

Overseas training boosts China's development

The CPC has a long history of sending officials abroad to learn from foreign expertise, and the latest move is designed to boost the economies of the country's two poorest provinces. **Fu Jing** reports from Brussels.

Editor's note: This is the last in a series of articles in which China Daily has marked the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China by examining its structure, history and influence.

In terms of poverty levels, Guizhou province is little different to many African countries, but Chen Min'er, the provincial Party chief, set the ball rolling to improve living standards when he visited Switzerland in November 2014.

During his trip, Chen, who was governor of the southwestern province at the time, set the goal of catching up with Switzerland, one of the world's wealthiest and most dynamic countries, which has parallels with Guizhou as both are landlocked and boast unspoiled picturesque scenery.

The plan is now being put into action after leading politicians, including President Xi Jinping and Ueli Maurer, former president of the Swiss Confederation, greeted Chen's idea with enthusiasm.

As a result, the Communist Party of China's Central Committee's Organization Department, which is responsible for the allocation of the Party's human resources, is now working with officials from the province and its Swiss partners to ensure the success of the project.

"We are now implementing an exciting 'action-learning' program to bridge the gap between Guizhou province and Switzerland," said Guido Palazzo, professor of business ethics at the University of Lausanne, who is in charge of operations for the program.

Pragmatic models

Palazzo said the one-year program targets China's two poorest provinces — Gansu, in the northwest, and Guizhou — with the aim of introducing pragmatic Swiss development models. In Guizhou, the tourism industry will be the main focus, while Gansu's main growth engine will center on the construction of industrial parks.

"The two provinces present their main ideas and send the officials in charge to Switzerland to learn (how to implement them)," Palazzo said, in a phone interview with China Daily. "And then we send our experts to the sites (in China) to help deliver the knowledge and put the ideas into action."

He praised the officials, saying they are "highly motivated" and "eager to learn and change."

Palazzo's program is a typical demonstration of how China's leadership has followed the examples set by other countries.

Switzerland provides an excellent role model for China, which is at a crucial stage in the process of transforming its economic development model from export-driven to one led by domestic demand and has pledged to improve the environment.

This is particularly vital after Xi, who became general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in 2012, upheld the governance concepts of ecological civilization, sustainable development and a "beautiful China".

Training overseas is not a new development, though.

What they say

"I studied on the MPA Program at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago in 2010-11. Not only did my academic knowledge of public administration improve, but also I felt enlightened in my work back in China. For a university language major like me, it was also a great opportunity to immerse myself in a foreign environment. It was very worthwhile."

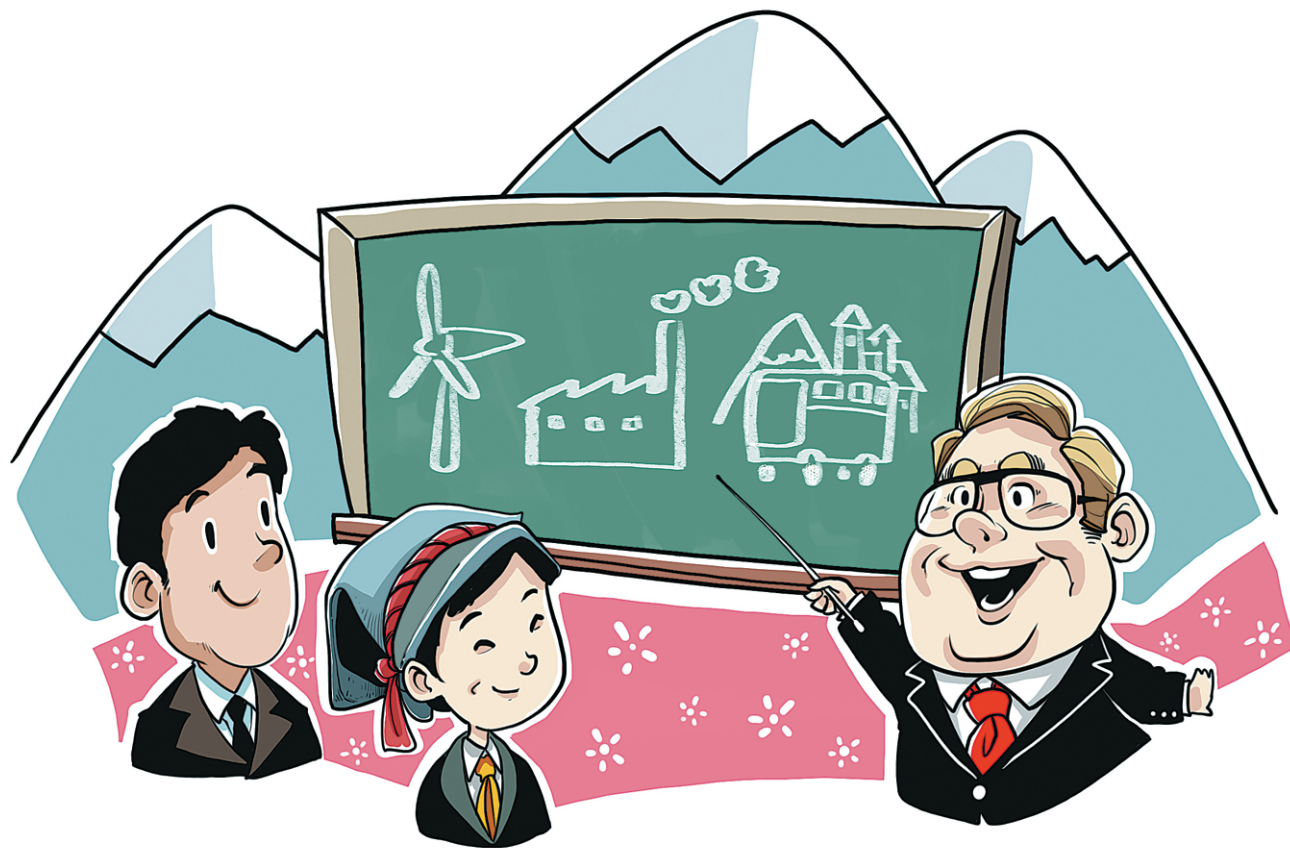
Kang Yi, deputy divisional chief of the Americas and Oceania department at the Liaoning Provincial Foreign Affairs Office

"The four-months of public policy training at Duke University (in the US) were helpful in changing our way of thinking. For example, when planning a project (in China), it often occurs like this: each department only speaks on its own behalf and lacks an overall view. When unexpected problems emerge, people just start again. But in the US, people pay great attention to interdepartmental cooperation. They design the overall layout and the flow, then implement the project step-by-step. But of course, we cannot just copy their methods. The training gave us the chance to understand things better, but we have to rely on ourselves to find ways of solving problems in China."

Zhang, an official with the China Meteorological Administration who preferred not to disclose his full name

"During my 10 months of study on an MPA program in the US between 2012 and 2013, I noticed the differences between East and West in terms of culture and mindset. We had a lot of case discussions with the teachers, which is different from how classes work in China. I also researched the subject related to my work — the use of both print and new media to produce impressive publicity materials. I felt I had a better command of my job and gave more consideration to the things our target audience wanted to know."

Yang Guang, a publicity official with the CPC Dalian municipal committee



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

“They are quite high-level and talented, and they always ask interesting questions.”

Guido Palazzo, professor of business ethics at the University of Lausanne

Since the early years of the CPC in the 1920s, the Party has established branches overseas and sent members to study in Western countries. The policy echoes the early education of leaders such as Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, who both studied in France as young men.

Overseas education played an important role when the CPC was implementing market-oriented reform and opening-up policies. It allowed officials to learn the foreign techniques and management expertise that helped the country along the path of development and economic growth.

In the late 1970s and early 80s, the CPC sent high-level delegations to countries in Central, Eastern and Western Europe to conduct onsite research. Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun, led one of the task forces.

Training programs

Later, the Party implemented a number of programs to send promising members and officials — from the grassroots to the ministerial-level — on educational programs overseas. In addition to Switzerland, the United States, Singapore, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan have all hosted CPC members as students.

Now, the University of Lausanne is implementing a pro-



A man reads a plaque erected by the French government in Paris to commemorate the late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, who lived in a nearby hostel when he studied in the French capital from 1922 to 1924. LI GENXING / XINHUA



Zhou Enlai (fourth from left in the front row) and **Deng Xiaoping** (third from right in the back row) pose with delegates at a meeting in Paris in July 1924. XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

gram for middle- to high-ranking CPC officials, civil servants and executives from State-owned enterprises, with as many as 100 undertaking two-week training courses every year.

"They are quite high-level and talented, and they always ask interesting questions," Palazzo said, adding that the training programs have been operating for more than 20 years.

While the Swiss program

deals with sustainable development, innovation and management, CPC officials who studied in the United States focused on leadership training.

Anthony Saich, director of

the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School, oversaw a leadership-training program for officials, jointly implemented by Tsinghua University and the China Development Research Foundation.

Saich, who first visited China in the 1970s as a student of Chinese economy and politics, said the main objective of the program, which started in 2002 and ended in 2014, was to introduce officials to techniques that would improve their ability to make informed public policy choices.

Dozens of ministerial-level officials, enrolled by the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, graduated from the program. Vice-President Li Yuanchao is one of the officials and business leaders who benefitted over the years.

"The participants were all very capable and clearly motivated, not only to learn but also to contribute their own experiences," Saich said. "A major factor was the discussion of best practices from around the world. I think the program provided participants with an international perspective that they could bring to their work."

Lu Mai, general secretary of the China Development Research Foundation in Beijing, and Xue Lan, dean of Tsinghua University's School of Public Policy and Management, were two of the originators and driving forces behind the program. Both studied and worked in the US in the 1980s and 90s, and the contacts they made benefitted the program.

"Many of the participants in the program, which was well-designed and meaningful, have been the backbones of China's development," Lu said, in a previous interview with China Daily.

In an email exchange, Saich said the program consisted of a number of components,

Leading centers attended by CPC members

The Nanyang Centre for Public Administration at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

After the late leader Deng Xiaoping urging China to learn from Singapore in the 1980s, Nanyang was adopted as a "training base" for Chinese officials and business leaders. More than 1,200 officials obtained masters degrees in public management and economic management, and some of them have been promoted to provincial governorships. Overall, more than 15,000 officials from China and other Asian countries have undergone short-term training at the establishment, which offers executive training programs in public management, innovation, urban planning and education management.

SOURCE: THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE NANYANG CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Yale University, the United States

The two-week China-Yale Senior Government Leadership Program, which started in 2005, was designed for Chinese officials at vice-ministerial level. Some of the most-senior government officials to participate in executive education outside China have attended the program. Moreover, more than one-third (27 out of 75) of the participants in the first three-year annual program have subsequently been promoted to top-level positions. The program includes a week in New York and Washington.

Since the founding of New China in 1949, about 10,000 students and officials have traveled to former Soviet Union countries and in Central and Eastern Europe. More than 8,000 officials studied in the former Soviet Union — ex-president Jiang Zemin and former premier Li Peng both studied in Moscow.

SOURCE: THE OFFICIAL YALE UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

— FU JING

including analytical tools and modes of analysis, specific topics and wide-ranging classes about US politics and other themes. The students were taught by renowned Harvard experts.

Professor Joseph Nye lectured on soft power, while Professor Lawrence Summers focused on the future of the US economy and Sino-US economic relations.

"One important by-product of the program was that we learned a lot about China and the challenges it is dealing with," Saich wrote. "The program gave our Chinese colleagues the opportunity to present their views about crucial issues to us."

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