

I. 1997 IN REVIEW

1997 was a year of change for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade which was reflected in the activities of the Institute.

The Executive Committee's discussion of the learning function in the Department which took place on December 5, 1997 led to a specific conclusion that the Institute "should stand as a symbol of excellence in the foreign service and that the highest importance should be attached to its role". This clear expression recognized the recognition of the contribution to the Department's professional excellence rendered by the Institute and set a challenge for the coming years.

This reaffirmation of the Institute's central importance took place amidst a general increase in new and exciting learning directions. For the Centre for Professional Development (CFSP), these included:

- ◆ an expanded role in the area of investment training;
- ◆ an "Influence Strategies and Economic Reporting" course covered in the US;
- ◆ the completion of the electronic version of the Strategic Planning Aid to negotiation;
- ◆ the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Information and Technology Management Bureau (SXD) for the design and delivery of Signet training;
- ◆ a key facilitation role in the Department's Bureaux Business Planning Process;
- ◆ the completion of 15 pilot courses in the area of distance learning and the development of the prototype of the Virtual Campus;
- ◆ the articulation of a comprehensive strategy for Locally Engaged Staff training at DFAIT's 157 locations world-wide as part of the comprehensive Human Resources Strategy which went into a new phase of development in 1997;
- ◆ the completion of preparations for a broader approach to the training of recruits called the Foreign Service Development Plan (FSDP).

For the Centre for Intercultural Learning, the achievements in 1997 were:

- ◆ the provision of self-learning programs, learning guides and group services for 1,500 staff members of the APEC 1997 Canada Coordinating Office which organized the Vancouver APEC meeting;
- ◆ the development with the Centre for Language Training of "The Language and Intercultural Project Syllabus";
- ◆ a cumulative two year cost reduction in the provision of intercultural services to CIDA amounting to 28%.

For the Centre for Language Training, the main results were:

- ◆ language training provided to 768 individuals;
- ◆ significant cost reductions in long-term language training;
- ◆ the development with the Centre for Intercultural Learning of a pilot project by which intercultural effectiveness training is incorporated in foreign language training;
- ◆ the establishment of distance learning projects in Spanish and German;
- ◆ a 250% increase in the language testing program (680 tests in 1997; 253 tests in 1996).