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**Higher Education Taking Action Towards the Sustainable Development Goals:
 Perspectives from Asia and Europe**



Interview | Conducted by Shanshan WU SDGs to Reorient Internationalisation

About the interviewer:

Shanshan WU majored in E-Commerce at Donghua University. She is currently studying for her second degree in Finance at the East China Normal University. She has great enthusiasm in environmental protection, women's empowerment, climate change and other public welfare undertakings. At present, she serves as executive chairman of Lean In College, and is responsible for managing the affairs of nearly 100 college associations in China. Shanshan is a member of the Chinese Youth Delegation to the 24th UN Climate Change Conference. At the same time, she also works with her team on the topic of 'Exploration of Sustainable Waste Classification and Recycling Mechanism in Chinese Colleges and Universities'.

About the Respondent: Xiaoran Peng, the former president of the Student Union of Donghua University. He studied finance for his Master in England last year, which made him know well about the education system in China and England.

I chose this topic because of three reasons:

1. I found that the Chinese government's support for internationalization of universities has increased a lot at the policy level, and I want to know how policy support has affected the landing of universities.
2. At present, China has made some achievements in the internationalization of higher education. I want to know what we should do next to promote the internationalization of higher education.
3. Xiaoran Peng has studied in China and England. I think he has a better and deep understanding of the internationalization of higher education and give me some inspired idea to me.

Internationalization is very important for the sustainable development of higher education, and international exchanges is one of the sectors of the nationalization of universities. In recent years, Chinese universities have taken many measures to promote international exchanges, such as increasing the number of professors visiting foreign countries, increasing the opportunities for

undergraduates, postgraduates and doctoral students to do exchanges abroad during their studies, and encouraging university students to participate in international exchange projects. In China, not only universities, but also major non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations are promoting the internationalization of higher education through various short-term and long-term outbound study programs for college students. In order to better understand the impact of international exchanges on the sustainable development of higher education, I had the privilege of visiting Xiaoran Peng, former president of the Student Union of the School of Management of Donghua University, and integrate the interview content into this article.

In the document approved by the State Council and transmitted by the State Council to the State Education Commission named *Some Interim Provisions on the Work of Overseas Students*[1], the principle of sending students and visiting scholars to study abroad in China is mentioned as "dispatching students and visiting scholars on demand, guaranteeing the quality and consistency of their studies, strengthening the management and education of overseas students, and striving to create conditions for them to return to study for practical use". When asked about the impact of this policy on sustainable development education, Peng answered, *"Deploying students or scholars to study abroad or exchange according to China's actual needs will help to cultivate the nationalized vision of students and scholars and enhance the internationalization of higher education."* The state will also provide financial support to students and scholars to ensure that they have sufficient funds to study and live during their studies and visits. *"Of course, it's also very important for the country to select foreign students and visiting scholars,"* Peng added.

In addition to the dispatch of students and scholars, the Ministry of Education of China has also made efforts to introduce international students. According to the *China Education Statistics Year book* [2], the number of freshmen enrolled in Chinese universities rose from 61,000 in 2005 to 111,000 in 2014, an increase of 82%. In contrast, the number of domestic college students enrolled in the same period rose from 5.4 million to 6.98 million annually, an increase of 38%. According to the annual data released by the Ministry of Education, if all kinds of foreign students are added up, their stock has risen from 290,000 in 2011 to 440,000 in 2016, while the number of institutions of higher learning receiving foreign students has increased from 660 to 829. China has become the largest destination for studying abroad in Asia. Peng also expressed his views about this phenomenon: *"On the one hand, this measure has improved the level of nationalization of universities, Chinese students can contact students from all over the world, which is conducive to thinking collision and cultural exchanges; on the other hand, Chinese universities still need to practice in selecting standard international students. At present, Chinese universities adopt different standards for selecting international and domestic students. How to ensure the relative fairness of Education under the double standards still needs to be explored in the future."*

The experience learned from this interview has given me a great inspiration and a deeper understanding of the internationalization of higher education in China, especially concerning international exchanges. Sharing educational resources between countries and international exchanges between students and scholars are of great help to the nationalization of universities. However, the selection criteria of students and scholars need to be constantly improved in the future so as to better realize the sustainable development of higher education.

References:

Some Interim Provisions on the Work of Overseas Students

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2012-09/21/content_6092.htm

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