

Special Reports



2001 was an exciting and noteworthy year for the ICDF. In addition to marking its fifth anniversary in June, the organization participated in innovative programs allowing more Taiwanese citizens to contribute to its international development operations, deepened its humanitarian assistance efforts worldwide, continued to attack the roots of poverty in developing nations, and strengthened its educational programs.

Perhaps the most significant operational development in 2001 was the ICDF's participation in the Diplomatic Alternative Service program, the ROC's most concrete effort to date to realize the ideal of civilian-based diplomacy. The ICDF accepted responsibility for the professional and linguistic training of the first recruits in the program, and now manages their work in Africa, Central and South America and the Asia Pacific region. The launch of the Diplomatic Alternative Service program was truly a landmark in the ROC's cultural and diplomatic history.

In addition to the Diplomatic Alternative Service program, this year the ICDF Volunteers program trained its latest contingent of talented Taiwanese men and women, who are now working in overseas technical and medical service missions.

The ICDF in 2001 solidified its commitment to disaster relief and humanitarian assistance worldwide. In addition to providing urgently needed immediate disaster relief in Mongolia and post-disaster reconstruction in El Salvador and Peru, the ICDF for the first time formally included humanitarian aid funding in its annual budget, and contributed to the drafting of new laws which specifically incorporate "humanitarian concern" into ROC foreign aid goals. These developments will allow the ICDF to better respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises in the future.

One area of human development is consistently at the forefront of ICDF efforts: the alleviation of poverty. The ICDF employs a multifaceted poverty reduction strategy that includes rural and agricultural development, improved educational opportunities, modern medical care and facilities, provision of credit to enable business growth, and government institution capacity building to encourage democracy and citizen participation. Success in these undertakings will reduce poverty and improve social conditions, foster social and economic equality of opportunity, and maintain citizen rights.

Responding to the ever-growing need for high-level, skilled professionals, the ICDF this year expanded its educational cooperation with National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, and also teamed up with National Chengchi University on a graduate international business management program.

The special reports in this section examine these various ICDF international cooperation activities, all of which attest the ROC's commitment to the cultivation of a peaceful, thriving, equitable international environment. Through its work, the ICDF hopes to play a positive role in international affairs and realize the vision of "making the ROC a better place and reaching out to the world."