

# YOUTH

## African winners of Huawei's contest to visit China

JOHANNESBURG — The winners of the Huawei ICT Competition Southern Africa 2018-19 were awarded trophies in Johannesburg on March 10. And, they will soon set off for China for the final global competition.

Yusuf Hamisi, 26, is a first-year information technology student at the Open University of Tanzania, who was part of the winning team.

"This is such a great opportunity. I didn't know that it would open so many doors for me," he says, adding that this is important for them.

About 28,000 students from universities and colleges across the sub-Saharan region took part in the competition, with teams from Nigeria and Tanzania clinching victories.

The winners, together with teams from Kenya and Angola will join another 22 teams from across the world to compete in May.

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**Yusuf Hamisi**, 26, a first-year information technology student at the Open University of Tanzania

Huawei is a global provider of information and communication technology. And its ICT competition, carried out at national, regional and global levels, has become one of the largest in the world, attracting around 80,000 participants this year.

Huawei's vice-president Mark Xue told the students at the award ceremony that the ICT competition is a global platform for the exchange of ideas and an important part of Huawei's talent development strategy.

"I am very pleased that we have enhanced mutual understanding through this journey for the development of your country and this promising continent," he said.

Wang Daoyu, first secretary of education at the Chinese embassy in South Africa, says providing hundreds of African students with information and communication technology skills is significant for the development and industrialization of the continent, and is essential for the industrialization and development of all developing countries.

The competition is also key for people-to-people exchanges, and it has brought so many together for the betterment of lives and people from Africa, Wang says.

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Zeng Li attends a cultural festival at Western Carolina University in the United States last year, guiding students to write Chinese characters.

# Nurture ethnic talent

An educationist from the Miao community talks of the importance of education at the annual legislative meetings, **Xing Wen** and **Yang Jun** report.

Donning the traditional clothing of the Miao ethnic group along with silver accessories, Zeng Li, a professor from Guizhou Minzu University, who's a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, explains her proposals in front of a camera in English.

The crimson color of her garment, she says, is the color of the Miao people. The unhurried way in which she speaks and the ready smile on her lips show the confidence and elegance of the Miao woman.

"I dressed up like this to showcase the culture of the Miao people," says Zeng.

"I would like to tell foreign friends about us and the changes my hometown Guizhou has been undergoing."

She says she proposed at the two sessions earlier this month that Guizhou province should have more postgraduate and doctoral programs in local universities to support its social and economic development.

According to her research, the postgraduate-to-undergraduate student ratio in Guizhou's universities "currently stands at 0.053 to 1". And there are only four universities in Guizhou that offer doctoral programs.

Zeng says with more local talent graduating with postgraduate or doctoral degrees from local universities entering the local workforce they could quickly "throw themselves into the development of Guizhou without needing much time to adapt to the local environment" as outsiders would.

Zeng, who was born in a small village in Kaili city in the Qiangdongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, knows how important education is for ethnic students to upgrade their lives.

She has obtained two master's and one doctorate in education, applied linguistics, English and lit-



Left: Zeng Li lectures about Chinese culture at the Swain Middle School in the United States in 2018.



Right: Zeng on campus at the Western Carolina University. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

erature, but since her college years, Zeng says she faced difficulties in learning English compared with many other classmates whose mother tongue is Mandarin.

When studying applied linguistics at the University of Luton in the United Kingdom, she says she spoke in a heavy accent influenced by the Miao language.

"That made me frustrated, and I was determined to improve my pronunciation and find better ways for ethnic students to learn foreign languages," says Zeng, who later worked on optimizing teaching methods and the curriculum so ethnic people could learn a third language easily, and she put the research results into her doctoral dissertation.

She also did survey in some primary schools in Guizhou's rural areas and found that the students used to learn English vocabulary and grammar by rote and pay less attention to the pronunciation.

"There's a pressing need in rural areas for more qualified teachers

capable of helping them learn the language through exposure to grammar and vocabulary in context," Zeng says.

Zeng, who's also the director of the GMU's school of international education and head of its international exchange and cooperation office, has been a witness of the progress made by the university in working with overseas counterparts over the past decade.

And though Guizhou is not a province bordering any country, its local universities have actively participated in and benefited from the annual China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week since its launch in 2008, an event attended by faculties from universities in China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Zeng says the university puts so much emphasis on international exchanges that currently its school of international education has more than 380 foreign students, a large part of whom are from ASEAN countries.

The GMU also provides opportunities for Chinese teachers and students to take part in exchange programs and attend international meetings.

Zeng herself was part of a visiting scholar's program at the Western Carolina University in the United States last year.

Zeng and her colleagues also have set up booths at educational expositions in the US, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and some European countries to promote Guizhou's higher education.

"Guizhou Minzu University is unique in its study of the arts, culture and history of ethnic groups like Miao and Dong, and I hope international students can help spread and pass on what they have learned here," says Zeng.

"We need to shoulder the responsibility to protect ethnic cultures as well as promote talented people for ethnic areas."

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## 70 Thai students get grants to study in Tianjin

BANGKOK — A total of 70 Thai students have gained full government scholarships from China's Tianjin Municipal Education Commission to study in dozens of vocational colleges for three years in the northern Chinese city.

The Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute in Thailand, along with other partners recently held an orientation for the 70 selected Thai students at the Office of the Vocational Education Commission in Bangkok.

Song Ruoyun, first secretary of education affairs at the Chinese embassy in Thailand, congratulated the students and encouraged them to learn on their majors and the Chinese language, and make new friends as people-to-people bonds are an important part of the Belt and Road Initiative.

She says China is willing to work with Thailand in areas such as high-speed rail, automation and aviation.

And she also praised the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, which has increased the number of scholarships.

“I am very excited to study in China. I want to master Chinese and the major (international business). I chose it in order to find a good job when I return to Thailand...”

**Noppasorn Visutti**, 19, a Thai student

Song thanked Buddhist monk Phra Prommangkalachan, or Chao Khun Thongchai, for his contribution to promoting the Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute as a platform to boost China-Thailand cooperation.

The monk encouraged the students to work hard to understand more about China and its people.

Wang Shangxue, the Chinese acting director of the Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute, says these students will take an intensive Chinese course at Tianjin Normal University for a semester and then go to six vocational colleges in Tianjin, according to the major they chose for two and a half years.

Wang says there are a total of 11 majors for the Thai students that comprise railway signal automatic control, high-speed train maintenance technology, e-commerce, tourism, logistics and photovoltaic power generation technology and application.

Wang also says the scholarships, which were launched in 2015, have so far been granted to 118 Thai students to study in Tianjin. The number had been increased to 70 scholarships every year as the project was showing good results.

Wang says the students for this year have been selected from 155 students from 49 vocational schools in Thailand, and that they would be granted Chinese graduate certificates recognized by Thailand after they complete the three-year learning in Tianjin.

Speaking about the scholarship, Noppasorn Visutti, a 19-year-old student from a vocational school in Suphan Buri Province, says: "I am very excited to study in China. I want to master Chinese and the major (international business)."

"I chose it in order to find a good job when I return to Thailand after three years of study."

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## Lesson in peaceful coexistence on how to make borders irrelevant



Schoolgirls (left) from Myanmar ride bikes home after lessons at Yinjing primary school in Ruili, Southwest China's Yunnan province. Despite the international border dividing the village into two, kids from China and Myanmar study there together every day in peace and harmony. LI XIAOQUO / XINHUA