

**2025 Global Outstanding Overseas Compatriot Alumni
【Public Welfare Contribution Award】**

Mr. Li, Sam Choi

When Li, Sam Choi first arrived in Taiwan, he came with nothing but a suitcase. Today, he has single-handedly advanced the teaching of more than a dozen Asian languages in Taiwan, founded multiple non-profit and cultural platforms, established scholarships at several schools, held over 50 public film screenings and 200 charity lectures, donated over 50,000 books, and - before turning 40 - contributed nearly NT\$10 million to underserved areas across Taiwan and Southeast Asia. He says, “The early years of working tirelessly, the love I now have for Taiwan and my mission to connect Asia’s many cultures - these are the promises I made to myself and the legacy I want to leave to the next generation.” Li, Sam Choi is a changemaker who brings lasting energy to Taiwanese society through language, education and culture.

Born in 1979 and raised in Hong Kong, Li comes from a new immigrant family and working-class background. He started working early in life to find his own path. At 18, with the help of a need-based scholarship(清寒公費獎學金) from Taiwan’s Overseas Community Affairs Council, he came to Taiwan alone to pursue his education. After completing the preparatory program for overseas Chinese students at National Taiwan Normal University, he was accepted into the Department of Public Relations and Advertising at Shih Hsin University - beginning his lifelong journey of building a life in Taiwan. He firmly believes that “education changes destiny,” a belief that has guided his life ever since.

While at Shih Hsin University, Li was actively involved in public affairs and served as student body president, championing campus reform and student services. He supported himself by tutoring Cantonese to other students and this foundation in language and cultural identity would later inspire his vision for

multilingual education and cultural outreach. He was awarded the Director's Prize(主任獎) upon completing the preparatory program and received the university's "Outstanding Performance Award(傑出表現獎)" at graduation from Shih Hsin University - testaments to his tireless drive, often putting in the effort of two days in one. After establishing his first business, he donated NT\$200,000 in his mother's name to set up the "Chen Jiudi Thai Language Learning Scholarship" in 2009. This was the beginning of his long-standing commitment to giving back to both his alma mater and the broader community - a practice he has maintained for over 15 years.

Li is a cross-disciplinary practitioner whose work spans education, culture and public service. His major contributions include:

1. Establishing Language and Public Education Systems

In 2012, he co-founded the "Five Languages + N School(五語+N學堂)" with 4-Way News, offering free courses in seven Southeast Asian languages - Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, Burmese, Filipino, and others - to empower new immigrants and broaden Taiwanese students' understanding of Southeast Asian societies. In 2013, he independently launched the "Jiudi School," pioneering courses in Lao, Hindi and Bengali - among the first such offerings in Taiwan. By 2016, he partnered with local high schools to create the "Southeast Asian Language Centre," introducing Southeast Asian languages as electives at the secondary school level. He also connected government bodies and schools with qualified instructors, helping shape Taiwan's evolving cultural and educational landscape.

2. Launching Cultural and Social Innovation Platforms

In 2012, he founded the "Chen Jiudi Memorial Center for Hong Kong Overseas Chinese in Taipei(臺北市香港華僑陳就娣紀念中心)" to promote philanthropy, education and cultural inclusiveness in his mother's name. The center has hosted over 50 free film screenings and more than 200 charity lectures across Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China and Myanmar. Operating

as a foundation, the center supports a wide array of public service initiatives and serves as a vital hub for Asian cultural exchange and multicultural advocacy.

3. Advancing Overseas Education and Cultural Outreach

He has established free Mandarin classes and libraries in Cambodia and Myanmar, raised funds to rebuild rural school campuses and install children's play facilities, and sourced financial aid for educational infrastructure. Li also actively promotes multilingual education and publishing in Taiwanese, Cantonese and other languages. His book donations now exceed 50,000 volumes and have reached libraries in Hong Kong and across all 319 administrative districts and townships in Taiwan.

4. Advocating for Policy and Public Participation

Li has long served as Finance Committee Member and Convener for Citizen Congress Watch, regularly meeting with legislators to voice the concerns of new immigrants and international students. As the founding president of the "Taiwan Foreign Alumni Network" under the Ministry of Education's SIT program, he launched the "International Student Relief Scholarship(僑外生紓困獎學金)" to support over 200 students through the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2025, he established the "Taiwan Foreign Students Association(臺灣僑外生協會)" and as its first president, he is committed to building a support network to help foreign students navigate life and learning in Taiwan.

5. Giving Back with Gratitude - Using Social Resources for the Public Good

Since 2014, Li has served as a child welfare advisor to the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families, focusing on women and children's issues and was named a Model Advocate(扶幼楷模). In 2015, he was honored as a Distinguished Alumnus of the Overseas Chinese Preparatory Programme at NTNU. In 2018, he received the Youth Medal(青年獎章) from President Ma. In 2019, he was appointed to the board of the "Pearl S. Buck Foundation,"

where he continues to champion the needs of economically disadvantaged new immigrant families.

Li, Sam Choi hopes to continue advocating for “international students and new immigrants in Taiwan, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs understood. He aims to help newcomers establish secure, fulfilling lives and work alongside them to build a better Taiwan - one that grows stronger through inclusion, understanding, and shared commitment.”