

International High-Level Professional Training

Background

The ICDF's early human resources training programs consisted primarily of short-term training seminars with specialized topics. These seminars focused on the most relevant and advantageous elements of Taiwan's development, transmitting Taiwan's successful experiences to government officials and professionals from allied nations. In order to give seminar participants an inclusive overview during the two- to three-week seminars, content typically included broad issues such as policy planning and long-term development. In addition to the training provided at the seminars, attendees were able to learn from each other and share experiences gained during development in their home nations. The variety of subjects and the brief durations of these seminars were appealing, and governments of allied nations sent large numbers of trainees to participate each year. To build on the success of these seminars, and to respond to the growing need for high-level professionals in allied nations, the ICDF established a graduate scholarship program for foreign students at National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST) in 1998. The program took root and grew, and this year, it was expanded to include doctoral studies in agricultural science. Also in 2001, the ICDF created an international MBA (IMBA) program in conjunction with National

Chengchi University in Taipei, which is accepting Taiwanese and foreign students. With this program, the ICDF significantly increased the breadth and depth of its human resources development operations. Following are descriptions and highlights of both of these programs.

NPUST Agricultural Science Scholarship Program

When the ICDF was planning a new graduate scholarship program in early 1998, it was well aware that agriculture still formed the economic mainstay of most nations allied with the ROC, and that most of the projects conducted by ICDF overseas technical missions involved agricultural development. Providing full scholarships to a well established, highly professional agricultural program was therefore decided upon as the most effective strategy. The ICDF selected the two-year master's program at NPUST's Institute of Tropical Agriculture (ITA). The program offers over fifty courses in agricultural science in NPUST facilities, with additional laboratory and fieldwork conducted at the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center and other agricultural organizations. Initially limited to agronomy, horticulture, plant protection and rural planning, the scope of the courses—taught in English to improve participants' professional communication skills and global perspective—has been expanded to include



Signing an agreement for the cooperative scholarship programs conducted by the ICDF, National Pingtung University of Science and Technology and National Chengchi University

agribusiness management and food processing. In an effort to train even more competent agricultural specialists, plans are being drawn up to add courses in agricultural economics, veterinary medicine and environmental protection.

Students who successfully complete this program are granted master's degrees accredited by the Ministry of Education in accordance with the ROC's *Degree Conferral Act*.

Of the 22 students in the first three classes in the program, 10 students in the first and second classes graduated and received master's degrees (the third class will graduate in July 2002). In light of these results, the program has been extended, and the ICDF will now offer scholarships to one to three agricultural science doctoral students each year. It is hoped that the top students in the master's program will continue their studies in the Ph.D. program after earning their degrees. The fourth class in the ITA, enrolled in the 2001 academic year, consisted of eight M.S. students and the first Ph.D. student.

From the outset of the program, it was hoped that graduates would apply what they had learned to their nations' agricultural sectors and long-term socioeconomic development, as well as provide support for cooperative agricultural projects conducted by ICDF technical missions. This hope was not unfounded, and now many graduates have achieved high positions in government

and industry in their home countries. Momodou D. Jabang is currently a research officer at the National Agricultural Research Institute of The Gambia; Mbaye Ndiaye is now chief of Senegal's Phytopharmacie Laboratory; Michael Ho'ota is was named chief of the Extension Department of the Solomon Islands' Ministry of Agriculture and Primary Industries; and Jean Carlin Prosper is employed by the Organization for the Development of the Artibonite Valley, a group associated with the Haitian Department of Agriculture. Mr. Prosper is also helping the ROC technical mission in Haiti conduct an agricultural assistance project.

National Chengchi University International MBA Program

The ICDF created the IMBA program at National Chengchi University in order to help allied nations train corporate managers with international perspectives and experience, which will in turn strengthen trading relationships between Taiwan and these nations. The ICDF will each year provide full scholarships to four to six students to attend this program. In 2001, the inaugural year of the program, twenty Taiwanese students (each with at least one year of work experience) and ten foreign students (four Central American students and one African student were awarded scholarships) are taking part.

IMBA program courses, taught by leading professors, include management, international finance, marketing, human resources and entrepreneurship. The program also includes professional seminars, and the option of either studying for one semester at a sister school overseas, or participating in an internship in a foreign company. Like the ITA program, the IMBA program is conducted in English. The combination of academic work, real-world training, practical experience, language instruction, and interaction with students from around the world in this program will broaden students' global business perspectives and deepen their academic and professional experiences.

Future Prospects

The NPUST Foreign Student Agriculture M.S. and Ph.D. Scholarship Program has assumed a prominent role in Taiwan's higher education system and in the ICDF's human resources training operations. The program has received accolades in Taiwan and abroad. Education at this level is yielding professionals with advanced expertise that have already brought important benefits to their home countries. The continued development of the program is an ICDF priority. The ICDF is similarly committed to the new National Chengchi University IMBA program.

In the future, schools participating in ICDF scholarship programs will expand their course options, providing students more diverse and flexible academic choices. The ICDF hopes to institute courses in technical management and the development of Taiwan's high-tech industries—areas in which Taiwan has abundant experience and a keen competitive advantage. Simultaneously, the ICDF is arranging for conversational Chinese courses to be included in the programs. With this training, students will return home possessing not only graduate and postgraduate degrees, but also the ability to communicate in Mandarin, which will strengthen their ties with ROC technical missions, educators and government. The ICDF looks forward to this fruitful and rewarding exchange.



NPUST Graduate Agricultural Science Program: Student Application

At the beginning of each year the ICDF, through the ITA, sends recruiting notices to ROC embassies overseas and the embassies of allied nations in the ROC. These institutions select and recommend suitable students and then send student application materials to NPUST. Applicant review begins in mid-May. A review committee examines each applicant's educational background and transcripts, résumé, research, published material, academic honors and English skills. The director of the ITA performs a telephone interview with each applicant before final acceptance into the program. Successful applicants are sent acceptance letters in June. The ICDF then requests ROC embassies to assist with student travel arrangements. Students are expected to arrive in Taiwan and enroll at the university in late August. The program begins in mid-September.

NPUST Graduate Agricultural Science Program: Student Performance

In addition to regular midterm and final examinations, the ITA implements a series of student evaluations based on students' academic performance and extracurricular activities. The results of these assessments are sent to the respective embassies in the ROC, and the student with the top academic performance receives a merit scholarship of NT\$10,000. All students with perfect attendance receive an award of NT\$5,000. Students in the program have generally displayed outstanding academic performance. The Chinese Agronomy Society began accepting scholarship applications from students in the NPUST program in the 2000 academic year. That year, the ITA recommended four students, and after rigorous review, the Society honored Belizean student Nerie T. Sanz with the Yu Yu-hsien Scholarship.