

《高考不是唯一的出路》

China's notoriously tough college entrance exam - the Gaokao - has long been known as having the potential to have a massive impact on the lives of young Chinese. A high score in the test not only gives students access to a good education, but also sets them on the path to potentially earning a premium wage and securing social mobility.

But not everyone still believes that the Gaokao should determine the direction their life takes.

Wang Jingwen, a teenager from Beijing, doesn't need to worry about getting into college.

Wang was accepted to a school in the Netherlands last December. While her peers have had to suffer through the stress of preparing for the Gaokao, Wang has had a slightly more leisurely time; reading books in a cafe or helping an American photographer with his work in Beijing.



Wang gave up Gaokao as she had already been admitted to a university in the Netherlands. /CGTN Photo

"I think going abroad suits me better. I am going to study media in the Netherlands, which will also give me access to some great internship opportunities," Wang said.

"The skill set and experience I will get in the next four years will not only broaden my horizons, but also prepare me well for an actual job, like being involved in a big project at a media organization instead of starting from the most basic position," she said.



Year 12 students attending a meeting before Gaokao begins in one of Beijing's high school. /CGTN Photo

In 2016, 540,000 students from China studied overseas, an increase of nearly 4% on the previous year.

Seeing more of her students giving up Gaokao and heading abroad, He Xiaoping, a teacher from Beijing's No. 156 High School, says the attitude to Gaokao has changed significantly since her student days.

"When I took Gaokao in 1984, it was a totally different scene. I remember myself at night using a flashlight to do homework in bed after the school put out the lights," she said.

"Nowadays, not everyone weighs Gaokao to the same degree. Some still take it very seriously, but others are under much less pressure because they know there are other options out there," she added.