



UN Volunteers Tian Liang (left) and Zhai Xinyi (right), serving with UNAIDS, are passionate about advocating for a world free of discrimination and stigma.

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## UN Volunteers in China advocate for a world free of discrimination and stigma

In the lead-up to Zero Discrimination Day 2020, we reflect on how UN Volunteers Zhai Xinyi and Tian Liang are advocating for a world free of discrimination and stigma. As UN Volunteers, they have contributed towards UNAIDS' mandate to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Xinyi has been serving as a Programme Assistant at the UNAIDS China Office since 2019. Before serving as a UN Volunteer, she was an intern at UNAIDS China Office and the Headquarters in Geneva. She completed her studies in Global Health at the University of

Washington in the United States.

During her studies, she got the opportunity to travel to Kenya where she was involved in HIV testing for local children. She also worked with Save the Children in the US and Ethiopia, supporting projects on maternal health and child policy. With the experience gained across America, Europe, and Africa, she aimed to contribute towards improving Public Health in China. After completing her studies in the United States, she returned to China. Initially, she worked as a communications consultant, continuing her work on AIDS response. Six months later, she became a UN Volunteer.

“ Being a UN Volunteer adds new meaning and substance to the work I do. This has provided me with the opportunity to participate in China’s global AIDS response. - UN Volunteer Zhai Xinyi with UNAIDS China

Tian Liang served with UNAIDS in China from April 2019 to February 2020, as a Communications Officer. With a background in health communications, the volunteer opportunity was a perfect match for his academic experience. Previously, he was also involved in health promotion work.

“ UNV gave me an excellent opportunity to use my professional skills to create awareness among the public on the AIDS response and eliminate public bias and misunderstanding towards AIDS. - UN Volunteer Tian Liang

UNAIDS leads and inspires the global realization of zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 co-sponsored agencies (of which 9 UN agencies in China participate in joint projects) and works closely with global and national partners. Being a part of the UNAIDS team in China, provided an opportunity to Xinyi and Tian to actively support and participate in these joint initiatives, under the guidance of relevant representatives.

“We had the opportunity to participate in joint decision-making at the UN agency level with people living with HIV and people affected by HIV. We were able to integrate human-centred AIDS prevention strategy planning, service provision, monitoring and evaluation into practical work. We are grateful to UNV for this great learning and professional experience. We also got the opportunity to strengthen our networks thanks to this experience,” says Xinyi.

UNAIDS provides strategic information and analysis to promote understanding of the HIV epidemic and the progress made locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Among them, one of the most important activities is to participate and support the activities of the National AIDS Conference. Together with a partner, China Association for STD / AIDS Prevention and Treatment, UNAIDS organized one of the sub-forums during the conference, the Youth Forum in 2019.

Experts from the United Nations, National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention, and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention introduced the participants of the conference to the current situation of the AIDS epidemic among young people from all over the world to China, as well as the achievements and experiences of youth-oriented AIDS prevention work. Xinyi and Tian Liang, as UN Volunteers, got the opportunity to participate in this forum in 2019. They see this as one of the highlights during their assignment. They also take pride in taking the lead and being responsible for the preparation and implementation of a series of commemorative events for the World AIDS Day 2019.

“As UN Volunteers, we also witnessed the UNAIDS process of driving policy change. By participating in high-level policy forums and conferences, providing policy backgrounds and information summaries for key conferences, and accompanying international and domestic experts, we also became a part of UNAIDS' new force,” says Tian.



UN Volunteers Xinyi and Tian with the UNAIDS China Team at the International Candlelight Memorial Day in 2019. (UNV)

Thanks to the efforts of many parties, one of the outputs during Xinyi's internship at UNAIDS Headquarters - a campaign titled 'Equal Eyes – Chinese edition' - is now an initiative widely received by the community. Equal Eyes is a strategic information initiative dedicated to the rights of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Sponsored by UNAIDS, Equal Eyes first started in English, and has since been launched in four different language versions, including Chinese. With the support of Tian Liang and the community mobilization adviser Liu Jie, 'Equal Eyes – Chinese' has now become a long-term project for community mobilization and media advocacy at UNAIDS.

Xinyi and Tian are committed to promoting a healthy and resilient environment among the public to ensure that people living with HIV can receive all the support they need from communities, and thus live in a world with zero discrimination.



• China

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#)