

CEIBS: Social Responsibility in Action!

Series of events held
in Beijing under theme
of New Era, New
Responsibility

■ By Lei Na



More than 200 CEIBS alumni, special guests and entrepreneurs from all over the world gathered on the afternoon of April 15 to discuss corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the new era. They were brought together for a three-tier celebration of CSR, which included the CEIBS Social Responsibility Forum, the official release of the CEIBS CSR Report & the CEIBS Alumni Social Responsibility Awards presentation ceremony. The theme for the series of events, hosted by the CEIBS Alumni Association with academic support from CEIBS was New Era, New Responsibility. The venue was Kerry Centre in Beijing.

As a renowned international business school, CEIBS has long embraced its mission of fostering business leaders who have an entrepreneurial spirit and actively assume their social responsibility. On the cusp of a historic moment in time, CEIBS Alumni Association and the school jointly held the series of activities as a way to encourage alumni to make every effort to be beyond reproach in their commercial activities, and urge more alumni enterprises to include social responsibility in their development strategies. In the future, social responsibility will become the theme of annual CEIBS Alumni Association meetings, providing an opportunity for the leading business school in Asia to continuously contribute to the advancement of commercial civilisation and social progress.

The Forum

As CEIBS President Professor Li Mingjun noted in his speech that signalled the start of the forum, in the last 24 years CEIBS has consistently been in step with the times and the fate of China – and bravely assumed its social responsibility. He explained that, since its establishment, CEIBS has always been closely connected to the wider society and has integrated the concept of social responsibility into all aspects of its day-to-day operations such as teaching, research, and forums. President Li reminded the audience that CEIBS has offered a compulsory course in business ethics since the launch of its MBA programme, and

has selected Good Deed Award winners among EMBA programme participants every year to encourage students to take an active role in undertaking their social responsibility. Other facts shared by President Li: CEIBS established its Africa Campus in Ghana to equip local students with management knowledge and, by providing scholarships and subsidies, has made an impact in educating the continent's current and future leaders. To date, CEIBS has 449 alumni in Africa. In September 2017, CEIBS began to offer – from its Beijing Campus – a special course called Key Talent Programme for Chinese Companies Going Global, so as to contribute to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. “We would like to work together with everyone to keep the concept of social responsibility at the forefront of our minds and jointly promote the development of commercial civilisation along with the progress of China and the rest of the world,” said President Li.

Another highpoint of the forum was an inspirational speech by Baosteel Chair Professor in Economics at CEIBS and spokesperson of the CEIBS Alumni Social Responsibility Series of Activities Wu Jinglian. He pointed out that the social structure that took shape in the 19th century meant that social issues were handled through both the private and public sectors. Over the years, defects have gradually been found in this model. Governments around the world have had to pay higher and higher costs to address social issues, yet they are still unable to meet public

demand. This despite the fact that, in some specific cases, non-governmental organisations also deal with public issues. Prof Wu added that this pattern, although it developed fast, was weak and lacked resources, and accounted for a small proportion of the society. Therefore, it became a trend in the late 20th century to get thousands of commercial companies involved in public welfare activities. At present, the pattern of social enterprise has been institutionalised in some countries and it is hoped that similar systems will emerge in China, which will allow the business community to provide more help in solving social problems. He explained that it is of great significance that CEIBS has raised social responsibility to the strategic level, and he told the audience of his wish that this cause would be successful.

Co-director of China Commercial Civilisation Research Centre Qin Shuo, who is also a Financial Observer and the Initiator of Qin Shuo's Circle of Friends, shared his research findings from the field of commercial civilisation. He divided corporate social responsibility into three phases. In version 1.0, there is a potential, implied contractual relationship between the enterprise and the society and the company's profits should be regarded as the result of an enterprise's effective use of social resources and successful supply of required services to society. In version 2.0, social value-driven companies emerge as the times require; that is, a group of companies that have prospered out of good deeds and continue to

uphold good deeds. And in version 3.0, social value is created in the social public space through entrepreneurship, which is the outlook for the future. To drive home his point, he shared a quote from Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, "The perfect human nature will be constructed when one thinks of others more than himself, suppresses his own desire and conducts good deeds in public."

Executive Director of the CEIBS Alumni Association, Co-director of

the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, and Chairman of China Universal Asset Management Co Ltd Li Wen, shared his experiences from the perspective of someone who practices CSR. According to him, "An enterprise should, from its launch, assume social responsibility, which is also a major reason for its very existence. Social responsibility creates social capital and is an important core competitiveness of an enterprise. The connotation of social responsibility is continuously deepened with the development of the enterprise

and the progress of the times." Good corporate governance, adequate organisational security, and integration into the company's corporate culture are three elements in a company's practice of social responsibility, he told the audience. Li Wen added that the day's event was an indicator of CEIBS' open mindedness in exploring the current landscape and diligently fulfilling its social responsibility with concrete results. Meanwhile, he said, the alumni are enriching the core values of CEIBS through their own efforts.



The Report

CEIBS Associate Professor of Management Terence Tsai represented the school's faculty in releasing the 2017 CEIBS CSR Report. The document summarises global CSR trends and CSR practices in China in 2017 and highlights excellent CEIBS cases and research results.

The report points out that, from a global perspective, there is a consensus – within the society – on the importance of engaging in CSR, and global business practices that incorporate CSR development trends have been integrated at unprecedented levels. Chinese companies' CSR practices are rapidly catching up with international trends: environmental protection has become one of the most important challenges; corporate poverty alleviation has shifted from financial to technical aid; it has gradually become a trend to publish CSR reports, the content and use of which are increasingly diversified; and the investment community is actively promoting responsible investment. Chinese companies have increasingly grown to realise that CSR is not merely a cost or constraint, but also a strategic step that can create new opportunities, promote innovation and provide a competitive edge.

Awards Ceremony

As one of the highlights of the activities making up the CEIBS Social

Responsibility Series, the winners of the CEIBS Alumni Social Responsibility Award were also announced during the forum. From among the list of nominees, winners were to be announced for the Innovation Award, Public Welfare Award, Environmental Protection Award and Social Responsibility Award. The working group and the panel of judges independently audited and scored the 73 participating alumni enterprises/organisations based on a strict selection criteria and rigorous process. In the end, the Social Responsibility Award, the most highly-regarded and comprehensive of the batch, remained unassigned. A challenge, one may say, for even more work to be done in the future.

The selection criteria for the coveted (and unassigned) Social Responsibility Award covered four indicators: the environment, society, corporate governance and the economy. Meanwhile the Innovation Award assessed breakthroughs involving products, technology, models, concepts and strategy; the Environmental Protection Award focused on environmental friendliness, energy conservation, environmental certification, circular economy and green office. And the Public Welfare Award covered educational support, corporate poverty alleviation, volunteer activities, community service, and job creation.

The winners:

Innovation Award: First Respond (Shanghai SOS919 Information

Technology Co Ltd).

Public Welfare Award: CEDAR.

Environmental Protection Award: Real Estate Industry Green Supply Chain Initiative Promotion Committee.

Among the short-listed nominees were:

Social Responsibility Award: Essilor Group (China) and Central China Real Estate Limited

Innovation Award: www.edaixi.com (Beijing Yidai Family Service Co Ltd), and Chervon Group (Nanjing Chervon Industry Co Ltd)

Public Welfare Award: Jingdong Group and Mangrove Conservation Foundation

Environmental Protection Award: Canature Environmental Products Co Ltd and Poten Environment Group Co Ltd

CEIBS leaders, professors, and well-known public welfare activists presented awards to winning alumni companies/organisations who were lauded, by everyone present, for their outstanding contributions to the field of corporate social responsibility.

Great oaks from little acorns grow. There is still a long way to go to develop commercial civilisation. The success of the social responsibility series of activities marks a milestone in CEIBS' history. It is a clear signal that the school has upgraded social responsibility to the strategic levels of its positioning, and a demonstration of CEIBS' unswerving pursuit in promoting the development of corporate social responsibility.