

# Guangxi Alumni Chapter: Far away but close to our hearts

■ By Lei Na

With its capital city Nanning located about 2,000 km away from Shanghai and 2,500 km away from Beijing, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a literal example of the saying “thousands of miles away”. The distance means nothing, though, to a group of CEIBS alumni who call Guangxi home. Despite their distance from the school’s two China campuses, they have steadily supported their alma mater’s development and the public good. Among the mountains and rivers of their hometown, they have been living CEIBS’ motto of “Conscientiousness, Innovation and Excellence”.



Li Qingfeng (AMP 01) is Secretary of CEIBS Alumni Association Guangxi Chapter and as one of the founding members, he has witnessed its evolution. In an interview with *TheLINK*, he speaks about the work

being done by the Chapter which at first glance seems distant, but is actually very closely linked to the school.

***TheLINK*: Tell us a bit about the growth and development of the CEIBS Alumni Association Guangxi Chapter.**

The Chapter was established on December 18, 2010. At that time, it had 34 members, and we happened to be the 34th alumni chapter of CEIBS. The coincidence in the numbers was quite interesting to see.

CEIBS alumni in Guangxi are mainly based in cities such as Nanning, Liuzhou, Guilin, and Beihai. There is one president and one vice president in Nanning, and in other cities there is one vice president and one deputy secretary general. If there’s an event coming up, all the cities take turn to act as organisers. We don’t have many alumni, but we are a close family. In recent years CEIBS has seen a rapid growth in the number of alumni in Guangxi. Now the chapter

has more than 80 members.

Every year, the school asks us to hold a CEIBS forum. We have had lectures from Professors Xu Xiaonian, Ding Yuan, Katherine Xin, and Xu Dingbo. Professor Lin Chen has also visited recently. With the school's support, we have held many forums and public lectures, as well as a series of activities for the public good. Now more and more Guangxi entrepreneurs are becoming familiar with CEIBS. In the future, we hope there will be more events in Guangxi because the government has a series of favourable policies for entrepreneurship in the region, and we are still in need of more knowledge and information.

***TheLINK: What has motivated you all to spend so much time building the Chapter?***

We are a very closely knit chapter. We see each other as brothers and sisters. We enjoy an exceptionally harmonious relationship. I am not the only one who's giving, even though I am the Secretary. It's team work; there's a group of people dedicated to this cause. The alumni who often work with me include the former President Sun Daguang; Vice Presidents Xiao Kai'ning, Wei Feiyan, and Luo Xin; Directors Yang Qin, Jiao Nianmin, Gan Lin; along with Deputy Secretary Generals Sun Xiaobing, Liu Zhenkun and Lu Jinsheng.

Every quarter we have one event; we either invite professors for lectures or visit an alumni company. Though working for the Chapter may keep

me really busy, I also learn a lot from fellow alumni and the events. People may say we have made a great contribution to the Chapter, but actually the Chapter has also returned the favour.



*More and more  
Guangxi entrepreneurs  
are becoming familiar  
with CEIBS.*



Each time we have an event, I am moved by the spirit and generosity of our alumni. Sometimes some alumni are unable to attend the event, but they still ask if there's anything they can do to help – either by giving financially or with their labour. This attitude is shared by everyone, and we don't have any excuse not to make every effort to make the Chapter better. The Chapter also helps us in our professional lives as we can turn to each other for advice when faced with challenges on the job. That is another reason I am so in love with this Chapter.

***TheLINK: What are the typical traits of members of the Guangxi Chapter?***

CEIBS' alumni, to some extent, are influential in Guangxi. In the area

of entrepreneurship, we have people from all walks of life. Chapter Vice President Wei Feiyan is the Chairman of Guangxi Huahong Pharmaceutical Co, Ltd; Vice President Luo Xin and Director Yang Qin are both prestigious real estate entrepreneurs; Jiao Nianmin is the “Sugar King” in China; Wu Xunxian's dental medical devices enjoy a good reputation in the industry and are among the best in the world; the “Hanger King” Lu Jinsheng is a hidden champion; Li Fuchao is running a listed company which makes automobile parts; and Xiao Kai'ning is a big name in Guangxi's education industry.

There are only two or three alumni in Guangxi investing in real estate; most of us – including me – are in the manufacturing industry. Now all the companies are transforming and going into intelligent manufacturing. I believe that many of them will succeed in the transformation. I am very confident in this industry. My company specialises in gloves – those used when playing golf, skiing, mountain biking, etc. We have also set the standards for the cut-resistant and pierce-proof gloves used by the Chinese police. It has been challenging in recent years, but with increasing investment in automation and design innovation, many Guangxi alumni in the manufacturing industry are bound to see a better future!

***TheLINK: How does the Chapter give back to society?***

Our alumna Wei Feiyan invested

## MY CEIBS EXPERIENCE AS TOLD BY LI QINGFENG

“I began life as an entrepreneur as early as 1998. Before that I had spent five years doing exporting at a foreign trade company. For my business, I specialised in glove manufacturing. Fortunately for me, a state-owned company closed down just as I began operating, and I rented their factory and hired a few skilled hands. It was a prime time for the export business. After one or two years, I earned my first ‘bucket of gold’. The company grew smoothly, step by step. The only setback occurred in 2008, when we had a lot of unwanted inventory due to the financial crisis. But after 2009, business gradually picked up again. Though the company operates on a relatively small scale, it is among the best in its industry segment.

At the very beginning I did an export marketing programme at CEIBS. I found the professors’ teaching to be exceptionally incisive and the campus was really beautiful. I did some research into the school and was pleased with the results, so I applied for the CEIBS AMP programme.

I had led my company for 10 years, and had earned a name for myself in my part of the country. But after I enrolled at CEIBS, it dawned on me that there were so many entrepreneurs who were better than I was. When I returned to Guangxi, I told everyone that only by going out can one find his/her real position.

When I was studying at CEIBS, I had to do homework every evening and had to visit other companies. This rigorous and studious atmosphere made me admire the school.

Later I became Secretary of CEIBS Alumni Association Guangxi Chapter, and kept in touch with the school, recommending excellent candidates as well as promoting its programmes. The more I engage with and interact with the school, the more I love CEIBS. We are all equal under the CEIBS umbrella, and we communicate with each other wholeheartedly. After AMP, I attended the SEPC Programme (CEIBS-HBS-TSEM Joint Senior Executive Programme– China). After that, I

have returned to the school from time to time, attending short-term programmes on negotiation management, project management, etc. Each time I learn something new. Usually the professors’ viewpoints inspire me to come up with new solutions for my company.

Eleven years have passed since I first joined CEIBS in 2005. Many competitors have stumbled along the way, but our company is still in good shape. This is because of the management knowledge I’ve obtained at CEIBS. I’m extremely grateful.

I am currently the President of Beihai Young Entrepreneurs Association. Almost all of the entrepreneurs under the age of 45 in Beihai are in this organisation. Last year, I recommended two entrepreneurs from the association to CEIBS AMP programme, and I will try to recommend two persons every year in the future. After they attend the course, they are very grateful to me – and to CEIBS. At CEIBS they learn how vast the world is. I have noticed that some of the entrepreneurs tend to be more rigorous, studious and optimistic after attending CEIBS programmes; also, they become more confident in their companies’ development direction.

To be frank, Guangxi entrepreneurs are relatively unsophisticated. I often suggest that the enrolment criteria for them should be lower than that for Shanghai entrepreneurs. Someone can be a top entrepreneur in his local region, but due to disadvantageous conditions, the scale of his company cannot reach the same level as those in Shanghai. In big cities, one has a huge room of choices, while entrepreneurs in the second- or third-tier cities have fewer channels of information. After reaching a certain scale, they will be in dire need of study. On one hand, they need to learn how to apply new methods and ideas taught by professors; on the other hand, they need to learn from alumni – everyone is a book, and sharing among alumni is no less valuable than professors’ lectures.”

a half million yuan and built a Hope Primary School in Zhiliao Village, located in Hongshui Town, part of Rongshui Miao Autonomous County, in Guangxi's Liuzhou City. The Chapter takes care of the basic facilities and teaching supplies. We have also set up a fund for this, with every share worth RMB5,000. We invited alumni to purchase shares, and each person could purchase no more than 20 shares. Through this initiative, we raised more than RMB2 million which we used to establish the fund. Two alumni from the finance sector are in charge of the fund, assuring an annual return of 12%. That means our 'public good' fund can earn over RMB200,000 every year. With this money, it will be easy to sustain this project. To put it in another way, with this fund we have solved the problem of the Chapter's sustainable development.

We have been helping the wider society for seven years, mainly by supporting this Hope Primary School. The first year I went there, I could barely drive up the hill because the road was so bad. It took me five hours to walk up and down the hill. Later my driver managed to drive up. However it was too slippery and he didn't dare to drive the car down the hill. In the past seven years, we have seen the school improve bit by bit. Muddy grounds were replaced by concrete floors, and the environment was also enhanced. Basic facilities have almost been completed. There are teachers of Chinese and mathematics, but we are

still looking for teachers of fine arts and music. The Miao people are talented in singing and dancing. We have been there with our kids during the vacation and watched the locals' performances. It was great fun. Public good activities are also a source of enlightenment for the alumni's next generation.

We have reached a consensus within the Chapter. We have agreed that we will keep investing in the public good fund, which will be focused on this Hope Primary School. We are also thinking about how to help the local farmers grow rice in an environmentally-friendly way. This project is now being discussed with the head of the village. We bought some produce from them for Chinese New Year. By doing this, on one hand, we can help them get rid of poverty; on the other hand, the produce is really good and we either use it ourselves or as gifts for our employees. We hope to help this place in many ways. Our target is to transform it within 10 years. Now seven years have passed, and I believe this goal will be achieved in a couple of years.

### **TheLINK: What's ahead for the Chapter?**

First, we will more proactively help to gain brand exposure for our alma mater and recommend more excellent entrepreneurs in Guangxi to CEIBS,



so as to strengthen the school's alumni network. This is something we believe the Chapter has an obligation to do.

Second, we will keep on doing what we can for the public good, which can be a way to educate our next generation to have a sense of social responsibility from a young age; it is also a way to groom our successors.

Third, we will continue to strengthen exchanges among our alumni, moving forward with our spirit of learning and consolidating our knowledge. Although we have alumni company visits and forums every quarter, we still hope to host more events. Whether these are forums or study tours, we will provide more opportunities for our alumni to exchange ideas.

Finally, we will integrate alumni resources via more events, so that members can help each other; it would be even greater if alumni can work together in business. Of course these kinds of exchanges should not only happen in our professional lives, but also among the families of our alumni; in fact many of our alumni's children are already friends with each other.