

YOUTH

preter is, without doubt, an essential component of a better solution moving forward, according to the report.

Put to test

Born in 1992 in a rural family in Yanyuan county, Sichuan province, Tan lost her hearing at the age of 8 as a result of medical malpractice. Enduring a silent world, she was forced to drop out of school.

school, and she only returned home twice a year. Although not expensive, the school fees were still a burden on her parents' finances.

"I knew how precious the opportunity was for me. I had to work harder at school than the others," Tan says.

Thanks to her outstanding performance, she finished her primary school in three years, and at Leshan Special Education School, she finished her junior and senior high

schooling, normal university, to earn her bachelor's degree in information resources management.

If she hadn't seen Tang's recruitment information online in 2017, following graduation, Tan's path would have led her to become a teacher at a special education school. Law seemed to be a tough career choice for someone with hearing difficulties, because one of the most obvious qualities of an attorney is vocal eloquence.

job as Tang's assistant.

In 2017, Tang recruited five college graduates with hearing disabilities, including Tan. Among them, he hoped, would be the country's first hearing-impaired lawyer.

The job opened a new chapter for Tan, who has met and communicated with people from various walks of life, most of whom had some type of hearing impairment, for legal consultation. At first, however, her lack of basic legal knowledge meant

empower the hearing-impaired community and enable them to be seen, and heard. The first step in achieving that goal is passing the national bar exam, which has an estimated pass rate of 17 percent, according to this year's exam data released by the Ministry of Justice.

Her preparation for the test lasted for more than 1,000 days, which, she says, was "one of the hardest things" she has faced. Most people have to watch lots of video lecture

Her middle school teacher once told her that she would be the bridge between people with hearing difficulties and those who can hear clearly.

With every obstacle she overcomes on her journey to become China's first hearing-impaired lawyer, she lays another brick in its foundations.

Contact the writer at wangqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Elective sexual health course proves popular with students

LANZHOU — For Luo Xiaofeng's elective course in Northwest China's Lanzhou University, students fill up the classroom and even crowd the aisles at least half an hour in advance.

Drugs and HIV/AIDS, sexual minorities and HIV/AIDS, sex education — topics that are traditionally sensitive and embarrassing for many Chinese due to a relatively conservative culture — are now highlights of Luo's class, which attracts over 1,000 applicants every year.

"Many of my classmates chose Luo's course as we never had the opportunity to learn sex-related knowledge this systematically and comprehensively before," says Niu Yue, a student from the School of

Journalism and Communication. "One of the best things about the course is that it shows us that sex is just as open to discussion as any other subject."

The course was established to guide students in understanding the science in the prevention of contracting HIV or AIDS. "Everything started from a field trip to a village in Yunnan, where intravenous drug use was once a major cause of HIV infections. The province borders the Golden Triangle, an area notorious for narcotics in Southeast Asia," says the associate professor.

According to Luo, back then, he was a PhD student in AIDS epidemiology at Fudan University. "It was

the first time I met an HIV-positive person, and frankly speaking, I was worried."

The first time eating with the person, Luo's eyes almost never left the chopsticks. "I concentrated on the pieces he picked and avoided even moving my utensils to that area of the dish.

"The HIV/AIDS group is sensitive. The distrust directly leads to the slow progress of my work," he says.

It was a female village doctor who had been working on AIDS for a long time that ultimately changed Luo's perspective. "I saw that she was very natural in the whole process of communicating, touching and eating with those who were infected, treat-

ing them as she would anyone else." Luo was then determined to learn from her and kept telling himself to "remove the stubborn bias about this special group".

Gradually, Luo accepted the patients from his heart. He would take a ladle and drink water from water tanks in their homes when thirsty. "The experience was memorable, creating an unwavering need to educate more people about the virus," he says.

With such a simple purpose, in 2017, Luo launched an elective health education course for college students at Lanzhou University, which involved some AIDS-related knowledge. The class was warmly

received, and as students expressed their willingness to learn more, the teacher opened another elective course specializing in sex and HIV/AIDS in 2019. He has also made the course content available nationwide through online platforms. So far, Luo's sex and HIV/AIDS course has been viewed more than 9.82 million times, and tens of thousands of students from nearly 600 universities across China have taken it.

Though HIV and AIDS continue to be controlled at a low level in China, the problem of HIV and AIDS among young people has attracted much attention in recent years. According to data released in 2019 by the Chinese Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, about 3,000 new HIV cases are reported every year among students aged 15 to 24 in the country, mainly due to unprotected sex.

In Luo's view, factors such as the physiological impulse of adolescents after sexual maturity and the lack of sex education contribute to the spread of HIV.

Among various HIV and AIDS prevention measures, publicity and education are considered to be the primary means and the most economical and effective "social vaccines", which are essential for teenagers, Luo says.

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