

## YOUTH

# Seeking the right answers

A teacher, a deputy of the National People's Congress, listens to people's problems and proposes solutions, **Xing Wen** and **Yang Jun** report.

The long summer and winter vacations during which teachers can recharge their batteries and prepare for a new semester is certainly a perk. But Wu Minglan, a primary school teacher in Liupanshui city, Guizhou province, has certainly not seen it that way for the past seven years.

Wu, a Chinese teacher at Liupanshui Experimental Primary School, has been devoting her spare time to finding out the pressing social needs of people by conducting door-to-door surveys and drafting proposals for the National People's Congress since she was selected as an NPC deputy in 2013.

"I try to strike a balance between instructing the students and following up on people's urgent demands," says Wu, 49, who was re-elected last year.

She just proposed at the two sessions that the government expand maternity leave for female workers and come up with more favorable policies for families with two or more children. She came up with the idea after some of her colleagues at school talked about the challenges and hardships they faced after giving birth to their second child.

Her proposal was the result of a survey of over 60 families with a second child, and focused on how the new arrival influenced the parents' lives.

"I mainly interviewed the parents of my students as they are from various walks of life, and I found that they usually became upset when facing a doubled economic load and more pressure at work," says Wu, adding that she feels a great need to call on the government to help these families go through this period of disequilibrium.

As a primary school teacher, she always concerns herself with the development of compulsory education and the well-being of students in Southwest China's rural areas.

In 2013, when she volunteered to train teachers at a primary school in Liupanshui's Luome village, she was surprised to see that these rural teachers always rushed to the canteen after class without marking papers or giving individual attention to students.

And after investigating the matter she was shocked to discover that these teachers also doubled up as school cooks and often searched for pig breeders in nearby villages at



**Above:** Visiting teacher Wu Minglan asks students at a local primary school in Liupanshui, Guizhou province for a show of hands during class. **Below:** Her students sit in class. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



night to purchase fresh, reasonably priced pork for the children.

"They told me that the food subsidies that the school got at that time were insufficient to hire someone to work exclusively in the canteen and at the same time provide students with good meals," recalls Wu.

She says although the country started its "nutritional lunch project" by providing an allowance of 3 yuan (\$0.45) a day per student to ensure quality food for students in compulsory education early in 2011, the funding was not enough for schools in remote places.

"So, because of a tight budget, some teachers were asked to cook in the school canteen in order to cut costs," says Wu, who later made a proposal at the two sessions in March 2014, suggesting that the government increase the free lunch project subsidies.

Now, most primary schools and junior high schools in Guizhou are able to afford a nutritious lunch that includes three dishes and a soup every day, according to Zou Lianke, director of the provincial education department.

Besides her raising the issues of

people in need at the two sessions, Wu also keeps a close watch on how the problems are resolved after the annual event.

In 2015, she was the first to propose that heating systems should be installed in classrooms at high altitude in western China.

"In winter, students usually suffer from chilblains and terrible coughs due to the freezing and damp weather in western China," says Wu. "So, it's really imperative to address the problem."

The government of Shuicheng county in Liupanshui city was then inspired to take action the following year.

And at the start of last year, a central heating system was set up to cover 12 schools and kindergartens in the county's downtown area, benefiting over 22,300 students.

Also, to enable more students benefit from the heating project, Wu is now trying to persuade local officials to do a survey and expand the coverage of the project.

"If there's one less child suffering from the cold, I will feel a bit better," she says. "Making positive changes for the people and society is a source of happiness for me."

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

## Old school in Manila gets China book center

MANILA — The first China book center in the Philippines was unveiled on March 18 at the University of the Philippines, with the aim of promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries. The center, located at the Asian center of the University of the Philippines Diliman, was jointly established by the Chinese embassy in the Philippines, the China International Publishing Group and the University of the Philippines.

Tan Qingsheng, the Charge d'Affaires at the Chinese embassy, says he hopes the center will provide teachers and students at UP with a window into China and give them an insight into China's history, culture, and development.

"I also hope more Filipino scholars and students can be ambassadors of friendship and cooperation between China and the Philippines," he says.

Around 1,000 books in English and Chinese are available at the center. All the books, which cover Chinese politics, economy, culture and ecology, were donated by the China International Publishing Group.

Chen Shi, deputy editor-in-chief of CIPG, says the book center at UP is the first one in the Philippines and only the second in Southeast Asia, after the first one opened at Bangkok University in Thailand.

Michael Lim Tan, chancellor of the University of the Philippines Diliman, says that there are many Chinese culture activities at UP and the book center is another way to help students better understand China.

UP, a most prominent university in the Philippines with a history of more than 100 years, has established close ties with Chinese universities in recent years.

XINHUA

## Shanghai and US universities co-found new medical research institute

By **CAO CHEN** in Shanghai  
[caochen@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:caochen@chinadaily.com.cn)

Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Yale University on March 23 jointly launched an immune-metabolic institute in Shanghai that focuses on the research of the immune system's metabolism.

The institute is the first of its kind that Yale University has established outside the United States.

Richard Flavell, an academician at the National Academy of Sciences in the US and the founder of the immunology school at Yale, and Su Bing, director of the Shanghai Institute of Immunology, School of Medicine of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, will serve as the deans of the institute.

"The area the institute will work on — immune-metabolism — is a critical area for the treatment of human diseases such as obesity. By bringing together world-leading medical institutions at Shanghai Jiao Tong and Yale, we aim to build the best international institute in the field, contribute to the health of people, and tackle the medical problems we cannot deal with at the moment," says Flavell.

According to Su, up to 30 medical experts from around the world will help with the research at the institute, which aims to produce pragmatic research achievements in the industry within three to five years.

"We will do our best to jointly establish a world-class joint laborator-



Faculty members from Yale and Shanghai Jiao Tong universities jointly launch an immune-metabolic institute. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ry with Yale, and fully support this project by incorporating it into

Shanghai's high-level university development project and the nation-

al 'double first-class' initiative," says Chen Guoqiang, chancellor of the school of medicine at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Chen says the school is now communicating with the Shanghai government to incorporate the institute into the overall scientific and technological plans of Shanghai Zhangjiang Science City.

Vaccines and antibodies based on immunological theory are important in the prevention and treatment of conditions such as polio, leukemia and lymphoma.

According to scientists, the study of the emerging medical field of immune-metabolism has also opened up a new way for the prevention and treatment of major chronic

diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Chen adds that immune-metabolic research would have a significant impact on the treatment of age-related diseases.

"Diseases common among the elderly are mostly due to deterioration of the metabolism of immune cells. We hope to strengthen the basic research in the geriatrics field as the average life expectancy of Chinese people continues to grow," says Chen.

In China, the average life expectancy rose from 35 years in the 1940s to 76.5 years in 2016. The country is aiming to hit 77.3 years by 2020 and 79 years by 2030, according to the Healthy China 2030 blueprint released in 2016.

### IT TAKES JUST ONE MOVE TO PROTECT PANGOLINS

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