

How CapitaKids Came into Being

Come September, three student beneficiaries from CapitaKids Programme will embark on the journey to pursue their dreams

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Teachers from the Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School went to Inner Mongolia CapitaLand Hope School to recruit talented kids

It was in May 2012 in Beijing, China.

Bearing a sense of curiosity and nervousness while carrying their dreams, it was the first time that eight kids from CapitaLand Hope School have been to Beijing for a life-changing exam: the entrance exam of the Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School. These kids came from nine of our Hope Schools in Yunnan, Sichuan and Inner Mongolia. None of them had received formal art education. Most of them had never had a music class or even seen an instrument. This is the CapitaKids Programme, the philanthropic programme that offers these talented kids an opportunity to go to Beijing and get a chance to embark on the road of art.

As staff of CapitaLand China Holdings, we worked together to plan, organise and execute the first CapitaKids programme in China. We have also personally witnessed how innovative and remarkable the programme was to bring life-changing influence to underprivileged kids.



Talented kids from CapitaLand Hope Schools and their parents at the Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School

Launched and sponsored by CapitaLand Hope Foundation, CapitaKids aims to discover gifted kids at their appropriate ages from CapitaLand Hope Schools in China and offer them professional (vocational) education opportunity for them to grow up to be a specialist in a certain area. As a form of continuous education after CapitaLand Hope School's primary education, it helps to connect education to talent development for underprivileged kids.

The CapitaKids programme, rolled out by CapitaLand China Holdings under the credo of "Innovation, Caring and Sustainability", focused on traditional Chinese arts education, among many other types of professional education. Mr. Liew Mun Leong, President and CEO of CapitaLand once said,

"A great many of Chinese traditional merits can be found in traditional arts." For many years, CapitaLand sponsored a number of traditional art programmes in China. We approached Traditional Chinese Opera Academy, the best school to learn traditional Chinese opera, for partnership and the school gave their full support for this innovative and meaningful programme.



A young boy (right) auditions for a chance to receive the art education in Beijing

In April 2012, CapitaKids started preliminary selections in nine CapitaLand Hope Schools in Yunnan, Sichuan and Inner Mongolia. The admission committee included the principal, deputy principal and faculty heads from Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School. The committee tramped over hill and dale, trudged a long distance without stopping and went deep into the remote mountain areas to select potential kids. After comprehensive assessments, eight out of hundreds of kids from grade four to grade six met the requirements and were selected to have a second round of interviews and exams.

Sponsored by CapitaLand and accompanied by parents or school teachers, the eight kids went to Beijing for professional training and took part in a nation-wide second round of interviews and exams during the Labour Day Holiday in May 2012. Given that these kids received limited prior art education and their basic art-performing skills

were weaker than other candidates, CapitaLand worked with Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School to give them a two-day closed-door basic training so that they could perform better in the exams.



Kids attending the physical training (left) while little Bao Chenhui (right) fills in the enrolment blanks himself as his mum is unable to read English

1 May marked the end of this fate-deciding exam. The school calculated the scores of the eight kids immediately and announced the name list of admission that night. Yang Jinfu (Hani nationality), Guo Yanping (Hani nationality) from CapitaLand Huangmaoling Hope School in Yunnan and Mu Xiye (Mongolia nationality) from CapitaLand Xingfuzhilu Hope School in Inner Mongolia were admitted to Traditional Chinese Opera Academy Affiliated Secondary School to study performance and folk dancing.

The school will send out official admission letters in the middle of July. On 1 September, this first group of student beneficiaries will begin their dreams pursuing art. After six years of vocational education, the kids will have a chance to further their studies in the Academy of Traditional Chinese Opera. CapitaLand Hope Foundation China will sponsor their studies and necessary living expenses for ten years. The kids will have the opportunity to work in top art troupes or academies in China after graduation. We are looking forward to seeing these brilliant young artists performing on the stage in the near future. These CapitaKids will be our shining stars forever!



Young stars belting out at the singing audition while others stretched and warmed up before the physical examination

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