

## 2019 Work Report of Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva

### 1. Teaching of Chinese Language, Cultural Lectures and Chinese Bridge Competition

**Profile of Chinese Language Teaching.** In 2019, the Institute provided 10 Chinese classes for the University of Geneva. Two of those classes are for the graduate students of the GTI program, four especially cater to the need of students of the Global Studies Institute, and the rest are for all the students of the university including undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D students. To the graduate students of the Department of East Asian Studies and the resident Chinese teachers, the Institute offered the course “Chinese Linguistics and Chinese Teaching”. All the above-mentioned classes are incorporated within the University’s ECTS credit system, and were open both to students of the university and the general public. In addition, through the University’s Faculty of Continuing Education, the Institute offered 6 Chinese classes and 2 HSK preparation classes of different levels, and a four-week intensive summer Chinese language class (80 class hours) with four Chinese cultural lectures targeting at the general public.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva is located in a city which is home to a large number of international organizations and many Chinese language training institutions. According to the positioning of the Institute as a research-oriented institute and the existence of the various local Chinese teaching institutions, most of the students of the Confucius Institute are students of the University of Geneva. This year, there are 220 registered students. The Institute places great importance on the construction and management of its Chinese language curriculum system. All the courses it offers are included in the official teaching plan of the university. At the same time, the Institute cooperates with the Faculty of Continuing Education of the University to provide local people with different levels of Chinese language courses and intensive Chinese proficiency tests preparation courses, striving to make the Institute's course audiences more diversified. The Institute has always placed great importance on the issues of teacher recruitment, teacher quality, and teaching effectiveness. Up till now, the Institute has successfully completed all its teaching plans and the students are very satisfied with the courses of the Institute.

**Lectures, scholarships and Chinese Bridge Competition.** From January to November, 2019, the Institute has organized 7 public lectures on Chinese culture with a total number of participants of more than 400. The Institute also actively helped students of the University of Geneva to apply for Hanban’s scholarships for summer school and long-term programs. In 2019, 20 students of the University of Geneva got scholarships to attend the summer school at Renmin University of China. The Institute co-organized the 2019 Preliminaries of the “Chinese Bridge” Chinese Proficiency Competition for College Students and Secondary School Students in Switzerland, which went off as a great success enjoying very positive reception among the locals. This is the second time the Institute has organized the important event ever since it was established.

## **2. Support of and Involvement in local Chinese Teaching**

In 2019, the Institute organized one Chinese teaching colloquium, which provided a high-quality opportunity to the resident Chinese language teachers to improve their professional skills. The Institute participated in the 2019 Confucius Institute Miniature-Novel Translation Competition in France and French-Speaking Switzerland. Of the 5 prize winning entries, 3 were by the students from the Institute's literary translation workshop, which was held once a month. Chinese teachers in the Institute regularly visited the local Chinese language teaching institutions to exchange with their teachers and provide professional counseling and support where they could.

## **3. Academic Research and Ph.D program**

The Institute is dedicated to cross-cultural and interdisciplinary comparative studies of contemporary Chinese society. Each month, the Institute holds a Ph.D candidates' seminar, which is attended mainly by Ph.D candidates from the University of Geneva and the University of Lausanne, who are interested in research on Chinese issues. They share their research experiences and get inspiration and motivation from their peers in the discussions. The Institute keeps reviews of the academic symposiums it has held, which are published on the Institute's scientific blog. At present, the Institute's research projects include for instance: "The Childbirth Experiences and Healthcare Needs of Chinese Women: Comparison between Switzerland and China", among others. In addition to a Ph.D. candidate funded by the China Studies Program at the Confucius Institute Headquarters, the Institute currently has three other Ph.D candidates co-supervised with the University of Geneva School of Economics and Management, the University of Geneva School of Social Sciences and the University of Lausanne

The Institute actively participates in the research of teaching Chinese as a foreign language in China. To the "Global Corpus of Interlanguage" hosted by Beijing Language and Culture University, the Institute has so far contributed 3000 student writing samples, ranked sixth among all the contributors of writing samples globally.

In 2019, researchers and Ph.D students of the Institute published the following papers:

"Process of Institutionalization in Chinese Martial Arts: the Case of its Ranking System." *Religiskifilosofisk*. 26. Pp. 82-92.

Analysis of Vocabulary Errors of Chinese Learners in French-Speaking Areas and Correspondent Teaching Strategies. In *Research on Chinese Language Education in French-Speaking Countries*.

"Snowball" Vocabulary Teaching Method and Related Parameters. *International Chinese Teaching Research* (Beijing) 2:10-18.

"Waves and Forms: Constructing the Cultural in Design." *AI & SOCIETY* 34 (3), pp. 403-417, 2019.

## **4. Main events**

On January 21, the Institute participated in the "Geneva Dialogue" which explored ways to scale education for the UN Sustainable Development Goals by leveraging digital innovation, sharing inspirational practices and brokering partnerships. More than 200 leading thinkers, educational innovators and policy makers from academia, international organizations and the private sector participated in the Dialogue.

On January 27, Chinese teacher Bao Yinhui of the Institute attended the conference on "Chinese Language Teaching in Switzerland" hosted by the Culture, Education, Science and Technology Affairs Section of the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland and

delivered a speech entitled “Inherited Morphemes and the Teaching of Vocabulary of Chinese as a Second Language”.

On February 12, the Institute held a reception to celebrate the Chinese New Year. More than 100 people representing the faculty and staff and the student population of the University of Geneva, international organizations in Geneva, the business sector, and Chinese Swiss attended the reception.

On February 26, the Institute held a public lecture entitled “China: 40 Years of Reform and Opening Up” at the University of Geneva, which was delivered by Emelie Frenkiel, Associate Professor of the Université Paris XII.

On March 7, the Institute held a seminar together with researchers from the Center for Scientific Policy Studies of the University of Geneva and the European Organization for Nuclear Research to discuss issues on academic diplomacy.

On March 8, the Institute, GTI of the University of Geneva and the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce jointly held the “China in One Day” series of lectures on the theme of “China's Innovation”. More than 40 graduate students from the University of Geneva and local people participated in the lectures.

On March 12, the 2018 Board Meeting of the Institute was held at the University of Geneva.

On March 19, the Institute invited Isabel Attané, a demographer and sinologist at the French Institute of Demographic Studies to hold a public lecture entitled “The Problem of Rapid Population Ageing in China” at the University of Geneva.

On April 11, the Institute received a visiting delegation from TUS Triple Helix Co. Ltd. to discuss cooperation between China and Switzerland on science and technology innovation and the establishment of technology incubators.

On April 16, the Institute organized the “Sino-Swiss Higher Education Teaching Quality Control Exchange Meeting”. Thirteen people, including Director M. Schaub, Teaching Evaluation Consultant A. Salzmann, Teaching Consultants I. Rotondi and C. Huneault of the Center for Teaching and Learning Support at the University of Geneva, O. Maulini and M. Schaub of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Science and scholars and professors of Renmin University of China attended the meeting.

On April 16, the Institute invited Isabelle Sourbès-Verger, a researcher in astronomy at the French National Academy of Sciences, to hold a public lecture entitled “China's Space Project and Its Prospects: Myths and Realities” at the University of Geneva.

On May 4, the Institute held the “China in One Day” series of lectures on the Chinese language, society, immigration and the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, including an introduction to the contemporary Chinese society and the humanistic features of today's China, which opened up new horizons for the local people to better understand China.

On May 6, The Sino-Swiss symposium on the topic of “The Challenges Currently Facing the WTO” was held at the Institute. Three experts from the Geneva Security Policy Center and five scholars from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences conducted in-depth discussions and exchanges on the trade friction between China and the United States and the role that the EU and Switzerland can play in it.

On May 11, the 2019 Preliminaries of the *Chinese Bridge* Chinese Proficiency Competition for College Students and Secondary School Students in Switzerland were held at the University of Geneva. The event was sponsored by the Confucius Institute Headquarters, hosted by the Culture, Education, Science and Technology Affairs Section of the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland and co-organized by the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva.

From May 22 to 23, the Institute assisted Hanban's Filming Crew to film the work of

the Institute, which is part of the filming project accommodating some representative Confucius Institutes in the world.

On May 24, the Institute and GEDT of UNIGE co-organized the international symposium on “Globalized Heritage in Asia: Regional Articulation, Silence, and Contestation”. Eleven scholars from the University of Geneva, the University of Freiburg, the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, the UNESCO, the International Centre for the Protection and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, the Geneva Institute of International Relations and Development, the Aga Khan Cultural Trust and Nankai University made presentations at the symposium.

On May 25, the Institute held the 10th Chinese Teacher Training Event. The theme of this training is “Cognition and Teaching of Chinese Characters in the Case of Non-Chinese Character Circle Learners”. More than 20 resident Chinese teachers from the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Geneva, the University of Lausanne, Taiwan Chinese School in Geneva, the Chinese School in Bern, and the Chinese language education institutions in the French areas around Geneva participated in the training.

On June 11, the Institute received a delegation of Chinese universities. During the visit, we exchanged information about the work of the Institute, the work and plans of the Chinese universities in recruiting international students, and discussed the role that the Institute could play in the exchange of students between Chinese and Swiss universities, including how to help Swiss students participate in the Chinese College Student Internship Program.

On June 13, the Institute held the annual summer reception to thank the community in Geneva for their strong support for the work of the Institute.

From June 26 to 27, the Institute held an international symposium entitled “Islam(s) in China: Reflecting on Muslim Diversity”. Twelve scholars from France, Switzerland, the United States and China made presentations at the symposium.

In June, the Institute participated in the Translation Competition of French and French-speaking Swiss Confucius Institutes. Three of the five award-winning translations of miniature Chinese novels were by students of the translation workshop run by the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva.

On July 10th, the Institute assisted GTI of UNIGE to hold a summer camp at the Institute. A total of 25 Swiss and Chinese graduate students participated in the summer camp.

On Oct. 4, the Institute assisted the House of History of the University of Geneva to hold the academic writing workshop for Ph.D students.

On Oct. 8, the Institute organized a get-together of the alumni from the French speaking parts in Switzerland, who used to study in China.

On Oct. 15, the Institute organized a public lecture on the topic of “Seven Persistent Cliches about the Chinese Language”, which was delivered by Professor Wolfgang Behr of the University of Zurich.

On Oct. 17, the Institute participated in the International Day event of the University of Geneva to promote the mission, activities, courses and scholarships of the Institute, as well as Unige’s partner Chinese University – Renmin University, including its setting of academic disciplines, teaching and research, enrollment of international students, and the provision of scholarships.

On Nov. 6, the Institute assisted the Chinese Student Union of University of Geneva to organize the “Searching for Language Pals” event for French and Chinese speaking students.

On Nov. 14, the Institute received the “Elite Leader” economic talent growth training

camp from Renmin University of China.

On Nov. 18, the Institute received the delegation from Zhongshan University of China.

On Nov. 19, the Institute organized a public lecture on the topic of “The Enigma of Chinese Growth” delivered by Dr. Rémy Herrera, an economist and researcher at CNRS.

On Nov. 27, the Institute invited Dr. Rémy Herrera, an economist and researcher at CNRS, to give a public lecture entitled "The Effects of the China-US Trade War on French-Chinese Economic Relations" to the French-speaking Students' Union at the University of Geneva and the local public.

On Dec. 3, the Institute and the University of Geneva History Center jointly hosted a public academic lecture entitled “The Invisible Nature of the Holy Mountain in East Asia”. The speaker is Professor James Robson of Harvard's Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Director of the Center for Regional Studies of East Asia.

## **Work Report of Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva (2020)**

2020 has been a difficult and special year for everyone. The global spread of the COVID-19 epidemic has also brought great difficulties and challenges to the work of the Confucius Institute in Geneva. Even so, we have invested ourselves with the same enthusiasm as in the past in our work, and we engaged actively under the conditions of strict compliance with the laws and requirements of epidemic prevention and control.

### **1. Chinese as a foreign language activities**

The Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva offers the following three types of courses:

1) Courses for all students of the University of Geneva. The first set of courses is on Chinese as a foreign language and the second on contemporary China. Both sets of courses are open to undergraduate and graduate students from all departments of the University of Geneva. The Chinese as a Foreign Language course provides a foundation in Mandarin Chinese (divided into four levels I, II, III, and IV), including an introductory course specifically designed for undergraduate students in International Relations at the Institute of Global Studies at the University of Geneva, and another introductory course for the Geneva-Tsinghua University Project (Master's Degree in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability). Courses on contemporary China include contemporary Chinese society, contemporary Chinese economy, Sino-European comparison of innovation practices, etc. At present, the above courses have been integrated into the credit system of the University of Geneva.

2) Postgraduate courses in Chinese linguistics and Chinese as a foreign language. These courses are taught in cooperation with the Unit of Chinese studies in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Geneva and are included in the credit system of the Faculty of Humanities.

3) Non-credit Chinese courses for students of the University of Geneva and residents of Switzerland and the surrounding French regions, from elementary to advanced level, from oral to translation, from classroom to online courses. These courses constitute a complete teaching program within the framework of continuing education.

4) Intensive pre-test coaching course for HSK exam. Although the HSK 2020 exam was cancelled due to the epidemic, this course was able to run normally.

In 2020, the Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva opened 8 classes with 204 students; 56 students in the continuing education Chinese language course; 34 students in the intensive HSK pre-test coaching class.

The Confucius Institute of the University of Geneva has gained a solid reputation in the field of Chinese language teaching in Geneva and the surrounding area, and has greatly promoted the development of Chinese language teaching and the promotion of the Chinese language in Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland. For example, our vice-dean teaches Chinese at the Department of Economic Development of the Canton

of Geneva every week. This illustrates the fact that the Chinese language is attracting more and more interest and is also an example of the effectiveness of the work of the Confucius Institute.

## **2. Academic activities and cultural activities**

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the cultural activities of the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva in 2020 were basically on hold. However, the Confucius Institute made specific efforts to organize and host several academic events and online seminars. Here are the main ones.

On February 25, 2020, the Confucius Institute, in cooperation with the Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce, organized a public lecture entitled “China in Africa” by Thierry Pairault, a sinologist, socio-economist and honorary research director of the French National Academy of Sciences (CNRS).

On July 30, 2020, the Confucius Institute organized a thematic workshop at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum entitled “To Choose is to Renounce - How is cultural diversity taken into account in ICT design and implementation?”. This workshop brought together a multidisciplinary group of researchers and designers to discuss the role of culture and cultural diversity in ICTs. Scholars discussed the concept of *cultural diversity*, how to better understand and explore the context of cultural diversity, and how to increase inclusiveness and foster cooperation and collaboration. The first half of the workshop was based on short presentations by researchers and designers from China, the UK and Switzerland, followed by an open discussion.

On August 8, 2020, the *Chinese Bridge* Chinese language competition for university and high school students in Switzerland, organized by the Cultural and Educational Section of the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland and co-organized by the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva, was held online. Participants came from universities and high schools, including the University of Geneva, the University of Zurich, the ETHZ and the University of St. Gallen. Five contestants were selected and trained by our Institute to participate in the competition. Among them, Marine Emmanuelle Krieger and Gwendoline Fluckiger won the first and second place in the university student category. Olivia Rehnstrom won the first prize in the secondary school category. In the global final with participants for all around the world, Olivia Rehnstrom won the second place in the European category and the top 15 worldwide, which is the best result ever achieved by a Swiss contestant in the previous Chinese Bridge competitions.

On September 4, 2020, the Confucius Institute organized the 11th training course for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language on the theme “Educational coordination of online or hybrid Chinese teaching - integrating IT tools and resources into practice”. The aim of this seminar was to share existing resources, compare and introduce current digital tools, and train in the use of certain software particularly suited to teaching Chinese as a foreign language, in order to ensure the quality of e-learning or hybrid formats. With discussions based on the teaching practices of each participant, this seminar provided solid support for the management of online educational software for

Chinese language teachers. The training instructor, Yinhui Bao, is a Chinese teacher at the Confucius Institute. Prior to this, on August 21, based on the urgent need for online teaching of the epidemic, the Institute co-organized with the Chinese School of Geneva two other training sessions. The first one was entitled “From the Ontology of Chinese Education to the Fundamentals of Classroom Teaching” and given by Joël Bellassen, Honorary General Inspector of Chinese Language at the French Ministry of National Education and Professor at the French Institute of Oriental Languages and Cultures. The second one was entitled “Designing Chinese Language Teaching at a Distance” and given by the Confucius Institute associated research Dr. Jue Wang, who is also working for the Continuing education program of the University of Geneva. These trainings provided invaluable help and support to the majority of Chinese language teachers who were struggling to adapt their teaching during the epidemic.

On October 20, 2020, the Confucius Institute organized a public academic lecture entitled “Where does Europe stand in the US-China confrontation?” given by Dr. Antoine Bondaz, a researcher and program director at the Foundation for Strategic Studies (FRS) and lecturer at Sciences Po Paris. The Covid-19 pandemic has been an indicator and some sort of gas pedal during the confrontation between the United States and China. In the US, China was at the heart of the presidential election debate, and the Trump administration increased economic and political sanctions against the country, demanding increasing support from Europe. Conversely, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent visit to Europe was aimed at showcasing Sino-European cooperation and providing a critique of U.S. unilateralism. In this sensitive context, the lecture discussed the foreign policy that individual European countries may or may not adopt, arguing that equidistance and neutrality are the best strategies and that Europeans should draw a new path and go their own way.

For many years, the Confucius Institute has been organizing a monthly seminar on the French translation of contemporary Chinese literature. Since the beginning of the epidemic, this seminar has continued in an online format. The seminar is attended by enthusiasts of Chinese literature and literary translation, including master's and doctoral students of the Department of East-Asian studies at the University of Geneva, full-time translators from the United Nations, graduates of the East Asia Department and freelance translators. The aim of the seminar is not only to introduce contemporary Chinese literature, but also to encourage and help the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature. The work of the last few years has been fruitful, with for instance the publication in France of two introductions and translations of contemporary Chinese microfiction.

These events, which focused on topical academic issues and responded to real needs, were attended by more than 300 people and had a positive impact in Geneva and Switzerland. In addition, the Confucius Institute organized a workshop on the topic of “The current state of relations between the West and China and the image of China”, a debate between artists and scientists on the theme of “transitional toys”, and six other public lectures. Unfortunately, due to the epidemic, these events were cancelled or postponed.

### 3. Special and outstanding activities

Research work and projects. The Institute currently has three major research projects: “Directions in New Sinology”, “Chinese Women's Reproductive Experiences and Reproductive Care Needs - A Comparative Study of Switzerland and China”, and “Chinese Programmatic Blocks: A Triangulated Mutual Evidence Study Based on Corpus Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Chinese Second Language Teaching”. Overall, research activities are progressing well. Here are three examples of publications representatives of the research programs:

Poizat Grâce, ”Micronouvelles en langue chinoise et LING Dignnian, un maître du genre”. In *Brèves (Villelongue d’Aude) : Le Monde dans un grain de riz*. N° 117 : 3-55.

Porchet Pierrick, "The Transmission modes of taijiquan: traditional martial art, competitive sport and the political reappropriation of culture in modern China", in Fan Hong et Lu Zhouxiang (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Sport in Asia*, Routledge, New York : 2020. pp. 45-53.

Bugnon Pascale, 2019, « “Memory from Beyond the Grave”: Revitalization of Muslim Shrines in Southern China », in *Heritage and Religion in Asia*, The Publishing House of Zhejiang University (forthcoming).

For more and more detailed information on our research results, please refer to the research section on our website.

Doctoral training. The Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva is committed to the training of new doctoral students in Sinology and contemporary Chinese studies. In 2013, the Confucius Institute had successfully applied for three doctoral training scholarships from the Hanban. Currently, the program is progressing well, and all doctoral students are in the process of submitting and defending their dissertations. They are expected to receive their doctoral degrees in 2021.

Local teacher training. The Confucius Institute pays attention to localized development and attaches great importance to Chinese teacher training. 11 teacher training sessions were held, which have achieved very good results. Several senior local Chinese teachers also participate directly in the Confucius Institute's Chinese teaching work.

Relationship with the government. The Confucius Institute is currently the only Confucius Institute in Switzerland and maintains good relations with the local government in Geneva. At the same time, it actively works together with other public organizations such as the Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The Confucius Institute also collaborate with faculties of the University of Geneva for the organisation of academic seminars and the promotion contemporary Chinese studies in Switzerland.

Relations with the public. The Confucius Institute has always attached importance to maintaining close contact and communication with the public in Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland who are interested in learning Chinese language and understanding China. During the epidemic, we communicated with the public through our website and kept in touch with these people by email, answering their questions about the work of the Confucius Institute and listening to their opinions and suggestions.

International cooperation. The Confucius Institute attaches importance to

international cooperation with other universities. 2020, under the conditions of COVID-19 pandemic, the Confucius Institute at the University of Geneva and the Confucius Institute at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar launched a successful cooperation. Grâce Poizat-Xie (Deputy Director), and Basile Zimmermann, (Director), offered teaching courses for the Confucius Institute at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop. Dr Poizat-Xie went to Dakar in person to offer a course on Chinese teaching methods for students and teachers of the Confucius Institute. Dr Basile Zimmermann taught through online classes.

In 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic halted much of the work of the Confucius Institute. We used this as an opportunity to renovate the Confucius Institute's office, the Villa Rive-Belle, by painting the exterior of the building, repairing the steps, and we also redone the lawn. We are confident that when the epidemic is over and everything is back to normal, a more beautiful Villa Rive-Belle will continue to support the development of the Confucius Institute with added colors.