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, in late January for an 11-day business trip, a journey that also took him to Shenzhen and Changsha, Hunan province.

Aguilar's frequent trips to China have been propelled by a 2018 agreement, signed during President Xi Jinping's visit to Spain, that allowed the European country to export bone-in ham to China.

Over the years, Aguilar has become a familiar face in China promoting Iberian ham. In 2023 alone, he visited China four times, staying more than 90 days in the country.

The January trip, however, stood out due to a new and convenient measure: a unilateral 15-day visa-free entry policy granted to ordinary passport holders from several European countries, including Spain, as well as Malaysia. This policy, on a trial basis and initially set to expire at the end of the year, has been extended to the end of 2025. It now applies to 14 countries, with Australia and New Zealand recently included.

"These kinds of small conveniences help a lot in promoting commercial exchanges between countries," said Aguilar, who works for the Interprofessional Iberian Pork Association, which is headquartered in Zafra in southern Spain.

In a written speech delivered at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit in San Francisco in November, Xi reiterated Beijing's commitment to make it easier for foreign expatriates to live and work in China.

"We will also take more 'heartwarming' measures, such as improving the policies on entry and stay of foreign nationals in China and removing for them choke points in financial, medical, e-payment and other services," he told the global business community.

During the Central Economic Work Conference in December, China's top leadership decided to remove more barriers to facilitate business, study and travel in China for foreigners. Since then, central as well as local governments have introduced a series of measures to meet the diverse needs of foreign visitors and expatriates.

### **Broader agenda**

As China has pursued a more proactive strategy of opening-up since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, observers said these measures exemplify China's efforts to advance a broader agenda of opening-up across more areas and in greater depth.

Matteo Giovannini, an Italian who has lived in China for nearly 11 years and has witnessed such efforts, highly rated the quality of his life in China, considering aspects such as affordability, safety and cultural richness.

Giovannini said the digitalization of government services is one aspect he has found particularly beneficial for foreigners. "It has made it easier for residents to access public services, pay bills and complete administrative tasks online," he said.

He said that initially, it was challenging for him to adapt to life in China, as English was not widely available on public transportation and in restaurants when he arrived in 2013 in Dalian, Liaoning province.

It would be even better if the availability of translation and interpretation services, especially in critical areas like healthcare, legal services and government offices, can be further increased, he said.

Now being deeply immersed in China's culture and traditions and the Chinese language, Giovannini said he does not see himself living somewhere else for the foreseeable future. He was granted permanent residence status in 2022.

"The fact that China enjoys political stability with a predictable living environment is something that cannot be underestimated nowadays," he added.

Wang Ying, a researcher at the Beijing-based University of International Business and Economics' Academy of China Open Economy Studies, said that through the facilitation measures, the Chinese government is showing a welcoming attitude toward foreign visitors as well as expatriates in China.

"We can see that the adopted measures are targeted at existing bottlenecks and obstacles, with the purpose of creating a better environment for them to work and live in China in the long run," she said.

As convenience improves, more and more foreigners, including businesspeople, will be willing to come to travel, work and live in China. "This will help boost economic, trade, as well as cultural exchanges between China and other countries, thus deepening cooperation and mutual understanding," Wang said.

Aguilar, the Spaniard, said he has full confidence in the Chinese economy and will deepen his involvement in the Chinese market with a planned visit in September.

He said that in the last five years, sales of Spanish cured ham to China increased more than 104 percent, with an annual growth of 28.5 million euros (\$30.52 million). Now China has become Spain's second-largest destination for such products outside the European Union.

"China is a very large country with so many cities of interest to visit and work in," he said, adding that he hopes the 15-day period of the visa-free policy could be extended a few more days to facilitate his stay.

Wang from UIBE said, "Efforts to improve the quality of life for foreign citizens in China will also help to establish an objective understanding of China and enhance their sense of belonging toward China by showcasing the openness, inclusiveness and friendliness of China as a major country."

### **Getting a true picture**

For many foreign visitors who have never been to China, an in-person visit will enable them to get a true picture of how the country looks today after decades of reform and opening-up, Wang said.

In the first quarter of this year, foreign nationals made four times more trips in and out of China, data from the National Immigration Administration showed. During this period, the administration issued around 466,000 visa documents for foreign nationals and granted over 1.98 million foreign travelers visa-free entry, up 118.8 percent and 266.1 percent, respectively.

Videos shared by foreign tourists on video platforms about their firsthand travel experiences in China have been going viral recently.

In a video titled "Shocked by this crazy city in China" that received 545,000 views, the You-Tube user "JetLag Warriors" experienced the transportation and accommodations services, tasted local food and visited tourist attractions in Chongqing.

A viewer with the username "dr\_emmz" said in a comment under the video that, "I can't believe you guys made me smile the whole day.... China is the best country, lots of places to explore, lots of food, lots of cultures, it's almost unreal, and this is not what the media shows us, I'm actually coming to China for my vacation this year, so excited".

Miao Lu, secretary-general of the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think tank, said that with efforts to facilitate cross-border travel and high-standard opening-up, China is leading globalization against a rising trend of anti-globalization and implementing the Global Development Initiative and other major initiatives proposed by China.

"By doing so, China is telling the rest of the world that its commitment to expanding opening-up is not just lip service," she said.

Contact the writers at [mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn)

## Vocational student makes it to global math contest finals

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing and CANG WEI in Nanjing | [chinadaily.com.cn](http://chinadaily.com.cn) | Updated: 2024-06-16 23:41

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202406/16/WS666f07a8a31095c51c509260.html>

A 17-year-old student recently amazed millions of people worldwide by ranking 12th in the preliminary round of a global math competition, despite being up against formidable rivals from top universities, her own mentor and even artificial intelligence.

Jiang Ping, who is majoring in fashion design at Lianshui Secondary Vocational School in Huai'an, Jiangsu province, taught herself advanced mathematics for about two years, and then made it to the finals of the 2024 Alibaba Global Mathematics Competition with a high score of 93 out of 120.

She became the first vocational school student to reach the finals and the only girl among the top 30 contestants. Most of the finalists, totaling around 800, are from prestigious institutions such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, MIT and Princeton University.

Vocational schools like the one Jiang attends usually focus on providing students with practical knowledge and training related to specific professions.



Jiang's story, which has touched and inspired countless internet users, clearly demonstrates that one's potential does not necessarily depend on one's educational background, and that dreams do come true if one is diligent and persistent.

Jiang's keen understanding of numbers began in junior high school, when she was easily able to solve complex math problems. Most students in China learn advanced math in college.

"I lean toward subjects such as advanced math, as they spark my desire to explore," she said. "I enjoy the step-by-step process of mathematical deductions, and reaching the desired result brings me great joy."

Jiang said she believes that regardless of which subject she is studying, fashion design or advanced mathematics, interest and effort are both crucial.

The teen, who spends most of her spare time solving math problems, keeps an English dictionary handy, so that language doesn't become a barrier when she's learning from Lawrence C. Evans' book Partial Differential Equations.

All of Jiang's books are full of notes, as she hopes to attend college someday and further explore her interest in math.

Wang Runqiu, a teacher at the vocational school, recognized Jiang's talent in mathematics and recommended books to her on the subject. He offered her personal guidance and encouraged her to give the Alibaba competition a shot.



Wang, who himself ranked 125th in the preliminary round of the contest, said, "I want to help young people as much as possible, and let them know they can have a different future."

Multiple top universities congratulated Jiang on her success, and some even encouraged her to pursue higher studies at their campus.

In a post addressed to Jiang on Sina Weibo on Friday, Shanghai-based Donghua University wrote: "Welcome to apply to Donghua University!" Two photos uploaded with the post showed the university's leading position in China in both fashion design and math.

Jiangsu University, based in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, also welcomed Jiang through Weibo. Tongji University in Shanghai said on Weibo: "Every effort will bring its own rewards."

Jiang's story has also received widespread attention on social media. A hashtag item about her, which read "In a life not defined by others, anyone can be a dark horse", garnered more than 16 million views as of Sunday.

The annual Alibaba math competition, which started in 2018, is open to all math enthusiasts regardless of age and background. Tens of thousands of people from across the globe participate in it every year.

This time, the competition was open to AI, but it failed to enter the finals.

The competition's organizing committee told JSTV.com that questions asked in the preliminary round were equivalent to undergraduate level, while those in the final round would be comparable to doctoral programs. The eight-hour final round is scheduled for Saturday, and all participants will answer online.

This year's competition will select five gold medalists, 10 silver medalists, 20 bronze medalists and 50 excellent award winners. The total prize money is \$560,000, according to the competition's website.