“Calen, don’t swallow the watermelon’s seed with its flesh! Didn’t I tell you a watermelon tree will grow inside your stomach if you swallow it?” I always hear this from my mom accompanied by my fear of becoming a tree man when I was little. After hearing that so many times and seeing my grandpa swallowing pain killers, I got an idea of inventing a ‘pill’ to prevent that from happening. Although I eventually didn’t invent that pill, but since then my curiosity never stops to evince:

“Is there a way for men to give birth?”

“Is there a way to become invisible?”

“Is there a way to recreate dreams?”

My curiosity has shifted toward technology when I played a game called Pokémon where I thought a coincidence as one of its features, and since I got an idea of making a weather synchronizing system between the real world and the game from that, I found myself becoming more curious upon technology related beings. As I grow older and learn computer science from the internet, I tried to make my ideas from curiosity come true. Because our school never releases the GPAs of each of our exams immediately after we know the scores, I decided to make GPAC, a GPA calculator, for both me and my classmates who have been complaining about this for a long time.

Every time I started a new project, my computer science skills advance. I am happy about this advancement, and this success of turning abstract ideas into concrete realities. Just like the Pokémon trainers in Pokémon, I believed that as I grow stronger on my computer science skills, I could do anything in this world at my will just like how Pokémon trainers became invincible after they became the Pokémon master of the world.

One day when I was playing video games, I received a message from Sharon, a girl who I had a crush on, inviting me to participate in a group competition with her. I accepted the offer without any hesitations. The goal of the competition was to solve a problem facing our world. While brainstorming, a group member brought up the topic of sex-education in China. Her words reminded me of the incidence that happened two years ago: Children at a kindergarten in Beijing were sexually abused. When I heard the news, I remember feeling shocked and angry. I wondered:

“Why did this happen?”

“Why didn’t these kids ask for help after they were being harassed?”

After the group meeting, I went home and did some research online. I was shocked how a lack of sex education put millions of young people at risk and trigger an incidence like the one in Beijing. I could not imagine what it’s like to be helpless to defend yourself. They even didn’t know what they were experiencing; they were even afraid to tell their parents the truth. Wordless anger filled my heart. Although Sex-education is a sensitive topic in mainland China, we continued to pursue the topic. While I was attracted into Sharon’s eyes during the second meeting, I recalled the video game I was playing on the night she invited me to the competition. It was a video game that teaches people how to date.

“If video game can be used to teach people how to date, why can’t they be used to teach sex-education?”

This idea got approved, and I was responsible for the technical parts, such as using game engines and film the game content because we decided to use cinematic content instead of virtual content to make the game more realistic.

Before starting this project, I knew that there are numerous risks that could waste lots of my time, energy, and even more. Such as not winning a prize from CTB, or more crucially, not being recognized by the society. But we still decided to work on this project, because we still believe that there are people in this world who would support us and understand us, and I am more than just willing to work on this project because of them. Soon, I realized that our concerns were becoming true: bringing this idea into reality was not only hard on the technical parts. The public ideological bias to the sex-education and the hardness on finding relevant knowledge that has been labeled as Apple of Eden became significant challenges for us to go. significant challenges for us to go. Even some of my classmates thought that I was doing something inappropriate.

Seems like there is a great wall standing in front of me, and it seems almost impossible to climb over that wall. But as a skilled “Pokémon Trainer”, I know the rule of Pokémon training very well: Do not ever give up on the things you promised. If I decided to finish this project, then I should not give up on it no matter what hardships I met. Like a Pokémon Trainer, I cheered up for my teammates and kept moving toward to finish this game.

Four months later, we finally finished the game and submitted it to Chinese software distributors. However, breaking the unconscious bias was not that easy. Our game was rejected because of “sensitive content”. Another “Great Wall” seems to be blocking me. But there is always another way. Like the sentence inside the first letter sent from China wrote: “Across the Great Wall we can reach every corner in the world.” I have to find a way across this Great Wall, so, I talked with a group of people in charge of reviewing game applications of the Chinese software distributors, and eventually after several required changes of the game itself, it finally got approved. Despite that, I also uploaded this game onto Steam, a global software distributor to let the world see its original look.

On Feb 7, 2018, the game was released online.

Then, I started my 10-day adventure in Norway’s Arctic as a reward for my hard work. No matter how the world reacts to the game, I would be proud of ourselves that we made a game from scratches and I didn’t regret doing that. Fortunately, the intermittent calls from various media telling me that the game we made has become a trending on the Internet broke our concern.

Now we have updated the 4the version with over 1000,000 downloads. These surprising changes have not only made us excited, but it has made us more than sure that our work have been accepted by the public. We didn’t waste our time, in fact, we succeeded to change the ideological norms of the society we live in by using technology. This time, the happiness to me did not only came from making an abstract idea into reality, nor my another advancement toward technology. It has also come from the chance that teenagers now have to learn sex-education easier, and also the fact that the people I believe existing really do exist. Being the Pokémon master is never about having the strongest Pokémon in the world, it is about having the courage to work on something that require strong responsibilities and to explore the area of unknown.

“I'm Ash, from the town﻿ of Pallet. I'm destined to be the world's number one Pokémon master!” – *Pokémon TV Show*