

# Internet key to bridging digital divide

## Nation's opening-up, tech development aiding poverty alleviation campaign

BEIJING — China's booming internet industry has played a key role in helping to bridge the digital divide nationally, according to experts and business executives.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates said China's opening-up and technological development are making a big difference, as the extreme poverty rate in the country has fallen from 60 percent in 1990s to less than 4 percent in 2010s.

"With its increasing role in the world and the growing capacity for innovation, I believe China will be a catalyst for a third wave of poverty reduction," Gates said at the first China International Import Expo in Shanghai earlier this month.

Statistics from the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development show that China has lifted 68.53 million people out of poverty in the past five years.

"China has achieved great results in bridging its digital divide," said Robert Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, during the fifth World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province. "It's a wonderful story the world needs to know."

"We have been expanding access to the internet in China's rural areas," said Hong Tianyun, deputy director of the Leading Group Office when addressing a WIC sub-forum.

As of June, 97.4 percent of China's villages had access to broadband internet and 95 percent had access to 4G networks, according to a report released at the conference.

China has been "very effective" in empowering impoverished people and communities by improving internet access, according to Sally Costerton, senior adviser to the president of the Internet Corp for Assigned Names and Numbers.

ICANN is an international organization dedicated to promoting the use of Internationalized Domain Names, which enable non-English speakers to navigate the internet in their native languages.

"Now we have around 1.3 million Chinese IDNs," said Costerton. "This offers enormous potential to help rural and poorer communities in China and many other countries around the world."

In addition, the Chinese government has partnered with e-commerce companies, such as Alibaba and JD, to pilot e-commerce projects in the country's poverty-stricken areas since 2014.

By connecting farmers directly with the market via e-commerce platforms, the targeted projects have con-

## Touch of warmth



Students at a primary school in Guiyang, Guizhou province, receive Warm Bags, which contain a variety of daily necessities, such as winter coats, snow boots and hats, from One Foundation, a Chinese private charitable fundraising organization.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



**With its increasing role in the world ... I believe China will be a catalyst for a third wave of poverty reduction."**

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft

**68.53 million**

number of people in China that have been lifted out of poverty in the past five years

tributed to the boom of local agricultural industries.

In 2017, 832 poor counties where such projects were launched reported a total online sales volume of 120.7 billion yuan (\$17.3 billion), up 52 percent year-on-year, according to official data.

"E-commerce has been an integral part of South-South cooperation between the United Nations World Food Programme and the Chinese government," said Qu Sixi, representative of the program's China Office.

He added that the World Food Programme is building a platform in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences to share China's experience in developing its rural areas with other parts of the world. In addition, companies in the sector are also moving to better the education in remote rural areas with the help of the internet.

Raymond Tang, CEO of Yinxiang Biji, a China-based information organization application, said the company has partnered with Shanghai-based WABC Charity Foundation to launch a special fund to give accessibility of knowledge tools and resources to aid in educating underprivileged children and those with special needs.

"As a technology company, Yinxiang Biji hopes everyone can benefit from technological advancements," Tang said.

China aims to lift at least 10 million people out of poverty by the end of this year and to eradicate poverty by 2020.

CHINA DAILY — XINHUA



A food safety expert interacts with students at a primary school in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province, as part of the National Children's Food Safety Guard Campaign sponsored by Walmart. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Food safety camp raises students' awareness

By ZHENG YIRAN  
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

The Walmart Foundation has teamed up with a series of NGOs in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, to launch a new program teaching children food safety.

The National Children's Food Safety Guard Campaign is being jointly launched with the China Children and Teenagers Foundation and the China Nutrition and Health Food Association. It aims to promote children's physical and mental health, as well as to create a harmonious society.

The Hangzhou campaign will see 10 experience camps held in eight primary schools

and two communities this month. Over the events, an estimated 10,800 comic books and 1,000 hands-on learning boxes will be donated, benefiting at least 60,000 children.

Han Lina, director of the Office of Children's Food Safety Protection Campaign in CCTF, said: "We have carried out 117 experience camps in 13 cities nationwide since the launch of the campaign, benefiting more than 300,000 people. This year, we will carry out 10 experience camps in Hangzhou to bring the joy of learning food safety to children.

"Meanwhile, we will donate over 20 children's food safety school resource bundles to

Zhejiang province and other regions. I hope that this campaign can further strengthen communication and make contribution to children's healthy development."

Yang Wen, local corporate affair director of Walmart China, said the retailer's charitable foundation has been funding the movement since 2016. "We hope that this campaign can spread food safety knowledge to the next generation, through experience camps in schools and communities. And in the long run, it will have a positive impact on children's health and the sustainable development of food safety concepts."

After the launching ceremony,

the camp headed to the Hangzhou Danfeng Experimental Primary School. Students took part in a range of activities spread over five themed zones, including reading food safety comic books, learning the "six steps to wash hands" from a hand-wash sensor machine, a food safety monopoly game, and a touchscreen refrigerator clean-up game.

Particularly popular was a virtual reality kitchen, brought to life using the latest VR and augmented reality tech. In this activity, students learnt how to prepare food safely, in a wholly digital world, as well as learn the traceability system of pork.

## Pharmaceutical firm's orchestra strikes the right chords in China

By WANG ZHUOQIONG  
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, the house orchestra of German pharmaceutical and chemical giant Merck, has made its debut in China with a weeklong series of concerts in an effort to enhance Sino-German cultural exchanges.

The DPM Concert Weektour was launched in the year of Merck's 350th anniversary, and saw it perform in Shanghai and twice in Beijing. For the finale, the musicians were joined by students from Peking University.

Stefan Reinhardt, general manager of the orchestra, said the group was amazed by their first trip to China and how they can connect with Chinese audiences through music.

"By bringing these performances to our audiences in China, we would like to facilitate

cultural exchanges beyond cultures and borders — to inspire people with music and cultural initiatives," he said.

Reinhardt said the audience response had been fantastic. "Some of them even cried during the performance. It's really our goal that we bring music from the heart to the heart."

DPM started 52 years ago as a nonprofit organization and has gradually changed into a full professional symphony orchestra, with over 100 musicians playing 30 to 40 concerts a year.

Two weeks prior to their trip to China, the orchestra went to Boston and St Louis in the United States for performance, and received warm applause from local audience.

According to Merck executives, the China performances provided a chance for the company and its partners to better fulfill their corporate responsibilities.



The Deutsche Philharmonie Merck performs during their charity concert week in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The orchestra has a history of working on special projects with children and young people, and has performed on international stages worldwide, including India, Brazil and Mexico.

Johannes Baillou, chairman of the Board of Partners of E. Merck KG and Vice Chairman Executive Board and Family Board, said: "At Merck, responsibility is a core value that shapes our daily practice. As a global company, it is of the greatest importance for us to understand the cultures of the countries we work in and bring the culture of our native country to the

places we operate."

Al Gabor, president of Merck China, said that Merck will continue to work with its partners on projects in China, especially in healthcare and promotional careers in science.

Merck has been in China for 85 years. Its responsibility projects in China include disease education programs, public health projects, energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gases, scholarships and other educational programs to encourage student innovation. Merck's responsibility projects are estimated to impact 100 million people each year.

## Herders reap the rewards of web connectivity

HOHHOT — Sitting in the quiet grasslands, Qoluman couldn't stop laughing as he watched a popular video online on his mobile phone.

Despite the fact that his village is deep in the grasslands, Qoluman, 39, a herder in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, can also enjoy the many benefits of the internet.

Qoluman lives in Adancholu village, Xin Barga Right Banner, in the city of Hulunbuir, and spends more than half the year herding his sheep.

Two years ago, Wi-Fi was installed in his yurt, and when he is out herding his sheep, he can access the internet using fourth-generation communication technology on his phone.

"Before, when a guest

arrived, the first thing he said was 'Hello! Now people ask: 'What's your Wi-Fi password?'" he said.

"These days, herders like myself can chat, shop, watch soap operas and play games on our phones. In the past, I could only stare blankly at the grassland because there was nothing to do after work."

The number of 4G mobile internet users in China exceeded 1.1 billion as of June 2018, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Over the next three years, China will work to improve the country's internet infrastructure, pledging that 98 percent of villages will enjoy fiber-optic internet and 4G services by 2020.

For Ganzhaorog, 43, in Huugilt village, Sonid Left

Banner, Xilin Gol League, the internet has helped him to build a modern farm since his Wi-Fi was installed three years ago.

In 2015, his farm became one of the first in the village to have a video-monitoring system. By 2016, four cameras that can monitor up to four kilometers were installed, enabling him to see almost everything on his farm.

"The signals and instructions for the machines and sensors are sent via Wi-Fi," he said.

The system has saved him time and the labor cost of having to physically check his herds — his phone is the only tool he needs to run his farm.

His farm is also equipped with an automatic drinking system to ensure adequate water for his herds. "I can take

care of my farm anywhere as long as there is internet," he said.

The Chinese government has been promoting these monitoring systems in recent years. With subsidies from the local government, herders can get the system installed as long as there is electricity and internet coverage, costing them just between \$290 to \$440.

Moreover, the internet has brought products from around the country to Enhgyirigarleng village, Dong Ujimchin Banner, Xilin Gol League, where herders live as far as dozens of kilometers from the center. Su Mongh manages an e-commerce station where herders can pick up products they have bought online.

XINHUA

## Briefly

### Singles Day sees win for charities

The Singles Day online shopping gala, which fell on Nov 11, saw charity donations from over 300 million deals made through Alibaba Group's e-commerce platforms. The donations involved more than 113 million consumers and 918,000 business owners. Each will be used to support projects related to education, medical care, orphanages and other good causes. Singles Day also saw 14.6 billion items sold from remote villages and less developed areas, giving a boost to the local economies.

### Prudence widens education efforts

The China Development Research Foundation has signed a partnership agreement with the Prudence Foundation, the charity arm of Prudential Plc, to promote education for children in less developed areas. Donald Kanak, head of the Prudence Foundation, said the organization hopes the actions battling poverty in China can offer reference to other countries. Earlier this September, the firm donated 10 million yuan (\$1.44 billion) to support the CDRF's nutritious breakfast and children care programs for three years.

### Book drive gift for Hubei schools

China Charity Federation has donated about 100,000 books valued at 3 million yuan (\$432,000) to 30 schools in Xiaogan in Hubei province. The book drive has been running since 2011 and is aimed at offering reading materials to schools in need. So far, the project has donated over 9.2 million books, valued at about 250 million yuan, in nearly 2,500 schools across 29 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. Zhang Qianyu, an official with the federation, said that offering educational resources works efficiently, and will benefit children in the long run.

### Gala raises more funds for the poor

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art had its annual charity gala on Nov 14 this year in Beijing. The gala invited over 650 guests, and raised 9.78 million yuan (\$1.4 million). Donations raised from auctions reached 5.6 million yuan, with one art piece alone from Liu Wei fetching 1.1 million yuan. All donations will be used to support nonprofit projects like art exhibitions and scholar programs. UCCA officially opened to the public in 2007, and has since overseen nearly 160 exhibitions and over 5,000 public welfare programs, which has attracted millions of participants.

### Healthcare gets rated in report

The 21st Century Business Herald has issued a corporate social responsibility report on Chinese listed healthcare companies. The report assessed 300 firms over seven categories, including environmental protection, product quality, and employee compensation among others. Beijing Tiantan Biological Products Co Ltd took first place with 92 points out of 100, while Jiangsu Yuyue Medical Equipment and Supply Co Ltd came last with 25 points. The report also found that a firm's profit has nothing to do with its corporate social responsibility: 10 of the 20 bottom-ranking companies achieved 10 percent to 30 percent of the 300 firms' total profit.

CHINA DAILY