

The Center for International Private Enterprise announces



The 2009 International Essay Competition: Engaging Youth in Reform

Themes: Citizenship in a Democratic Society • Educational Reform and Employment Opportunities • Entrepreneurship and Leadership

The Center for International Private Enterprise invites young people to share their ideas on how to create opportunities for youth to strengthen democracy and the private sector in their own countries.

Eligibility:

Students and young professionals aged 18-30.

Contest Deadline:

March 1, 2009

Essay Length:

2,000 - 4,000 words

The three winning essays from each category will be published as *Economic Reform Feature Service* articles.

“ I joined in this competition because citizenship and democracy are only empty words until you fill them with ideas, experiences, hopes, and criticisms. It gave me the chance to explore these concepts deeper than before, to try giving them concrete meaning, and to begin thinking of how we can provide ourselves, as youth, the tools to exercise our citizenship, as this is the only way to build a living democracy. ”

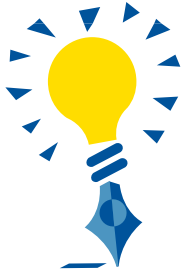
~ Majed Bamy, Palestine
2007 participant

See guidelines for more information at www.cipe.org/essay

A \$1,000 honorarium will be given for each winning essay

For more information about the Center for International Private Enterprise, please visit www.cipe.org





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2009 Essay Competition Guidelines: Engaging Youth in Reform

Young people can be a powerful force for change! As future reformers, young people (18-30) have innovative ideas on how to solve the political, economic, and social problems facing their countries. However, they often lack the voice to bring these ideas to policymakers. Simply, young people are often regarded as recipients of reforms, not active participants in the reform process.

CIPE's essay contest gives you the opportunity to share your ideas about citizenship, democratic and market-oriented reform, youth leadership, and the ways that your country can create avenues for youth to participate in the political and economic spheres. We encourage you to get thinking, get involved, and use your own experiences to develop concrete solutions to these development issues.

Eligibility

Open to students and young professionals aged 18-30. Special weight will be given to essays submitted by citizens of non-OECD countries.

Top Essays

In each category, a first, second, and third place winner will be chosen by a panel of CIPE staff and international partners. The three winning essays from each category will be published as *Economic Reform Feature Service* articles. **CIPE will provide each of the nine winners an honorarium of \$1,000.**

Topic Categories

1. Citizenship in a Democratic Society

What needs to be done to develop a sense of citizenship in young people and help them realize their role in a democratic society?

True reform occurs only when citizens actively participate in the governance process – it can't be achieved by street protests alone. Young people are an integral part of society and their input and participation in their countries' governance is necessary to effect political and economic reform. However, many lack the skills and opportunity to communicate with policymakers and get involved in their country's development. Youth are often disengaged from the political process and rarely develop the sense of citizenship that is so crucial to building an inclusive, participatory democracy. To become active citizens in their countries, young people must have the skills to develop their ideas on reform and outlets to express those ideas in a constructive manner. What does citizenship mean to you? How are citizenship and good governance connected? How can your country engage and enable young people to participate constructively in the governance process? **Be sure to begin your essay by describing the situation in your country.**

2. Educational Reform and Employment Opportunities

How can you reform your country's education system so that graduates have the necessary skills for employment in the public and private sectors?

In many countries, the youth unemployment rate is very high. In some countries, this is caused by a lack of jobs. However, in many others, young people entering the workforce are not prepared for the jobs available – they lack the necessary skills and education. Unable to find good jobs, they face a difficult choice: remain unemployed or accept low-paying jobs with no opportunity for advancement. Improving the educational systems of many countries is a key step towards creating a generation of young people who possess the skills and knowledge to participate in the economy, locally and globally. What are the major employment problems young people face in your country? What can be done to give them the right skills and opportunities to enter the workforce? Who should be taking the lead in doing so? **Be sure to begin your essay by describing the situation in your country.**

3. Entrepreneurship and Leadership

What needs to be done in your country to provide youth with the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and/or leaders in their communities?

Young people can play a positive role in the political and economic spheres in their countries, on both local and national levels. Unfortunately they often lack access to the resources and groups that would help them get involved and have an impact. However, when provided with the opportunity and skills to become influential members of their communities, youth can accomplish their goals. What are the skills that young people need to acquire to start a successful business or civil society group? What are the major barriers that prevent them from opening a business or assuming a leadership position in your country? What programs or policies would give youth the skills to become active and influential members of society? **Be sure to begin your essay by describing the situation in your country.**

For readings that address these topics, visit CIPE's youth website: www.cipe.org/essay

Judging Criteria

Essays will be judged on clarity, originality, and their contribution to the understanding of these development issues. The logic of the ideas expressed is more important than perfect English grammar.

Judges: Essays will be evaluated by a panel of judges comprising CIPE staff and CIPE's international partners.

Formatting Guidelines

- All essays must be written in English.
- All essays must be original and unpublished.
- Word count: 2,000-4,000.
- Please use the last page of this document as a guideline for your cover page. All requested information must be included as indicated.

Deadline

All essays must be submitted by [March 1, 2009](#).

How to Submit

- E-mail a copy of the essay as a Microsoft Word document to essay@cipe.org.
- An e-mail will be sent confirming receipt of the submission.

About CIPE

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) strengthens democracy around the globe through private enterprise and market-oriented reform. CIPE is one of the four core institutes of the National Endowment for Democracy and a non-profit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Since 1983, CIPE has worked with business leaders, policymakers, and journalists to build the civic institutions vital to a democratic society. CIPE's key program areas include anti-corruption, advocacy, business associations, corporate governance, democratic governance, access to information, the informal sector and property rights, and women and youth.

For more information about CIPE, please visit www.cipe.org.

Note: Winning essays and other essays of merit will be considered for publication as Economic Reform Feature Service articles. Some articles may be translated into Arabic, Russian, Spanish, or French.

The Feature Service is CIPE's online and electronic article distribution service. It provides in-depth articles designed for a network of policymakers, business leaders, civic reformers, scholars, and others interested in the issues relating to economic reform and its connection to democratic development. Before publication, all authors will be contacted by CIPE and provided with a proof of the article for approval.



Center for International Private Enterprise • an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1155 Fifteenth Street NW • Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20005 • USA
ph: (202) 721-9200 • fax: (202) 721-9250 • www.cipe.org • e-mail: cipe@cipe.org

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Mailing address:

Email address:

Essay topic: