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Meeting Santa! During the recent visit to Finland, Daniel Zheng, Managing Director of HOPE, together with the other member of the delegation, met with Santa in Rovaniemi, Singing Chinese folk song “jasmine flower” at the request of him and got a return of “echo” with Shanghai dialect!

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Inside HOPE

Annual HOPE Staff Conference set tune for new academic year

On 18th September, HOPE International Education held its annual staff conference to set tune for company's operation and strategy in the new year, particularly on the occasion of company's 25th anniversary in 2025.

Daniel Zheng, Managing Director, host the conference. He summarized the achievements made in the past academic year and announced the overall strategy and development plan for the new year as follows:

1. Achievements of the past year:

In the past academic year, four major areas of HOPE's business have seen substantial growth compared with previous years, including 1) the Background Enhancement/enrichment Programme, 2) international education planning and school selections/application for young (primary and junior middle school) students, 3) multi-country joint application to universities' UG and PG programme overseas, and 4) group overseas study tour (summer/winter camp and short immersion programme, particularly through the establishment of sister school relationships).

2. Overall development strategy for the new academic year:

To meet the demand of the market and our core clients, more diversified products and services will be developed. For example, for study abroad business, in addition to the main focus on studying in UK, HOPE will also develop more service for students who plan to study in other English-speaking countries or regions including US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macao from junior high school to doctoral level. For summer and winter camp, apart from the traditional destination of UK, Australia and USA, HOPE is developing programme and partnership in Finland, Singapore, Malaysia and HK.

For marketing events, HOPE is to organize more influential, meaningful, and creative but convertible events that can help sustainable growth of the company business.

For partnership, HOPE will develop more institutional partnership both at home and abroad to provide B2B services in university counselling, online tutoring, teacher training, study tour and joint programme.

3. Strengthening staff development.

To meet the challenge of this changing market and fulfill the strategy, a qualified

multi-talented team of staff is vital. In the new academic year, HOPE will continue its tradition of providing various training to each of its employees. Especially for consultants who deal directly with parents and students, holistic development is a requirement for their professional development in the new year.

The half-day conference provided everyone in the company a guideline for both company and personal development in the new year.

Parents' excursion see HOPE's commitment to one-stop service

From 20th-22nd September, HOPE International Education organized a 3-day excursion for 20 HOPE students' parents (whose children are currently studying overseas or returned) in Wuyuan county, a perfect place to appreciate the autumn landscape and its architectural culture in south east China's Jiangxi Province. Such type of excursion are organized twice a year all at HOPE's expense and are used as a tie between HOPE and its clients. What makes the excursion unique and unforgettable are HOPE's deep commitments to provide a one-stop service and long term friendship with its clients.



Parents Excursion in Wuyuan, in front of local style houses known as Huiju, a famous architecture style of Anhui Province near Wuyuan

Highlight 1: Working with industry elites to draw a career blueprint for overseas students



Emily Chen, an UCL graduate shared her experience on professional path of overseas students

Apart from parents, a few professionals are also invited to the excursion so that they can share their experience and industry information with the parents at “Parents Classroom” during the trip. This time, HOPE designed an interactive sessions to allow parents to listen and communicate closely with the special guest Emily Chen, who shared with parents her career path and experience when she studied in the UK. Emily Chen graduated from UCL and worked as an industry professional in a multi-national property company in Shanghai. She also shared with parents the importance of course selection and internship in their future careers.

Emily's story inspired parents, who not only saw the infinite possibilities for their children's future, but also gained a deeper understanding of HOPE's unique advantages in promoting students' all-round development and planning their career paths.

Highlight 2: Warm moments for parents and students, conveying gratitude

Another highlight of the event is the carefully planned interaction session between parents and their kids currently studying overseas. Requested by HOPE, students recorded a personal video clip to expressed their deep gratitude to their parents on the occasion of Chinese Mid-autumn Festival. The play of the video during the trip made a big pleasant surprise to the parents and some were even touched for tears. This session not only deepened the emotional connection between parents and students, but also left them a deep impression on HOPE's consideration and kindness.



HOPE students expressed their gratitude and blessing to parents

In addition, through in-depth exchanges at the Parents' Gathering over the years, HOPE International Education has also keenly captured the new needs of parents , study tours and camps for parents. HOPE has launched an UK immersion programme for adults. This programme aims to provide parents with an unforgettable British cultural exploration journey in Lake District and Edinburgh, through in-depth experience of the UK's history, art and literature.



Liz Zhou, HOPE Marketing manager introducing UK parental immersion programme

The three-day excursion also included a visit to local bioscience lab, a local brewery and guided hiking tour in hill and local village with astonishing autumn colour.

Director's visit to Finland and SE Asia pave way for diversified service

In order to develop new products and services demanded by both institutional and individual clients, HOPE management and marketing team are making various overseas trip to establish partnership and select suitable product supplies.

Invited by Business Finland and Visit Finland, Daniel Zheng, Managing Director, visited Finland from 7th-14th September. During the visit, Daniel visited some schools, local government in Oulu, camp providers. He also attended the Education Travel Workshop in Helsinki organized by Visit Finland, meeting about 20 institutions, local government department and summer/winter camp providers who are keen to develop China market.



Daniel attending Education Travel Workshop Helsinki



Daniel meeting institution representatives at the Workshop

From 23rd-29th September, Daniel and Julie Zhou, Senior Counsellor, Eric Guo,

Marketing Manager, visited Malaysia and Singapore. Given the fact that more and more enquiries have been received from students on studying and camping in south east Asian countries, working with partner schools and universities, particularly UK institutions Singapore and Malaysian campus become one of HOPE's priority for new product development.



HOPE in Nottingham University Malaysia HOPE visit University of Southampton Malaysia

In Malaysia, Daniel and his colleague visited Epsom College Malaysia, Nottingham University Malaysia and University of Southampton Malaysia campus. While in Singapore, Westbourne College, an IB school with main campus in Cardiff, host HOPE's visit.



HOPE visit Epsom College Malaysia and discuss for collaboration

In return, apart from UK schools, some Singapore and Malaysia schools are also invited to attend HOPE's school link forum and summer/winter school fair to be held in mid-October. More diversified destinations for Chinese students to study long term as well as short term programme is becoming a trend, and SE Asian is obviously one of the main choice.

INSIDE HOPE --- Photo news of September



From 10th to 12th September, HOPE Hangzhou office visited an international schools in Ningbo to guide how to write personal statement for Grade 12 students, providing specific advice and suggestion.



On 5th and 20th September, invited by Industry Bank Huaian(Jiangsu Province) and Changchun(North China's Jilin Province) Branch respectively, HOPE attended international education salons organized by the bank. In Changchun the event attracted about 20 families who plan to send kids to study overseas. An expert in both British and Chinese education invited by HOPE shared his own experience in how he sent his two kids to Cambridge University while HOPE staff introduced the study abroad market and how family shall prepare their kids in advance. An interactive discussions were also conducted answering typical questions from bank's VIP clients. There was an in-depth analysis from the expert on how children can scientifically and objectively position themselves and make international education plans in advance.

News from local media

US visas for Chinese students on rise, official says; concerns remain about unfair treatment

By ZHAO YIMENG | China Daily | Updated: 2024-09-24 07:22

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202409/24/WS66f1f850a3103711928a9565.html>



Chinese students and parents participated in an education fair in Beijing on Sept 22. [Photo by Zhao Yimeng/chinadaily.com.cn]

The United States remains the top destination for Chinese students studying abroad despite concerns among students and parents over visas and public security, said an official with the US embassy in Beijing.

Meanwhile, Chinese students who plan to study in US universities and their parents expressed concerns about unfair treatment that US border authorities imposed on Chinese students in some cases.

Karen Gustafson, the embassy's minister counselor for consular affairs, told China Daily on Sunday that the embassy issued 105,000 visas to students from China last year. "We are currently hosting 290,000 Chinese students in the US," she said.

A report released by the US Department of State showed that in the first half of 2023, a total of 44,762 students from the Chinese mainland were granted F-1 visas to study in the US, a year-on-year increase of 44 percent.

As of the end of July, the embassy had issued more than 80,000 student visas to Chinese nationals, Gustafson said, noting the continuing increase in visas issued to Chinese students.

According to the 2023 Open Doors report released in November, Chinese students accounted for approximately 29 percent of the 1.05 million foreign students in the US during the 2022-23 academic year, down from 33 percent in the previous academic year.

Gustafson said that despite a decreasing trend, Chinese students remain the largest group of foreign students in the US, and are expected to "stay at the top and grow".

"We really wholeheartedly welcome Chinese students to come to the US, and we are always hoping to encourage more students to come," she said, adding that the embassy is making efforts to maximize student numbers and return to the peak before the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Sunday, hundreds of Chinese students and parents participated in an education fair in Beijing, seeking information on the prospects of studying abroad. Around 100 US universities attended the fair.

A fair visitor, surnamed Wang, said she hopes to address her concerns over her daughter's further education in the US by seeking advice from the universities and the organizer.

Wang said that her daughter, a student of biological sciences in Wuhan, Hubei province, is preparing to pursue postgraduate studies in the US.

Given recent cases of Chinese students, particularly those majoring in science and engineering at US universities, having their visas refused on arrival, receiving unfair treatment by border enforcement and even facing deportation, Wang said she is worried and hopes to get more information from the authorities.

In recent years, dozens of Chinese students have reported that they suffered from unwarranted harassment, interrogation and repatriation because of their political or scientific research background.

Many have posted on social media platforms their "terrifying" experiences of being taken by border officials to a "small dark room" at US airports, raising public concerns.

"What I care about most is the safety of my child and whether she can smoothly graduate from a US university," Wang said, adding that she had heard that Chinese students applying for certain subjects face higher risks of visa rejection.

Gustafson called such cases isolated incidents, and said the majority of Chinese students are continuing their studies in the US.

While the US embassy is in charge of issuing visas, entry into the country is handled by the Department of Homeland Security, she said.

"What I can say is the vast majority of Chinese students going to the US end up studying in the US, and we really welcome them to continue to do so," she added.



Chinese students and parents participated in an education fair in Beijing on Sept 22. [Photo by Zhao Yimeng/chinadaily.com.cn]

Significant harm

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said in April that enforcing deportation orders against Chinese students has caused significant harm to the individuals concerned and disrupted cultural and academic exchanges between China and the US.

"Recent cases demonstrate that US law enforcement officers are engaging in deportation for the sake of deportation, exhibiting political, discriminatory and selective enforcement," she said at a news conference.

Zhu Chenge, an assistant researcher of US diplomacy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the excessive scrutiny of Chinese students by US authorities may seem to affect only a small group, but it is in reality demolishing one of the pillars of the complex interactions between China and the US.

"Normal academic exchanges between two technological powerhouses are disrupted. It is certainly not a positive sign if students and scholars are more concerned about their personal safety than academic matters," Zhu said.

Wang Jialing, a 10th grader in the international class at RCF Experimental School in Beijing, has started to prepare his US university application.

Aiming to enroll into the University of Southern California as a finance major, he inquired about application procedures and career prospects at the education fair. He said he wants to choose a college among the top 50 in the US in a relatively safe state, and plans to return to China after obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Liu Fangyuan, director of the University of Minnesota's China office, said the number of Chinese students at the university has been increasing after the pandemic, and currently accounts for about one-third of the over 5,200 international students on campus.

Around 70 percent of Chinese students apply for undergraduate studies, with most of them seeking to major in business or trending subjects such as computer science and artificial intelligence, she said, adding that no Chinese students at her college has reported visa problems.

International cooperation and integration conference opens in Changchun

Source: www.moe.gov.cn September 21, 2024

The 2024 International Conference on the Cooperation and Integration of Industry, Education, Research and Application (Jilin sub-venue) opened in Changchun, Jilin Province on Sept. 20. Around 230 representatives from Chinese and overseas higher education institutions, enterprises, and institutes attended the opening ceremony.

Vice Minister of Education Chen Jie delivered a speech at the event via video link. He said that Chinese President Xi Jinping puts high priority on opening up and cooperation in the education sector. He stressed the need to enhance collaboration between academia and industry in scientific research in order to expedite the practical application of more research findings. Since its inception six years ago, the annual conference has received positive feedback from domestic and international universities, businesses, and research institutions and has achieved remarkable progress. Chen urged the conference to maximize its role as a platform for cooperation by increasing digital applications and promoting high-level openness, coordinated development, and innovation in the integration of industry, education, research and application. He noted that these efforts would contribute significantly to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

High-quality employment a priority for socioeconomic development

By Cheng Si | China Daily | Updated: 2024-09-25 09:54



Contestants compete in an industry 4.0 contest during the 47th WorldSkills Competition in Lyon, France, Sept 12, 2024. [Photo/Xinhua]

China is ramping up efforts to boost high-quality employment growth by developing more new professions, encouraging entrepreneurship and skills education, and tightening supervision of the human resources market to secure a fairer, healthier working environment for people.

Li Zhong, vice-minister of human resources and social security, said at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday that high-quality employment is a priority of the nation's socioeconomic development, and authorities must give more support to industries and companies that are better suited to create job opportunities.

He said authorities need to establish a forecast mechanism for human resources demands based on technological and industrial advancement and regularly publish information about professions or occupations in urgent demand to relieve the current structural imbalance between labor force supply and employers' needs.

Li said the employment of young people, which requires systematic policy and financial support and the provision of smoother career promotion channels, remains a top priority for the ministry.

Senior officials have also attached importance to skills education and training, another important incubator of job opportunities.

Ministry spokesman Lu Aihong cited the outstanding performance of young Chinese at the recent WorldSkills competition while explaining the positive role of skills in realizing self-worth and boosting employment. The competition was held in Lyon, France, from Sept 10 to 15.

"It's the seventh time China sent a delegation to compete in the WorldSkills, which is recognized as the Olympics of skills," he said. "The 68 young people from China won 36 golds, nine silvers and four bronzes, showing the world their superior skills and upbeat spirits."

Lu said 283 young Chinese have competed at WorldSkills since 2010, and the honors they have won have given them more space for self-growth and more job opportunities.

"Many of these candidates and medal winners have devoted themselves to passing down skills, becoming good examples for the young generation," he added.

Li, the vice-minister, said the ministry will further optimize job services to ensure that people looking for work get fairer, easier access to more professional job-seeking guidance and services. He added that the ministry will also offer more support to entrepreneurs to help them start businesses.

"Also, we will continue to perfect the labor or working regulations and expand social security coverage to protect people's working rights," he said. "Improper or illegal behavior, including job discrimination, salary arrears or unreasonable layoffs, will be cracked down upon to ensure the stability and health of the job market."

FOCAC Summit launches initiative for China–Africa cooperation in education and cultural heritage protection

Source: www.moe.gov.cn September 8, 2024

The China – Africa – UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection was held in Beijing on Sept. 6 during the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China – Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Representatives attending the Dialogue conducted in-depth discussions on the topic of “ jointly promoting educational development and cultural heritage protection in Africa ” .

The Dialogue:

1. Praised the Beijing Summit of FOCAC, held on Sept. 5 – 6, for proposing a series of new cooperative initiatives and actions aimed at building an all-weather China – Africa community with a shared future. It also praised the 37th African Union (AU) Summit, held on Feb. 17 – 18, which named 2024 the Year of Education and adopted relevant conceptual documents.
2. Recognized education as the cornerstone for peace, stability, and prosperous development in the world as it plays a fundamental, pioneering, and supportive role in advancing national modernization and sustainable development and embodying people’s aspirations for a better life. It also considered cultural heritage a precious legacy created by humanity, and thus the protection of this heritage to be a prerequisite for the progress of human civilization and the world’s sustainable development as well as a common responsibility for the international community. Therefore, enhancing cooperation in education and cultural heritage protection is essential to the implementation of the three global initiatives (namely, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative), the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and the AU 2063 Agenda, as well as the development of a global community with a shared future.
3. Stressed China’s continued commitment to the principles of equality, mutual benefit, openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation in its cooperation with Africa on education and cultural heritage protection; and its efforts to help Africa strengthen capabilities and build a resilient educational system and a sustainable cultural heritage protection system, thus ensuring that more African people benefit equally from the results of this cooperation.

Both Chinese and African representatives expressed their readiness to take concrete measures to implement the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of FOCAC. Specifically, these measures will focus on:

1. Reinforcing educational collaboration and jointly promoting educational modernization

1.1 Vocational education empowerment: co-developing skilled talent and vocational education standards, improving industry - education integration and school - business cooperation, and advancing industrialization and agricultural modernization in Africa.

1.2 Teacher capacity building: establishing African regional centers for “Mandarin plus vocational skills” education, teacher education, and digital education, in order to forge partnerships for teacher training in areas such as STEM education, digital education, and vocational education, thereby strengthening the teaching workforce and bridging the educational development gap in Africa.

1.3 Digital education sharing: jointly setting standards for digital education development, sharing platforms and resources, and improving open education cooperation and digital literacy for teachers and students, in order to establish a data-driven education decision-making and evaluation mechanism.

2. Strengthening cultural heritage protection and promoting cultural exchange

2.1 Sharing experiences and resources in cultural heritage protection: strengthening cooperation in joint archaeological work, site restoration, museum and collection management, World Cultural Heritage nominations and protection, heritage management capacity building, collaborating on international affairs related to World Heritage to safeguard the interests of developing countries, and engaging in joint efforts to nominate transnational heritage, such as the Maritime Silk Road and Egypt’ s hydrological heritage.

2.2 Sharing experiences and resources to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property and promote the restitution of lost cultural relics: coordinating via international forums and with UNESCO’ s support to push for the return of cultural properties to their countries of origin.

2.3 Conducting practical cooperation in intangible cultural heritage protection and management: facilitating exchange on intangible cultural heritage between inheritors, experts, and professionals in China and Africa; encouraging them to participate in international cultural events; and building platforms for showcasing efforts related to intangible cultural heritage.

Chinese and African representatives praised UNESCO for making Africa one of its two global priorities and for its ongoing efforts in this regard. They pledged support for UNESCO in the following areas:

1. Implementation of UNESCO's Campus Africa program and efforts to promote education for girls and women in Africa.
2. Implementation of the China - UNESCO Trust Fund to help develop tertiary vocational education, train talent, and improve teacher skills in Africa, co-establishment of a China - UNESCO Trust Fund on World Heritage Capacity Building in Africa, and joint organization of training seminars on the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage in African countries.
3. Support for the protection, maintenance and promotion of culture, as well as recognizing and integrating culture as a standalone goal in the Post-2023 Sustainable Development Agenda, as stated in the 2022 UNESCO MONDIACULT Declaration.

Lastly, Chinese and African representatives called on governments, international organizations, social institutions, the education sector, and the cultural community to work together to implement the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as well as the AU 2063 Agenda, thus contributing to the development of a global community with a shared future.