

Industry note: The introduction of International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training

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Biographical notes: Jack Kuei-son Sheu serves as the Director of International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training. He also serves as a Counsellor of Council of Agriculture in Taiwan.

1 Introduction

At the second World Land Reform Conference in Rome in 1966, the representative from the Republic of China (Taiwan) presented the land reform experience from 1949 to 1953 in Taiwan. This presentation earned high recognition from the participants from the various countries.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (LILP), USA, for the purpose of understanding Taiwan's peaceful and gradual land reform programs, jointly held a seminar with Taiwan government. After the seminar, Taiwan Government and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in USA signed an agreement to jointly establish the Land Reform Training Institute (LRTI) in 1968. The LTRI was renamed to International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training (ICLPST) in 2000. Since its inception, the centre has been an independent, non-profit international training institute. The ICLPST is financed mainly by the Council of Agriculture of ROC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and LILP finances partial training program now.

2 Mission

The mission for the ICLPST is to help developing countries train their people in the fields of agriculture, urban and rural development by basing on Taiwan's land reform experiences. The agriculture policy and related topics were further introduced to interested countries in recent years. In addition, the international cooperation projects in agriculture were also provided to friendly countries so as to improve their people's living standard.

It is devoted to providing training opportunities for government officials, professionals, and others who take interests in land, agriculture, tax policies, as well as rural and urban development, to promote the understanding of distributing benefits on land ownership through peaceful and democratic means.

3 Organisation structure

The organisational structure is three-tiered, composed of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and the Administrative Office. The Board of Directors is the centre's guiding unit, which formulates general policies of the centre and approves its annual programs and budget. The Chair and Co-chair are appointed respectively by the COA, Taiwan, and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, USA. The Board members are nominated by both sides.

The Executive Committee oversees curriculum development, supervises programs, and provides advice on the annual budget and is responsible for the selection of participants and faculty members. Currently, it has seven members, with its Chair and Co-chair appointed respectively by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the COA. The Administrative Office is headed by the director, who formulates and presents the annual programs and the budget to the Board through the Executive Committee. There are Training and Administration Divisions to executive and manage the entire budget under the director.

4 Training achievements

The ICLPST's core business is international trainings, which includes three categories by funding sources:

- 1 Co-sponsored regular session: It adapts to international trends over the years by adjusting its themes and duration. Presently, the centre runs four regular sessions every year, each on Land Policy for Sustainable Rural Development, Land Taxation and Valuation, Infrastructure Development and Planning, and Agricultural Development and Policy, respectively.
- 2 Project and training sponsored by the ROC Government: for instance, two seminars supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Geographical Information System and Land Management, and on Knowledge-based Economy and City Competitiveness.
- 3 International training commissioned by foreign countries: for instance, agricultural technology cooperation projects for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, agricultural extension for Brunei, sustainable agricultural development for Vietnam, etc.

The course typically comprises the following parts: lecture, discussions, country presentation, international experience exchange, and field trips to related public and private sectors as well as cultural activities.

Since the first course in 1969, there have been 148 regular sessions and 450 other sessions and workshops, drawing 18,300 participants from 134 countries. We also have established a platform for international exchanges and cooperation in agriculture participants from countries around the world. It can substantially share expertise and experiences with the participants and their countries as well.

5 General affairs

The centre provides comprehensive services and assistance to participants to make their training and life at the centre easier and more colourful.

In aspect of extracurricular activities, the centre arranges classes like Discover Taiwan and Mandarin Conversation. So, the government officials and scholars from participating countries may get a taste of Taiwan's culture and local customs. Learning some simple Chinese conversation would also help participants adapt themselves easily to local living. Besides, the centre arranges get-together parties and sports games for the four-week regular sessions. All participants enjoy their time at these activities and build up precious friendship between one another, and which also relieve them of their homesickness for being far away from home and make Taiwan their second home.

In aspect of daily life assistance, the centre provides information and assistance in transportation between airport and the centre, visa check, return ticket confirmation, meals, medical assistance, contact with embassies/representative offices in Taiwan, religious needs, and travel information. As a tradition, the centre also arranges a colleague who speaks fluent English to be on duty, to provide services and assistance to participants in time of need.

6 Building and facilities

The building of the ICLPST has a history over 50 years. Many parts and interior attachments have taken some wear and tear as time goes by. In hope of keeping up with the modern practicality and enhancing the accommodation quality and convenience, the centre works very hard on the maintenance and repair of the aged building phase by phase with its allocated budget.

The overall building of the dormitory was renovated in 2011. Recently, the centre has been updating and repairing those dilapidated facilities in the dormitory, laundry room, kitchen and canteen. As the centre now provides only two meals, breakfast and lunch, during the weekdays to the participants, which increases the participant's need in self-catering. To make the participants' stay easier, the centre has improved safety and efficiency for administrative work, telecommunication and surveillance systems covering the whole campus. In order to improve our sport facilities for participants, we have redecorated our third floor, which is equipped with pool table, table tennis, fitness equipment and exercise facilities for participants.

7 Future of the ICLPST

Entering the 21st century, the centre has made significant breakthroughs in training with the support of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in the USA, the ROC Council of Agriculture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Development Council. Presently the training has already expanded from courses on land-related themes to agriculture-related local and international courses, which has yielded abundantly. During the past few years of difficult pandemic situation, the centre also adjusted its training program to reach our participants through online platform. In the

early stage of online courses, there were indeed many problems to be overcome. In addition to the fact that the participants are seriously interrupted by other affairs during the training period, related examinations, exercises and real-time seminars all affect the willingness of countries to participate and respond. In reference to the implementation of online training in 2022, the platform will change to Google Classroom, which provides participants with easier and quicker login. They can link, on a single webpage, to lecture videos, assignment homework, test and virtual meeting, etc.

Projecting into the future, the centre shall keep its founding spirit and make continuing efforts in the following areas:

- 1 Acting as a platform for the sharing of professional knowledge and experience in land and agricultural policy.
- 2 Helping train participating countries' officials in land and agriculture through sharing Taiwan's experiences in land policy, rural and urban development, as a way to contribute to the international community.
- 3 Sharing Taiwan's public and private sectors' agricultural development experiences and achievements with course participants to upgrade Taiwan's global image.