

Accessing Global Markets: A New Training Program

Bea J. Celler

Globalization has opened new frontiers for world trade. In more and more countries, it is driving the trend toward reforms that are bringing institutions in line with market-based rules. What significance does this trend hold for women, and why should they be involved in international trade? Because participation in the global market creates jobs, enhances development, helps create a higher standard of living, and exacts product and service excellence through competition in the marketplace. Evidence shows that women are going global (see box p.17). Can women-owned firms enter the international market on their own? Yes, they certainly can, but it is difficult—especially for small companies—to go global alone.

Associations—an invaluable link

Women's business associations can be invaluable in helping business owners meet the challenges of globalization. They are an essential link in offering women-owned businesses access to information, technology, leadership, how-to tools, and advice on overseas marketing. As the global needs of women entrepreneurs grow, associ-

CIPE's International Trade Training Program is being developed both as a stand-alone training session and as an integral part of its Business Association Management Training Program that has been offered in approximately 30 countries and trained 1,400 association managers. More information on the program is included in CIPE's Web site at <http://www.cipe.org/>. The course can be structured as a half-day, full-day or two-day training session depending on a business association's needs. For more information on the program, contact Bea Celler celler@cipe.org in Washington.

ations have an unparalleled opportunity to capitalize on expanding member services, which in turn help generate international business for their members.

As more and more countries face the challenge of moving from democratic elections to progressive democratic societies, the role of business associations in civil society is pivotal. Women need to become equal partners in this process. In order to build strength and attract members, women's business associations must develop the capacity to deliver the services women need. The International Trade Training Program (ITTP) CIPE is creating teaches these associations how best to help women entrepreneurs access international markets.

The ITTP curriculum gives business associations practical advice on how to provide their members with the international knowledge

necessary to navigate the global marketplace. One key service that women's business associations can deliver, for example, is providing the organizational framework through which women business owners can make their voices heard by trade negotiators and other global policymakers.

In former communist countries the state monopolized export, import, technology, and investment activities. As a result, newly created women's business associations in those countries have had virtually no opportunities to learn about the nuts and bolts of international trade (e.g., dealing with distributors and agents, freight forwarders and buyers). This training program offers them the means of assessing their memberships' needs for international information and then providing supplementary services tailored to their individual members.

Bea J. Celler is a CIPE Program Officer for the New Independent States.

COMPONENTS OF ITTP PROGRAM

Globalization
Export/Import Promotion
Foreign Direct Investment
Global and Regional Trade Institutions
International Trade Plan Development
Relationship Between Associations and Democracy

What the ITTP does

The ITTP probes the role of women's business associations in building knowledge, identifying trends and providing international services to their members. Components of the training include a detailed investigation of globalization, export promotion, import techniques, strategies and practices for foreign direct investment, use of global and regional world trade institutions, development of a regional international trade plan, and an examination of the relationship between voluntary business associations and democratic systems.

Technology, e-commerce and the Internet play an important role in this training package and are integrated into every component. Case studies and best practices detail how successful women's business associations are delivering international services. Internet sites are categorized by global finance, import and export support, international trade, associations promoting international trade and investment, and women in business.

ITTP also offers hands-on training in conducting successful trade scenarios; numerous means for entering, surviving and thriving in the international arena; checklists to facilitate export/import transactions, concrete steps for market research, identification of international distributors, and the best ways to organize and use in-

formation collected from trade exhibitions. It also provides essential background materials, checklists and useful internet site listings. And that's just the beginning. Below is a summary of the six key components of the training program:

Globalization. This section demystifies globalization by analyzing concrete cases that illustrate how the new global rules actually work. Time is built into this block for intensive discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of globalization. Particular attention is given to analyzing all the regulations of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and regional trade pacts such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Export/import promotion. Associations will also learn techniques for determining whether or not their members are export-ready such as market research, competitive advantage, product and service analysis, pricing strategies, customer demand, and distribution options. This program segment offers detailed checklists and case studies on global standards, packaging and technical requirements of importing and exporting. It also emphasizes approaches for successful trade show exploitation, utilizing e-commerce, employing strategic alliances, and finding financial backing.

Foreign direct investment (FDI). This module reviews different types of foreign investment such as brick-and-mortar projects, technol-

ogy transfer, greenfield investments, and portfolio capital inflows. It analyzes various kinds of foreign investors and provides exercises for discovering which strategies and investors best suit a particular country. Most international leaders agree that the most successful models of investment promotion throughout the world use a public-private partnership approach rather than governmental promotion exclusively.

Global barriers to FDI are examined including policies, practices, laws, and institutions that inhibit investment. As an exercise, the program participants devise an investment plan for their particular region with complementary tactics for targeting investment in their top markets.

Global and regional trade institutions. Trade organizations such as the WTO and regional pacts produce a myriad of regulations that can seem overwhelming to novice players. This portion of the training will simplify and classify information on the WTO's functions, trade pact partners, dispute resolution, accession processes, and issues of the Millennium Round of trade negotiations held in Seattle in December 1999. The WTO's future agenda will be discussed, along with the economic and political problems countries can experience in becoming WTO members. Associations will be directed where to seek technical assistance in resolving WTO questions. Prior to each training program, this module will be customized for the region where it is being used.

Development of an international trade plan. In this session an intensive interactive exercise will synthesize all previous components. A tailor-made, integrated international strategic trade scheme for an association will be designed

following a seven-step action plan. Whether to produce a regional, state or country plan is included as a discussion element along with advocacy tools to overcome existing obstacles. The action plan ensures that association members move their economy along by making best use of their country's competitive advantages.

The role of business associations in a democratic society. The final yet vital part of this training is to harmonize the international trade components with the connecting elements of a democratic, market-based system. The characteristics of a democracy and a market economy are compared with those of a voluntary business association. The opportunities of an open trading system are weighed along with obstacles existing in the particular country where the training is conducted. Women's business association leaders will identify and priori-

STATISTICAL EVIDENCE



- Globally women own between one-quarter and one-third of businesses in the formal sector and are likely to play an even greater role in the informal sector.
- In Russia, women business owners are involved in international trade at a higher rate (19%) than in the US (13%).
- In Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, 22–32% of women business owners are involved in international trade.

tize their objectives in guiding their members toward a blended civil society combining democracy, market principles and volunteerism.

Nemawashi, the Japanese concept of watering the roots of a tree, is analogous to an association nourishing the bloom of women's international business. The ITTP is an exciting and participatory training course geared toward involving women-owned businesses ready to

enter international trade as well as growth-oriented associations. By identifying value-added niches and industries that have potential international market demand, women entrepreneurs—and the associations that support and offer services to them—can be a powerful part of a community's economic foundation and at the forefront of global commerce. 🌐👩