

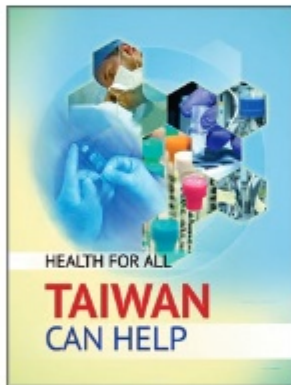


HEALTH FOR ALL

TAIWAN CAN HELP

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Let Taiwan In

Health is integral to quality of life, which is why the World Health Organization (WHO) considers the highest attainable standard of wellness to be a fundamental human right. According to the WHO, enshrining health as a right means related protections apply “equally, to all people, everywhere, without distinction.” Both state and nonstate actors bear a responsibility to uphold the principle of nondiscrimination, which notably encompasses freedom from profiling based on national origin. Yet the WHO, one of the biggest advocates of incorporating the right to health into international law, continues to shut Taiwan out of its activities, mechanisms and meetings. This exclusion not only runs counter to the organization’s professed beliefs, but also hinders the country’s ability to safeguard its 23 million people.

By definition rights do not need to be earned, and even if they did, Taiwan would have long since demonstrated its worthiness for a seat at the WHO table. The country has one of the best health systems in the world, ranking an impressive second out of 89 countries and territories evaluated in CEOWORLD magazine’s 2021 Health Care Index. The government-run National Health

Insurance covers all citizens and legal residents and can be used at roughly 92 percent of medical institutions nationwide, including all hospitals, 92 percent of primary clinics and 82 percent of pharmacies. Premiums are based on income, with payments divided between the insured, employers and the government. Combined with low copayments and additional subsidies for disadvantaged groups, the system ensures comprehensive, high-quality care is accessible to the entire population. The country is more than willing to share its domestic successes and best practices with international partners to help them enhance their own systems.

Despite being locked out of the world’s preeminent health body, Taiwan seizes every possible opportunity to engage in related multilateral exchanges. Last August, then-Deputy Health Minister Shih Chung-liang (石崇良) represented the country at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation’s High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy in Bangkok, Thailand, and shared key areas for investment to better prepare for future pandemics. Two months later, the 2022 Global Health and Welfare Forum in Taiwan invited experts to discuss addressing the world’s greatest health challenges through international unity, with over

1,000 people taking part online or in-person from Taipei City.

At the same time, the International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF), Taiwan’s foremost foreign aid organization, carries out a range of health missions in diplomatic allies and friendly nations. A TaiwanICDF project to enhance maternal and infant care in the Kingdom of Eswatini, for example, in selected hospitals the project has reduced the early neonatal mortality rate significantly.

The country has also opened its doors to people seeking care that is unavailable or unaffordable at home. In 2019 alone, before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down global travel, over 400,000 overseas individuals sought medical treatment in Taiwan. The country reopened to international patients in March 2021 and to all tourists in October 2022.

Health transcends borders, and Taiwan has thoroughly proven its readiness to help safeguard the well-being of world citizens. It is well past time for the WHO to acknowledge the hypocrisy of the continued ban and admit that the full inclusion of every stakeholder is the only way to attain its overarching goal of Health For All. To prove that well-being is truly a universal right, let Taiwan in. Members of the global community only stand to gain. ■

Ready and Able

Minister of Health and Welfare Hsueh Jui-yuan (薛瑞元) discusses Taiwan's medical achievements and why the country deserves greater participation in global health.

Taiwan is committed to helping the international community attain the highest possible standard of health. What is the government doing to advance this goal?

Hsueh Jui-yuan: The Ministry of Health and Welfare [MOHW] is key to Taiwan's ambitious role as a force for good through its implementation of projects with global impact. One such endeavor is Taiwan International Health Action [TaiwanIHA], which is jointly run with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The initiative provides training and aid where it's needed most, with the Taiwan International Healthcare Training Center providing professional development in areas like clinical medicine and health care management for foreign medical personnel since 2002. More than 2,000 health workers from 77 countries have taken advantage of the opportunity to date.

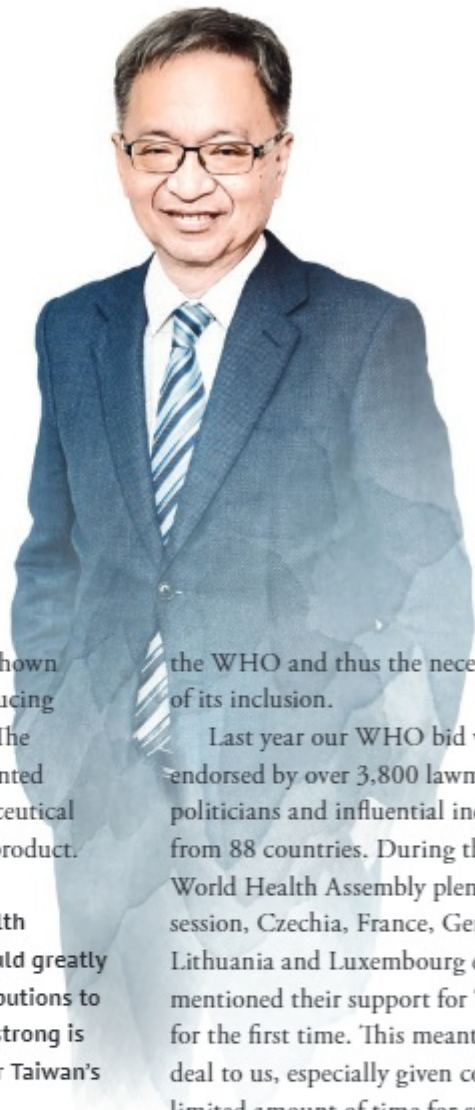
Only when all stakeholders can directly engage in the organization's meetings, mechanisms and activities can the WHO's goal of Health For All truly be realized.

TaiwanIHA particularly targets the Pacific, where it provides health services in six nations. The Taiwan Health Center operated by the MOHW's Shuang Ho Hospital in the Marshall Islands, for example, has given locals regular diabetes screenings since 2015 to help combat one of the country's biggest health threats. The hospital additionally offers internships to Marshallese medical graduates who complete their studies in Taiwan.

Taiwan is also sharing its know-how in South and Southeast Asia through the MOHW's "One Country, One Center" project launched in 2018. Under the initiative, 10 Taiwan medical centers train personnel from seven partner countries while enhancing cooperation with counterparts in those regions.

Taiwan's nongovernmental organizations [NGOs] play a major role in facilitating health care exchanges with other countries. Can you elaborate on this?

Hsueh: The ministry supports global health by funding NGO projects and overseas visits, including the 2019 Taiwan Medical Women's Association [TMWA] trip to New York City to attend the triennial International Congress of the Medical Women's International Association. At the meeting marking the organization's 100th anniversary, TMWA successfully won the bid for Taiwan to host the event in 2022, setting in motion a decisive opportunity for the country to expand medical exchanges. The ministry also backs Taiwan Global Healthcare Association's Global Medical Model Award with the goal of inspiring others to follow in recipients' footsteps.



Hsueh Jui-yuan

Taiwan has a robust medical research sector. How does this benefit the country's partners?

Hsueh: One recent success is a new vaccine protecting against enterovirus 71, a deadly infectious disease that is a persistent health issue in Taiwan and the rest of Asia. The homegrown vaccine is the result of more than 10 years of work by National Health Research Institutes and locally based Enimmune Corp. It's expected to save countless lives when it enters domestic and overseas markets.

Another opportunity to share our research arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the MOHW's National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine [NRCM] developed an herbal medicine that effectively prevents further progression of symptoms in mild or moderate cases. The therapeutic, called NRICM101, is now available in over 60 countries worldwide. A variation for severe cases

called NRICM102 has shown significant results in reducing patient mortality rates. The ministry has already granted approval to one pharmaceutical company to export the product.

Access to the World Health Organization [WHO] would greatly enhance Taiwan's contributions to global well-being. How strong is international support for Taiwan's inclusion in the WHO?

Hsueh: Being locked out of the WHO blocks us from participating in discussions on WHO reform and joining the global response to future pandemics. This runs counter to the organization's goal of building a more resilient world. Taiwan's work to battle disease and promote health worldwide—including the provision of essential medical equipment and supplies to other countries at the height of the pandemic—clearly demonstrates its worthiness to

the WHO and thus the necessity of its inclusion.

Last year our WHO bid was endorsed by over 3,800 lawmakers, politicians and influential individuals from 88 countries. During the 2022 World Health Assembly plenary session, Czechia, France, Germany, Lithuania and Luxembourg explicitly mentioned their support for Taiwan for the first time. This meant a great deal to us, especially given countries' limited amount of time for spoken statements.

I'm deeply grateful to Taiwan's allies and like-minded partners for their staunch backing. Taiwan continues to strengthen substantive ties with friendly nations while cultivating support for its participation in the global health body. Only when all stakeholders can directly engage in the organization's meetings, mechanisms and activities can the WHO's goal of Health For All truly be realized. ■

—interview by Oscar Chung

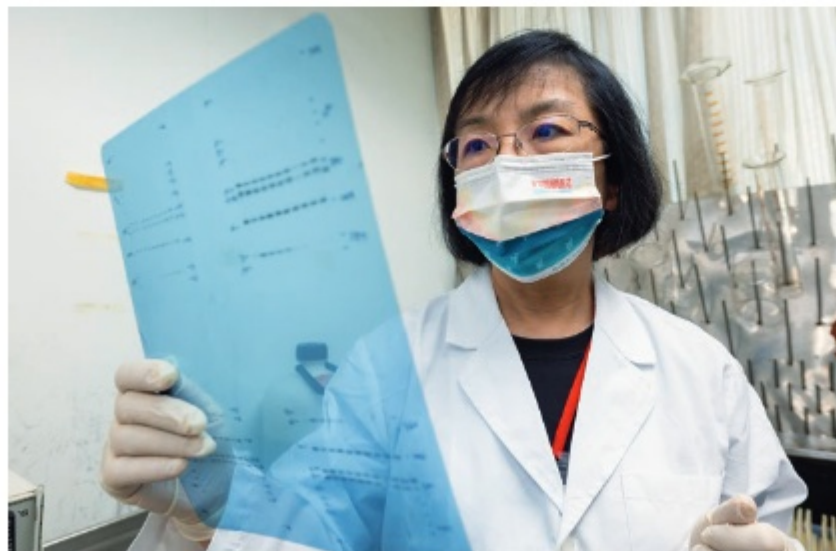
Empowering Women

Women are making greater contributions to the traditionally male-dominated medical and health industries.

By Kelly Her

Women in Taiwan have gained significant ground in the medical and health fields in recent decades thanks to concerted efforts by the public and private sectors to empower, promote and support female professionals. As a result, the proportion of female doctors practicing Western medicine in Taiwan has seen a steady increase from 10.4 percent in 2000 to 15.8 percent in 2010 and 21.2 percent in 2021, according to figures compiled by Taiwan Medical Association in Taipei City.

Anya Lin, chair of the Society of Taiwan Women in Science and Technology based in Taipei City, works to advance gender parity in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields to create stronger innovation ecosystems. (Chen Mei-Ling)



Anya Lin (林滿玉), dean of the College of Pharmaceutical Sciences at National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University's Taipei campus, is one such professional committed to forging a culture of equality. She works to boost inclusion as chair of the Society of Taiwan Women in Science and Technology (TWiST), a Taipei-based nonprofit that aims to build a better future through participation of girls and women in all aspects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Established in 2011, TWiST strives to encourage more women to enter these fields by offering grants, seminars and mentorship programs. The organization is a member of Canada-headquartered International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists and joined the U.N.'s HeForShe campaign launched in 2014 to increase the involvement of men and boys in the fight for gender equity.

Greater economic inclusion of women is also high on the agenda of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, whose Business Efficiency and Success Target Award seeks to encourage the



spread of best practices by women-owned small and medium enterprises across member economies. Among recent winners is Taiwan's Yang Shu-chen (楊淑貞), president of Huijia Health Life Technology Co. headquartered in the northern county of Hsinchu. Yang was recognized in the Fourth Industrial Revolution Project category in 2021 for her company's artificial intelligence-based smart health care system utilizing noninvasive fiber-optic physiological monitoring technology. Rather than emitting electromagnetic waves, it uses a high-sensitivity and high-precision sensor that can monitor and track blood pressure, breathing, heart rate and sleep, as well as COVID-19 symptoms like coughing and difficulty breathing, for round-the-clock health and safety management.

"My motivation in starting a business was to address social problems with innovative technologies," Yang said. "I was particularly concerned with challenges presented by rapidly aging populations, such as increased medical spending. My company's mission is to improve health care access, quality and affordability." Currently,



Huijia's products and services are used in more than 300 child and senior care facilities, hospitals and nursing homes.

Lin and Yang are just two of many women from Taiwan making substantial contributions to the health care industry and serving as role models for young girls keen to pursue degrees and careers in science and technology. "Advancing gender parity in STEM can enhance diversity of thought and forge stronger innovation ecosystems," Lin said. "It's also vital for achieving sustainable development goals." ■

Yang Shu-chen, president of Huijia Health Life Technology Co. headquartered in northern Taiwan's Hsinchu County, showcases her company's smart care film, which utilizes noninvasive monitoring technology. (Chen Mei-ling)

Healthy Futures For All

Taiwan leverages its medical expertise to strengthen the global health network.

By Pat Gao

“**T**aiwan Can Help” is more than just a slogan; it is an attitude that results in real change and deeply affects how lives at home and abroad are improved through Taiwan’s healthcare prowess.

Taiwan took early, effective action to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and received global recognition for this. While local people were vigilant in taking protective measures, credit for the country’s pandemic control, treatment and recovery is largely due to the universal health insurance system managed by the National Health Insurance (NHI) Administration under the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW). Launched in 1995, the NHI system offers easy, affordable access to both Western and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). During the pandemic, the NHI ensured fair and convenient distribution of medical masks for citizens nationwide and provided quarantined individuals with quality care as well as other critical services.

Taiwan’s expertise in comprehensive health services and disease control are evidenced by the country’s wide-ranging



international outreach programs. A prime example is the work of the Taiwan International Healthcare Training Center (TIHTC). Founded in 2002 by the MOHW and administered by Taipei Hospital in New Taipei City, the center offers training classes in a variety of fields ranging from clinical medicine and TCM to health care management. Over the past two decades, more than 2,000 health professionals from 77

Taiwan International Healthcare Training Center has assisted over 2,000 health professionals from all over the world including Harsh Mahesh Jakheta, front center, a dermatopathologist from India. (Courtesy of Ministry of Health and Welfare)

countries have completed courses. Among the trainees was Harsh Mahesh Jakheta, a dermatopathologist from India. “I’d really like to thank TIHTC for giving me such a valuable training



The Maternal and Infant Health Care Improvement Project in the Kingdom of Eswatini helps expand healthcare capacity for pregnant women and newborns throughout Taiwan's African ally. (Courtesy of TaiwanICDF)

Taiwan's National Health Insurance system ensures fair and convenient distribution of medical masks for citizens nationwide during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Chin Hung-hao)



experience,” he said. “Everything I’ve learned during my training reinforces my professional skills.”

An outreach program critical to future health is the Maternal and Infant Health Care Improvement Project in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Launched in 2016 in Taiwan’s African ally, the initiative seeks to provide comprehensive care to vulnerable pregnant women from the start of pregnancy through delivery to postnatal care. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)-backed

International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) is working with Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital and Chiayi Christian Hospital in eastern and southern Taiwan, respectively, to carry out the project’s goals. As of the end of 2022, 617 nurses and midwives have taken part in 21 local training programs, and the infant mortality rate has dropped significantly.

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia last year, Taiwan was quick to not only voice support, but also take concrete action through the MOFA and nongovernmental organizations. The response included donations of cash and medical supplies to the eastern European country’s health care institutions such as Zaporizhzhia Regional Clinical Children’s Hospital and the Scientific and Practical Medical Center of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, also known as Ukrainian Children’s Cardiac Center.

As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan is ready, willing and able to make practical contributions to the world and help shape a better, brighter and healthier future for all. ■

Committed to Help

Through government agencies and civic groups, Taiwan provides medical and health care assistance, as well as humanitarian aid, to allies and partner countries around the globe.

民主夥伴 共榮之旅

Meeting Democratic Partners, Fostering Shared Prosperity



2023.03.29-04.07



Taiwan Foreign Minister Jaushieh Joseph Wu, left, presents a model of San Pedro General Hospital to Belize Minister of Health and Wellness, Kevin Bernard, second right, during President Tsai Ing-wen's state visit to the ally. The health facility is the result of a memorandum of understanding signed by the two countries on construction. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)

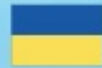


On her state visit to Guatemala, President Tsai Ing-wen, accompanied by Guatemala President Alejandro Eduardo Giammattei Falla, visits the National Hospital of Chimaltenango and attends the donation and handover ceremony for the newly completed Taiwan-funded hospital in the Central American ally. (courtesy of ROC)





#StandWithUkraine



Shipments of generators arrive in Ukraine (right and opposite). "Friends are helping us to survive the harshest winter," tweets Ukrainian parliamentarian Kira Rudik, second right (opposite). (Courtesy of Kira Rudik)



Taiwan's Humanitarian Support for Ukraine

- US\$57.8 million of donations for Ukrainian refugees
- 705 tons of medical supplies, relief items and essential goods
- US\$56 million allocated for continuous humanitarian aid and reconstruction



Donations to medical institutions including Zaporizhzhia Regional Clinical Children's Hospital and Ukrainian Children's Cardiac Center help save lives.

(Courtesy of Zaporizhzhia Regional Clinical Children's Hospital and Ukrainian Children's Cardiac Center)



Taiwan Representative to Lithuania Eric Huang, center (above) works with the Lithuanian Red Cross to provide stored-value shopping cards (above right) for Ukrainian refugees. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

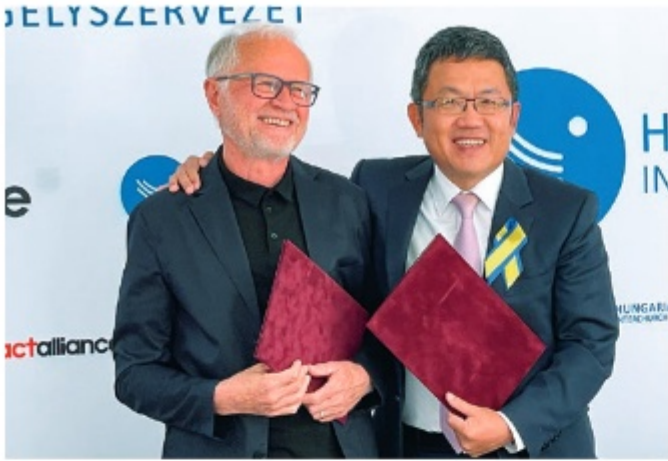


Taiwan Representative to Latvia Andrew H. C. Lee, right, signs an agreement including a donation of US\$1 million with Chairperson Ruta Dimanta of Latvia charity organization Ziedot, to help the displaced Ukrainians sheltering in Latvia. (MOFA)



A Taiwan-donated ambulance (right) prepares to head toward Ukraine through the help of Taiwan Representative to Slovakia Lee Nan-Yang, who, left (above) hands over a shipment of relief items for Ukrainian refugees to Gabor Grendel, deputy speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. (MOFA)





Taiwan Representative to Hungary Liu Shih-chung, right, works with Hungarian Interchurch Aid to offer a donation of US\$1.5 million for Ukrainian refugees. (MOFA)



Taiwan Representative to Poland Bob L.J. Chen, second left, hands over a shipment of medical supplies to the country's Government Strategic Reserves Agency to be forwarded to Ukraine. (MOFA)



(Left) Czechia Senate President Milos Vystrcil, second left, and humanitarian organization People In Need Director Simon Panek, first right, meet with Taiwan Representative to Czechia Ke Liang-ruey, first left, to express appreciation for Taiwan's supporting Ukraine.

(Below) Taiwan works with the Czechia Red Cross to equip a mobile clinic for Ukrainian refugees. (MOFA)



Pray for TÜRKIYE





Two Taiwan search and rescue teams immediately head to Türkiye following the magnitude 7.4 earthquake that hit the southern province of Kahramanmaraş Feb. 6 this year. The donation of disaster relief equipment to Türkiye's AKUT Search and Rescue Association on the completion of the Taiwan teams' mission is witnessed by Taiwan Representative to Türkiye Volkan C. Y. Huang, front row, fourth left (opposite).
(Courtesy of National Fire Agency, Ministry of the Interior)





One with the world, Taiwan responds



A Taiwan Technical Mission organized by the International Cooperation and Development Fund (Taiwan ICDF), Taiwan's foremost foreign aid organization, carries out a maternal and infant health care improvement project in the Kingdom of Eswatini. (Courtesy of Taiwan ICDF)





Taiwan/CDF's maternal and infant health care improvement project in Somaliland has effectively reduced the country's maternal and infant mortality rate in selected hospitals.
(Courtesy of Taiwan/CDF)

Taiwan/CDF and the Good Neighbors Taiwan, an international humanitarian development nongovernmental organization, work together to provide psycho-social support to Ukrainian refugee children in Romania.
(Courtesy of Simon Chang)





Health for All

Taiwan can help



THE DOCTOR IS IN