

New Approaches in International Human Resources Development

Strategic Alliances with Universities and Cooperation with Regional Governments

Human resources development programs play a vital role in assisting friendly countries to achieve sustainable development, and education is one of the crucial mechanisms in training work forces in developing countries. When the ICDF implements any cooperation project, it pays attention to education and training for program sustainability. The ICDF does this to ensure that its work will result in tangible long term benefits and help as many people as possible.

Strengthening international human resources through training and education is an important element in achieving the goal of economic transformation and upgrading. Unless locals are able to utilize theoretical and practical knowledge in cooperation projects, technical transfers are futile.

As times have changed, the ICDF has gradually adjusted and expanded its education and training operations. In the past, it focused purely on courses covering “The Taiwan Experience” and “Taiwan’s Competitive Advantages.” Each year, the ICDF holds a number of human resources development programs in various fields as well as international seminars and conferences to promote Taiwan’s economic and cultural diversity to the world.

In response to the government’s call for “People’s Diplomacy,” the ICDF is using innovation in its operations in order to generate increased participation. The ICDF has introduced two new strategies in designing specialized training: (1) Developing university strategic alliances (2) Strengthening cooperation with local governments.

I. Strategic Alliances with Universities

The ICDF’s program of strategic alliances with universities clearly meets the needs of the times. It provides more opportunities for people from cooperating countries to obtain greater resources and assistance and creates a winning situation for the ICDF, universities and society in general.

The initial concept behind university cooperation was to take advantage of the academic and research specialization of these schools, along with the expertise of their faculty. ICDF funding and professional project management for various programs would facilitate this. Both sides would benefit from the symbiotic relationship, and the combination of resources would create synergy. Academics would introduce an overview of Taiwan’s past policies, development experience and economic achievements in their curriculum, and graduate and postgraduate students from friendly countries would find it easier to adapt to such an arrangement. An added benefit of the program would be the creation of opportunities for students at universities to have the interaction with foreign people. That would nurture a more global view and a better understanding and acceptance of Taiwan’s international assistance work among students .

The program allows participating universities to put their research achievements into practice and it brings them into contact with international students and scholars. This promotes the international profile of the university and hastens the speed of the school’s internationalization. This helps to boost Taiwan’s educational standards and nurture lecturers who can



▲ Chairman Eugene Chien (Left) represents the ICDF in signing a mutual cooperation agreement with National Taiwan University



▲ Secretary General Yang (Right) signs a letter of intention with the Government of Tainan County

perform on an international scale. The university strategic alliance program adequately combines the advantages of both the domestic universities (which are constantly facing funding challenges) and the ICDF and serves as a prime example of strategic partnership.

II. The State of University Strategic Alliances

Since devising the concept of strategic alliances with universities, National Pingtung University of Science and Technology and National Chengchi University, were the first two institutions to cooperate with the ICDF in implementing two English scholarship programs: masters and doctoral degrees in Agriculture and the IMBA degree. To date, 20 graduates of these programs have received degrees from the Ministry of Education. This accomplishment has contributed enormously to attracting outstanding individuals from friendly countries to these programs.

Particularly, the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology is planning to redefine its mission to one that assists country development and hopes to become southern Taiwan's premier international agricultural university. This clearly indicates that the ICDF's university strategic alliances program is triggering action in the academic sector. The ICDF is eager to engage in further cooperation with the school and to pool resources to enlarge the scope of cooperation in areas such as sustainable development, agricultural upgrading and biotechnology.

In January 2002, the ICDF signed a contract with National Tsinghua University to conduct joint courses in technology management as a preparatory course for graduate studies. This initiative will extend the scope of the overall program into the high-tech industry.

In the future, the ICDF will continue to seek suitable university partners different specialization. It has already finalized a plan with National Taiwan Ocean University to launch a masters degree program



in 2003 for foreign students in the field of pisciculture and its management. The ICDF is also in negotiations with National Yang Ming University and National Tsinghua University on commencing a Public Health and Technology Management masters program. It also hopes to introduce, in the near future, a comprehensive scholarship and coursework program that will enable outstanding individuals from friendly countries to come to Taiwan to study, absorb the “Taiwan Experience” and take back the knowledge to their own countries.

III. Strategic Partnership with Local Governments

To some degree, cooperation with local governments rests on the same concept of integrating resources, as does the university strategic alliances plan. It also increases the opportunities for Taiwan’s population to understand and participate in the ICDF’s international cooperation and development

activities. The effects of Taiwan’s foreign assistance work will be augmented immeasurably as more and more people are willing to respond to the call for “People’s Diplomacy.”

IV. The State of Cooperation with Local Governments

The best way to understand Taiwan’s economic development is through interaction with the private sector. This interaction also helps our friends understand the local lifestyle, for experience at the grassroots level leaves a lasting impression on people. Therefore, to expand private sector participation in international assistance work and to increase the understanding of Taiwan among foreigners, the ICDF has drafted a local government cooperation strategy. This initiative will enable Taiwan citizens to have firsthand contact with foreigners and to increase exchanges with them.

Global trends indicate that joining forces on



a local level is highly rewarding. Since local governments supervise local affairs and are responsible for appropriating resources, they are naturally ideal cooperation partners for the ICDF. For their part, local governments have the opportunity to raise their international stature and image during interaction with foreigners. This creates a win-win situation.

In executing programs for study courses, the ICDF coordinates with local governments where feasible. For example, in 2002, the ICDF and the Tainan County Government jointly conducted a course on “Community Development and the Tourism Industry.” The success achieved by this course set the foundation for a cooperative relationship. The goal of the ICDF was to show how the local government and the public could collaborate to implement community based projects to promote the tourism industry. Thus, several distinctive communities in Tainan County were chosen to serve as the focus of the courses, and many field trips were coordinated. The many creative activities carried out during the plan bolstered the

relationship between the ICDF and the Tainan County Government.

Through the assistance of the Tainan County Government, course assignments called for direct involvement with the community. A committee of volunteers explained to the visitors how various policies had been implemented and what had been achieved. Such visits enabled the foreign visitors to view Taiwanese customs firsthand and experience the warmth of the local people, who showed us that they were quite happy to participate with regional authorities in such programs. Community residents helped a lot in many areas, including introducing local customs, showcasing regional dishes, and arranging accommodation and transportation. The results of this type of contact and interaction – a true illustration of “People’s Diplomacy” – far exceed those of other types of contact. The program left local residents with wonderful memories and created lasting appreciation among foreign visitors.

At the ceremony marking the end of the program, foreign visitors marveled at how much they



had derived from the courses. They thanked sponsoring bodies for their detailed planning and also expressed their appreciation to the people of Tainan County for their warm welcome. They asserted that the substantive experiences gained from visits throughout the county left a deep impression on them. A number of visitors said they are extremely willing to apply what they have learned about the “Taiwan Experience” in their future work.

At the end of the program, the Tainan County magistrate invited the 36 visiting scholars from 30 countries to sign an International Community Cooperation Proclamation with the Tainan County Government. The goals are to protect the local ecological environment, to develop local culture, and to promote interaction and study among residents in communities throughout the world. This proclamation further testifies to the significance of the ICDF’s cooperation with local governments and the expansion of public participation in international cooperation activities.

V. Looking Ahead

As a member of the global community, the ICDF will maintain a spirit of innovation in responding to the rapidly changing world. In the foreseeable future, the ICDF will continue to use knowledge based capacity building as a means of fostering sustainable development. It will also continue to expand cooperative relationships with domestic universities, in the hope that it can provide better rounded educational opportunities to individuals from friendly countries.

Strengthening cooperation with local governments not only boosts understanding among people from different countries, but also raises the profile of local governments and their residents. The ICDF will continue to implement the strategy of cooperation with local governments, as it enables Taiwan’s unique culture to be appreciated by a wider part of the global community.