Workshops Share the Taiwan Experience with Partner Countries

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The quality of a country's human resources has always played a crucial role in its economic growth and sustainable development. However, the skill sets required of human resources can vary and evolve over time. The different stages of economic development, increases or decreases in productivity, technological progress and transformations in the economic structure affect the quantity and qualities demanded of human resources. Education plays a key role in enabling a country's workforce to acquire the skills needed in a changing environment.

Taiwan is an instructive example: Starting as an agriculture-based economy, it industrialized, and then moved into the service industry sector, which eventually accounted for over 65% of the country's GDP. Now, it is fast becoming a knowledge-based economy. Economists and pundits have labeled the growth experienced during this transition an "economic miracle" and posited the education and training of Taiwan's human resources, to meet the practical demands of the labor market, as one of the principal factors.

An Appropriate Motto
So it followed that, on its establishment in 1996, the TaiwanICDF adopted the maxim of the "Taiwanese Experience" as the core principle of its international human resource development operations. It was hoped that, by sharing Taiwan's successful experience in economic development, the Fund could assist partner countries in cultivating human talent to foster economic and social development.

To this end, the TaiwanICDF conducts an International Workshops program, which offers short-term training to officials and professionals from partner countries, and serve to share Taiwan's strengths in economic growth with those nations.

The TaiwanICDF annually conducts 15-20 short-term workshops for a period of 2-3 weeks. The participants include government officers, academic instructors, development practitioners, and key individuals from the private sector. The workshops cover areas such as trade, economy, health, agriculture, fisheries, and information and communication technology. Besides working as forums for the cultivation of talented personnel, they also enhance exchanges and bilateral relations with partner countries.

Advances in Agriculture
In recent years, technological advances have improved agricultural methods around the world. To reflect these changes and share Taiwan's know-how in this sphere, the TaiwanICDF began holding a Workshop on Agricultural Policy Development and Management in 2000.

As well as offering participants an insight into crucial technological breakthroughs, the workshop introduces Taiwan's successful experience in agricultural development, and seeks to convey ideas on the implementation of strategies to achieve similar results. Since its inception, this workshop has proved immensely popular due, in part, to the fact that agriculture remains the main economic activity in the countries of many of the participants.

The July Package passed by the WTO in July 2004 had a great impact on the agricultural trade of developing nations, where most farmers engage in small-scale farming. The Workshop on Agricultural Policy Development and Management reflects these important international policy frameworks and initiatives by covering topics such as agricultural product development. Participants are instructed in methods of adapting to the WTO trading environment based on Taiwan's experience.

The application of WTO policies has heightened competition, meaning that Taiwan has had to face challenges posed by lower production costs in newly emerging economies. To offset the effect of this, Taiwan adopted the strategy of launching high quality agricultural products in the domestic market, while expanding its export volume to the global market.

Since its accession to the WTO, Taiwan's government has adopted the slogan "Variety, Quality and Brand" to represent a policy under which agriculture is no longer just farming but a combination of technology with corporate management systems. Today, Taiwan's agricultural products are known for their diversity and high-end quality. "Made-in-Taiwan" is now synonymous with "world-class."

Narrowing the ICT gap
Information communication technology (ICT) has eliminated the distance barrier to rapid communications. In this field, Taiwan is a world-renowned source of electronic devices, in particular notebook computers and semiconductors.

But one of the consequences of globalization has been an increase in the digital divide between nations. To combat this widening chasm, the TaiwanICDF has organized a Workshop on Bridging the Digital Divide, which aims to share Taiwan's ICT expertise with friendly nations.

The workshop focuses on such fields as e-government, the creation of incubation centers, policy-making, and e-business. It also attempts to assist participants with the implementation of ICT policies in their countries, since most participants are officials or personnel in positions to promote such policies. Finally, the workshop acts as a platform for participants to interact with Taiwan's ICT experts and industrial leaders, thereby fostering business opportunities.

To underline its commitment in this area, the TaiwanICDF cooperated with the Ministry of Education to hold the "2007 ICT For A Better Education - Taiwan Experience" conference from November 16-18, 2007. Thirty-four education and technology officials attended from 13 participating countries including Palau, Swaziland, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Britain, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. They discussed future cooperative ventures in ICT education.

A New Breed of Trade Policy Experts
Globalization has brought about free trade and regional economic integration - the dominant trends in world trade. Product personalization and efficient delivery have also become important conditions in maintaining strong trade relations. It is important that countries working to build improved trade infrastructure, and develop the skills required of the personnel in this field, stay in step with these trends.

To this end, the TaiwanICDF conducts a Workshop on WTO Trade Facilitation. One of the main targets of this workshop is to assist partner countries in the training of trade policy experts.
The concept of trade facilitation was first proposed at a WTO meeting in 1996. However, at the time, developing nations expressed doubts regarding its feasibility. Using Taiwan as a model, this workshop encourages participants to rise to the challenge, and discuss the implementation issues they face in their countries.

As well as the basic topic of trade itself, this intensive two-week workshop includes lectures and instruction on customs regulations, security, logistics, online services and one-stop windows.

In particular, the "Paperless Procedure" component has proved a favorite among participants, not only because it depicts the path Taiwan took to the development of its e-services, but also because attendees learn how advanced technology can be employed to respond to nationwide calamities and natural disasters.

Healthy Cooperation Initiatives
Medical administration is a relatively recent field of study. Advances in the theory and application of this subject have increased its importance and relevance to developing countries. The TaiwanICDF has made it a goal to support partners in their development drive in this area.

With this in mind, in 2007, the TaiwanICDF held a Workshop on Healthcare Management to assist partner countries in training medical management personnel in the design and practical use of modern medical infrastructure. The workshop also served to open up a new channel for international development cooperation since medical management training is one of the most direct ways of providing humanitarian assistance.

Many of the countries in question do not have highly-developed medical infrastructures. Taiwan's redoubtable track record in the implementation of advanced medical care systems and facilities, plus its national health insurance, which covers almost the entire population, are important points of reference that can be shared with partner countries.

A Vital Investment
Human resource development always entails an investment - an investment that ultimately leads to a better standard of living in the nations undertaking it. This was the path that Taiwan - an island lacking in natural resources - followed on its way to development.

The expertise, know-how and overall experience Taiwan has garnered over the years are advantages the TaiwanICDF wants to share with partner countries. To do this, the TaiwanICDF focuses on the importance of education and human resource training in the sustainable development of these countries.

The Fund positions itself as an "active conveyor" of innovative ideas and projects packaged into educational courses for the cultivation of human talent. There are plans to extend the scope of the organization's International Workshops program in the future, as well as the level of cooperation with NGOs, to further disseminate the "Taiwan Experience" and to forge strong links with the international community.

Influences:
Basically ICT has brought about a couple of benefits in the agriculture sector, close up the digital divide, enhance trade industries and assists people in areas of medical field. All in all, its has help Taiwan to move from their agriculture-based economy to a industrialise one, then as information communication become more prevalent and convenient, Taiwan will gradually transform into a knowledge-based economy.

Public opinions:
Workshops use Taiwan as a model to educate the importance and usage of ICT in a country or company.

Personal opinion:
This shows how ICT assist Taiwan in transforming into a developed country with a knowledge-based economy. Its has also emphasized the need to spread the use of ICT through education and human resource training. Constantly re-inventing and upgrading skills and attracting strong foreign investor is probably the path that Taiwan should take in the long term.

Reference:
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