Teen celebrity calls for quality education

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By Zhang Ruinan at the United Nations |   
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Popular Chinese singer-actor Wang Yuan on Wednesday vowed to promote high quality education for every young person worldwide, as well as sustainable development goals (SDGs) at a UN youth forum in New York.  
It's the second time that Wang, a member of the well-known Chinese boy band TFboys, was invited to the forum as a special advocate for education by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).  
"In my role as UNICEF Special Advocate for Education, I've seen for myself how education is a key factor in building happy, confident and resilient children," Wang said in his speech.  
"However not all children can access this type of education and it saddens me that there is still this massive inequality in the world today," Wang added.  
"This year, I think I have a more comprehensive understanding of quality education because I participated in many social good projects last year," Wang told China Daily in an interview on Tuesday.  
"I plan to join another mission with UNICEF to meet children attending schools in some of the poorest areas where there is a need to develop a more child-friendly approach to learning," Wang said.  
Wang also plans to leverage his popularity on Chinese social media Weibo, to draw attention and inspire progress toward universal access to quality education and the achievements of the SDGs in China.  
"As a young artist and a student, I am lucky to have a large following on Chinese social media," Wang said. "In fact, I have over 35 million followers. I see it as my duty to use this following for good."  
The SDGs are outlined in the UN-facilitated 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is one goal asking for complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by the year 2030.  
Last year, when Wang Yuan said the "internet is necessary for improving education in the rural areas", fans of the teen singer got together to turn his words into reality by donating a mobile signal tower to Jiangxinzhuang village on the eastern edge of Beijing.  
The Roy Signal Station, named after Wang's English name, is 35 meters high and will provide the village with 4G communications signaling for at least two decades, covering one primary school and two kindergartens. It was the fans' way of celebrating their idol's 17th birthday in November.  
"I will also play a leading role in my own social good project which is providing direct assistance to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and the elderly," Wang added.  
Time magazine has listed Wang as one of the 30 Most Influential Teens of 2017, in recognition of his accolades across numerous fields, his global impact through social media and overall ability to drive news.  
The Youth Forum, held annually by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs ECOSOC since 2012, is aimed at trying to involve the efforts of youth to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity.  
Yan Dongjie in Beijing contributed to this story.

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