



Business Association Management Training Program

In many newly democratic countries, business organizations often lack the experience and institutional capacity to provide assistance to members or to contribute to the policy debate. In response to this problem, the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) developed the Business Association Management Training Program.

CIPE's program is modeled after the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's 75-year old continuing education program for association and chamber of commerce executives. CIPE adapted the U.S. Chamber's program and added its experience from the more than 300 projects CIPE has funded in more than 50 countries. The program is designed to share basic management techniques with business association executives worldwide. Business association executives learn and discuss practical ways that their organizations can support small businesses and general community economic development, how the organization can promote business ethics and the basics of strategic planning. Participants leave the training course with practical tools and new ideas and a lasting relationship with other business organizations worldwide.

How is the program structured?

In every country where CIPE has conducted training, the first step is to consult with local business leaders. Based on local input and an extensive market analysis, CIPE training and program staff will design a curriculum for association executives by selecting subjects from CIPE's 25 areas of expertise in association management. CIPE will also fine-tune the program for each country. If there is a debate over public vs. private law chambers in the country of training, instructors will dedicate time to discussing this issue with participants. If corruption is a major problem, CIPE will bring case studies from other countries on what business associations can do to promote ethical conduct.

CIPE normally offers a week-long course consisting of ten or more courses. Training is rigorous and intensive, usually consisting of 6-8 hours per day. Participants are required to complete a pre-test and a post-test, complete readings each night and attend all sessions in order to receive a certificate of completion. Because of its emphasis on improving staff development, CIPE considers it equally important to provide a networking opportunity among participants. To encourage this to occur, CIPE training normally takes place in a residential setting, where participants not only attend training sessions during the day but are lodged at the same site. Mealtimes and evenings become opportunities to deepen knowledge of other business associations' operations.

CIPE relies on practitioners to deliver the information and transfer skills effectively, with real solutions to real problems. For all its training programs, CIPE normally recruits current and former chamber of commerce or association executives with years of experience, who then deliver CIPE's courses and complement them with their own experience. Immediately before a training event, instructors visit the country and make investigative visits to a sampling of business association executives that are participating, to further hone the training to their organizations' needs.

Who are the participants?

Participants are the executive directors and professional staff of trade associations and chambers of commerce. CIPE believes that business association executives benefit from training because:

- Staff training adds to the credibility of the organization to its own members.
- Staff training leads to consistency in association management.
- Staff training results in better financial planning and management.
- Staff training permits elected volunteers to lead their organizations better, through more rational use of limited personnel.
- Staff training leads to an improved and more consistent image of the business association.
- Staff training strengthens their involvement in and commitment to the association's mission, and improves morale.

Occasionally new or weak business associations will not have staff, being managed instead by the president or other key volunteers from the executive committee. In these cases, CIPE will consider their participation, with a view that through the acquisition of sound association management skills they will become better leaders and recognize the value of delegating day-to-day authority and responsibility for routine operations to staff, with them focusing on policy and long-term organizational strategy.

What are CIPE's areas of expertise?

- Overview of Business Associations
- The Role of Business Associations in a Democratic Society
- Strategic Planning and Programs of Work
- Public Policy Advocacy/Government Relations
- Association Public Relations
- Marketing Strategies for Associations
- Project Design and Proposal Writing
- Membership Development
- Development and Management of Volunteers
- Staff Development
- Finance and Budgeting
- Sources of Non-Dues Income
- Global, Regional and National Economic Trends that Affect Business Associations
- Promoting Business Ethics
- Small Business Development
- An Examination of Different Chamber Models: Public Law vs. Private Law Chambers
- Leadership Development: Promoting New Leaders in your Community
- Association Leadership Skills Part I: Presentation Skills and Running Effective Meetings
- Association Leadership Skills Part II: Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills
- Accreditation: Setting Standards for Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations
- Developing Effective Training Programs
- Volunteer-Staff Relations
- Community Economic Development
- Management Skills for Association Executives