



# TZU CHI FOUNDATION

The medical staff takes good care of a baby boy in a reconstructed medical station.

1997/2 • Wang Chih-hung

In Ethiopia, the oldest independent nation in Africa, secessionist movements and consecutive years of drought allowed hunger and disease to rule the land.

The highlands of Menz and Gishe Awraja, three hundred kilometers north of the national capital, Addis Ababa, had long been a battleground due to their strategic significance. The ravages of war had completely destroyed the health system in the area, leaving the sick with no one to turn to, save perhaps a witch doctor.

In January 1993, Tzu Chi joined hands with Medecins du Monde to implement a three-year plan to rebuild the medical network in the Menz and Gishe Awraja highland areas in North Shoa Province. The plan included building two medical centers and fourteen health clinics to provide medical services for the 347,000 people living in the area.

In the belief of "locals serving locals," Tzu Chi provided on-the-job training for three hundred local medical personnel. At the same time, fifteen water tanks were built at ten villages and health clinics to protect clean water sources. Water pipes were then laid to bring the water to the villages, where villagers simply used water taps at supply stations to receive clean water. The villagers were finally spared from having to walk long distances to get ground water that was contaminated and increased the risk of contracting diseases. The plan workers also promoted preventative medicine, surveyed local sanitary and health conditions, and monitored the nutritional and health conditions of the children.

From the beginning, the reconstruction plan placed great emphasis on local communication and involvement. Local health officials and residents were asked to participate in the drafting and execution of the plan. Only when the residents regarded the plan as a joint effort with the community



# AFRICA

## Ethiopia

### Medical system destroyed by war

Project time: January 1993-present

Aid provided: Reconstruction of medical establishment and training for medical personnel

could they develop a sense of identity with it. At the same time, local involvement helped the community to develop the ability to maintain and operate the plan on their own.

The three-year plan achieved results that won the recognition of the Ethiopian government, and it also became the model for reconstruction projects in other parts of the country. Furthermore, in an internal evaluation made by MDM, the project was ranked as the most successful of the long-term development projects they were implementing around the world.

In October 1998, Tzu Chi again worked with MDM to implement a two-year plan to rebuild a hospital in Debre Birhan, the capital of the North Shoa region. The hospital, built by the invading Italian army fifty-seven years ago, was the sole source of medical care for a population of almost two million. The plan included building operating rooms, delivery rooms, a blood storage room and lavatories, renovating ward buildings, building an operation station for the x-ray machine, and providing on-the-job training for medical personnel. The rebuilt hospital is scheduled to be inaugurated in June 2000.

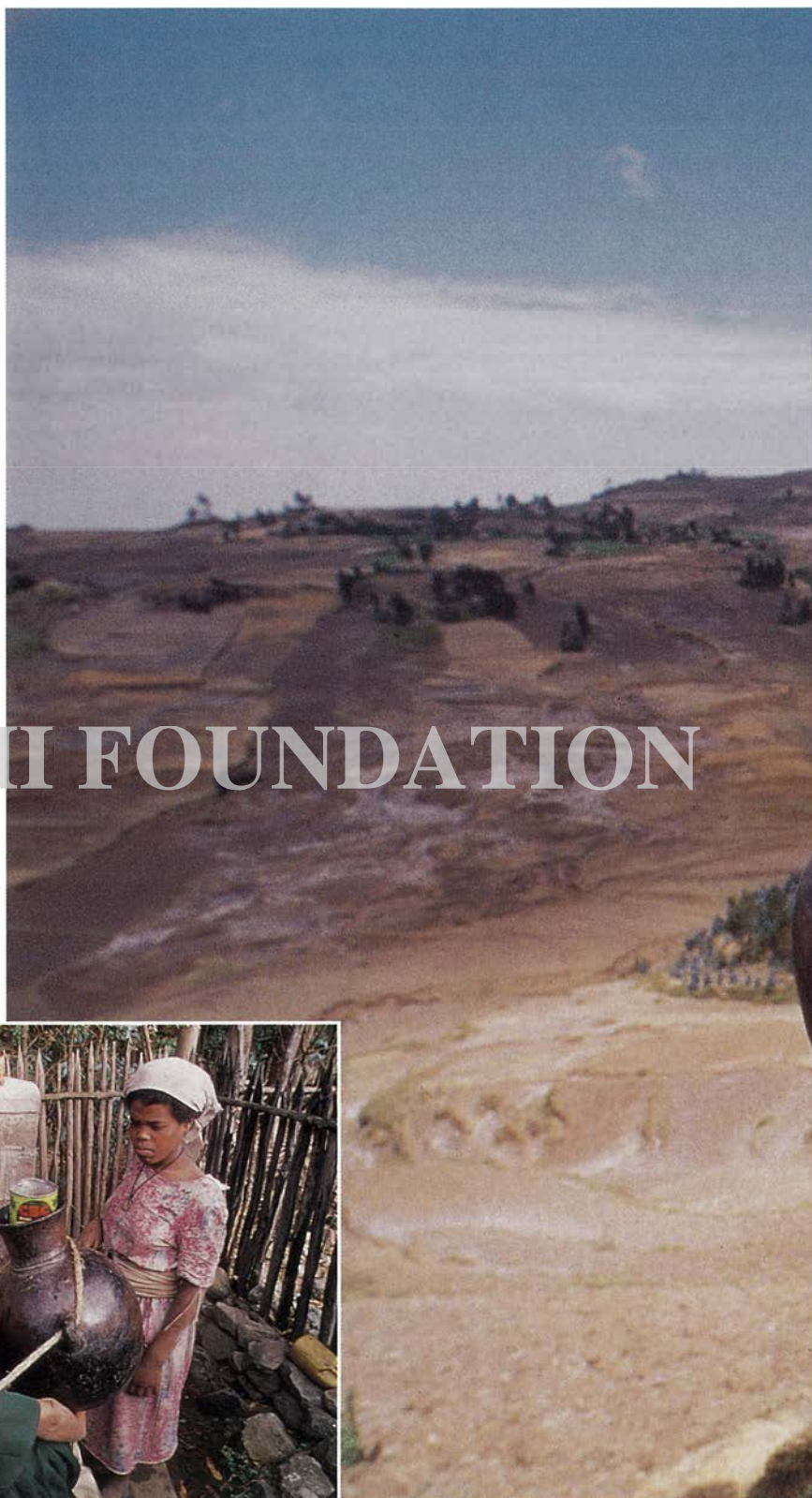
Reflecting on its long-term cooperation with Tzu Chi, Philippe Leveque, deputy executive director of MDM, said, "Although we come from different countries and speak different languages, we are working together in the hope of saving one more life in Africa."

The highlanders routinely trek ten to twenty kilometers to fetch water, which is open-air and often causes gastro-intestinal diseases. One of Tzu Chi's assistance to these people was to develop safe drinking water.

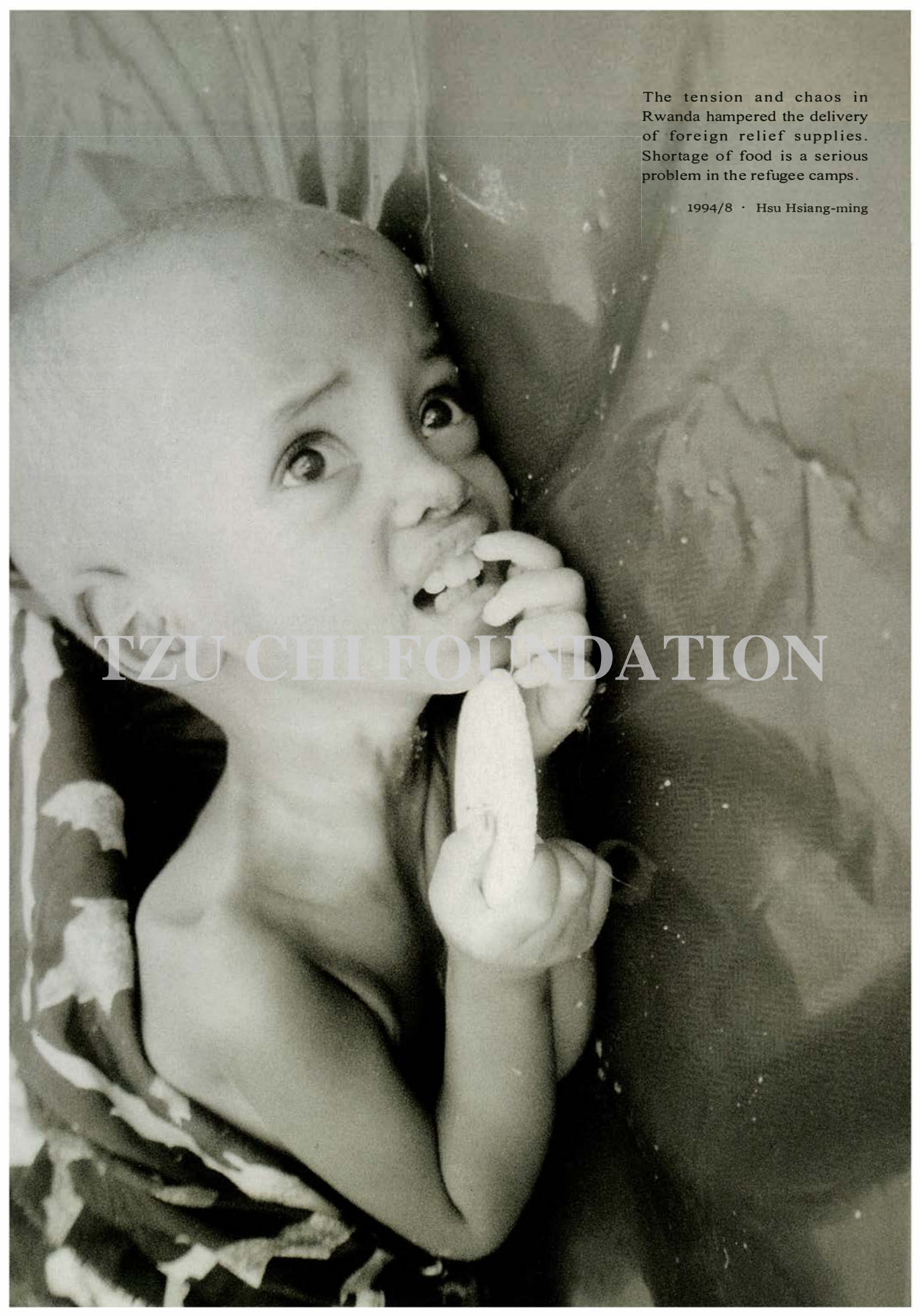
1997/1 · Wang Chih-hung

The water sources are covered by large water tanks, and underground pipes bring the water to the villages, where the clean water runs from taps at the supply stations. This has reduced water-borne diseases.

1997/1 · Wang Chih-hung







The tension and chaos in Rwanda hampered the delivery of foreign relief supplies. Shortage of food is a serious problem in the refugee camps.

1994/8 · Hsu Hsiang-ming

# TZU CHI FOUNDATION

# Rwanda

## War refugees

Project time: July 1994-September 1994

Aid provided: Emergency medical services

Rwanda, located in central Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. In April 1994, war erupted between the two largest ethnic groups in the country, the Hutu (90%) and the Tutsi (9%). Over five hundred thousand people were slaughtered, and more than two million fled to neighboring countries. The massive outflow of refugees was described as an "unprecedented disaster" by the international community.

Within two weeks, over a million war refugees flocked to Zaire, northwest of Rwanda. Food, water and medicine were in extremely short supply in the refugee camps, giving rise to contagious diseases such as cholera and dysentery. During the worst period, more than two thousand refugees died in a single day.

Faced with the pressing need for help and the tumultuous situation in Rwanda, in order to give relief to the refugees in the most direct and effective way, Tzu Chi decided to work with MDM, which was already in the country carrying out medical aid. In Taiwan, Tzu Chi recruited twenty-three volunteer medical personnel to travel to the war hospital set up by MDM in Goma,



a border city in Zaire. There, they provided medical services and nutritious food to the refugees to slow down

the spread of diseases. A medical station was also set up near Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, where medical services were provided for refugees returning home.

"In the medical station jointly established by MDM and Tzu Chi, I saw a young girl smile after receiving proper medical care," said Wang Ying-wei, director of the Family Medicine department of Tzu Chi General Hospital. "That precious smile, blooming from a land of death and misery, where everyone seemed expressionless, moved me deeply. Our powers may be limited, but at least we have brought the love of the people of Taiwan."

Due to the emergency medical aid provided at the crucial time by MDM, Tzu Chi and other international relief organizations, the health of the refugees in Goma was improved: within two months the daily death count dropped from two thousand to around five hundred. At the conclusion of the relief project, the medical station, still in operation, was turned over to the local government.

# TZU CHI FOUNDATION



Tzu Chi volunteers and MDM staff visit an orphanage. Cared for by Catholic nuns, the children are temporarily free from fear and loneliness.

1994/8 · Tzu Chi Archives





# TZU CHI FOUNDATION

Tzu Chi set up vocational centers to teach the poor useful skills such as sewing, hairstyling, and masonry. The sewing machines, irons, fabrics, etc., are provided by Tzu Chi.

1995/12 • Tzu Chi Archives

# AFRICA

## South Africa

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### Poverty

Project time: 1992-present

Aid provided: Daily necessities, scholarships for underprivileged students, construction of elementary schools, establishment of vocational training centers and boring of wells

Apartheid was abolished in South Africa in 1994. However, that did not mark the end of all the country's problems—the chasm between the rich and poor remained, whereas the unemployment and crime rates increased.



for black students. From 1994 to 1997, a total of thirty-seven containers of clothes were collected in Taiwan and sent to South Africa to help 130,000 impoverished people get

through the cold winters.

Although politically all races in South Africa were equal, there was still much to be done to improve people's lives.

As early as 1992, a group of local Taiwanese businessmen began to promote the Tzu Chi missions in South Africa. They undertook long-term aid for the poor and emergency relief work. Currently, Tzu Chi has six liaison offices in Johannesburg, Durban and Ladysmith, carrying out charitable and educational work.

The foundation's charity work in South Africa includes regular distribution of daily necessities in settlements of black people, boring wells for regions that lack water sources, visiting and providing funds for old folks homes, orphanages, and shelters for disabled or abused children. In the field of education, Tzu Chi has opened vocational training centers for black people and established scholarships and built schools

To solve the problem of poverty at the root, Tzu Chi members in Ladysmith decided to teach local people how to catch fish, instead of just giving them fish. They founded fifty-three vocational training centers to train residents in skills such as sewing. Students give part of their earnings back to the center to help more people acquire skills and improve their lives. The center thus operates on a circular fund.

Tzu Chi's long-term efforts have received a warm response from locals. The principal of the Vuku Zakhe Elementary School in Ladysmith gave up an opportunity for a transfer and instead stayed to work with Tzu Chi volunteers to build a new school. "Before Tzu Chi helped us, we had nothing but poverty," Gladys Ngema, a local teacher at the vocational training center in Durban, said. "Now that Tzu Chi is here, we have hope."



Tzu Chi members in Ladysmith bore sixty wells in the poor, remote villages that lacked water sources. Each well provides water for two to three hundred people.

1997/11 • Wang Chih-hung

## Natural disasters

Project time: 1992-present

Aid provided: Daily necessities and housing

Aside from long-term assistance to the poor, Tzu Chi volunteers in South Africa also bring emergency relief to victims of natural disasters.

On August 28, 1999, a tornado moving at a speed of 150km/hr (93 mph) whirled through Western Cape Province, killing three hundred people and wounding five hundred in the areas of Surrey Estate, Manenberg and Guguletu. One thousand families were made homeless and five schools were damaged.

Tzu Chi's liaison offices in South Africa put together one hundred thousand South African rand as relief funds and purchased emergency relief items. Seven days after the disaster, the workers distributed blankets, cookies, milk and clothes to two thousand families in the most affected areas.

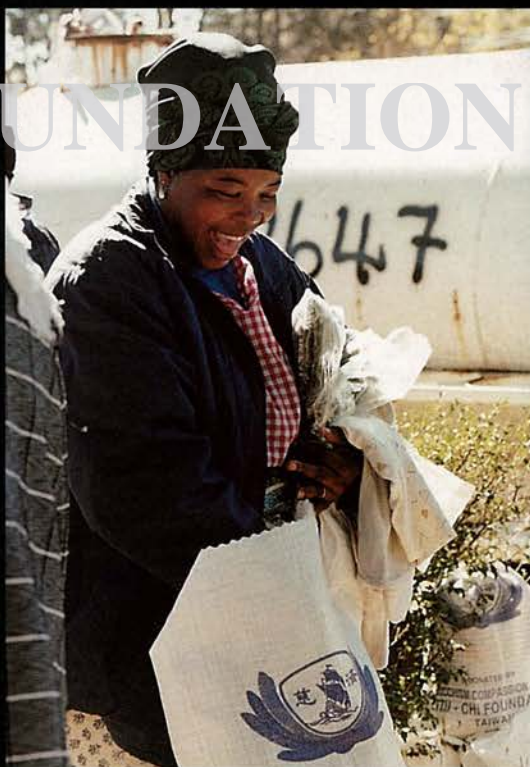
In February 2000, heavy rainfall in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe resulted in floods that displaced millions. In Northern and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa, over a million people lost their homes, at least fifty people lost their lives, and transportation to the outside was cut off. The government proclaimed it the worst flood in fifty years.

Tzu Chi volunteers in Johannesburg went to investigate the situation. They found that in the only black area in the city, Alexandra, around eight hundred houses built along the riverbank had been washed out by the floodwaters. The workers made contact with the municipal government, which provided land for Tzu Chi to erect

sixty-nine houses for survivors.

The temporary houses, designed to last fifteen years, mark the establishment of the first Tzu Chi village in South Africa. During construction, Tzu Chi implemented a program which hired survivors as construction workers. The purpose was to provide employment opportunities for the victims and to give them a sense of participation.

In addition to the temporary housing project, Tzu Chi members also distributed medicine, food and clothes in Mpumalanga, where roads, bridges, and water and electricity supply systems had been destroyed by the flood, thus hampering the movement of daily necessities in the region.



An aid recipient at one of Tzu Chi's regular distribution sites.

1999/5 • Yi Hsuan

During each distribution, Tzu Chi volunteers hand out copies of a letter addressed to the victims from Master Cheng Yen expressing her concern and best wishes.

1997/11 · Weng Yu-min

# TZU CHI FOUNDATION



# Lesotho

Lesotho has long been plagued by political unrest and violence. The people generally live in poverty, social welfare and medical resources are scarce, and the level of education is low.

Tzu Chi began operations in Lesotho in 1995, with Taiwanese businessmen making up half of the local members. They regularly handed out daily necessities to the poor and provided aid for charity organizations such as orphanages and shelters for the disabled. Over the years, they have helped more than ten thousand impoverished people and orphans.

In Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, a shelter for street children and orphans was struggling to stay open due to insufficient funding and an increase in the number of children living in the shelter. Some of the children living there were driven to stealing to feed themselves. Tzu Chi began to provide monthly food stipends for the children in 1996. Sewing machines and fabrics were donated to the shelter to start a sewing class. The children finally got enough food and began learning to make clothes. Better still, under the guidance of a local mason, the children built a warehouse for the shelter with their own hands.

Through their long-time involvement in bringing relief to the poor, Tzu Chi volunteers found that the essential way of lifting them out of poverty is to help them stand on their own. Therefore in February 2000, fifteen vocational training centers were set up in orphanages, centers for the disabled and churches around the slums of Maseru. Fabrics and sewing equipment were donated to help students acquire a useful skill.



## Poverty

Project time: 1995-present

Aid provided: Daily necessities and vocational training

## Riots

Project time: September 1998

Aid provided: Daily necessities

On September 22, 1998, suspicions that the ruling party had manipulated a general election two months earlier gave rise to an outbreak of rioting in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. Troops from neighboring South Africa were sent in to crack down on the violence, causing a wave of antiforeign sentiment. People looted foreign businesses and foreigners were expelled from the country.

Previously, there had been a bout of antiforeign riots and looting in 1991. After that, many Taiwanese still maintained businesses in Lesotho but moved their homes across the border into South Africa. Therefore, during the 1998 violence, even though their businesses were ransacked or destroyed, they still had homes to return to. But for thousands of mainland immigrants who had borrowed money from friends and relatives back home to start a new life here, the riot stripped them of everything they had.

Tzu Chi volunteers in Lesotho, having suffered great losses themselves, formed a relief team with volunteers in South Africa to meet the mainlanders at the border and arranged for them to stay in the houses of Taiwanese businessmen or emergency shelters.