



Iraq Program Accomplishments

as of September 2007

As free market and democratic institutions are being developed in Iraq, the need to build an educated citizenry is becoming more urgent. To build a constituency for market-oriented democratic reform, government officials, political parties, the business community, and other civil society groups must cooperate to navigate the transition process.

Since October 2003, CIPE has reached out to more than 60,000 Iraqi businessmen and women through its network of over 40 business associations and chambers of commerce. Working with the private sector, economic journalists, think tanks, academics, students, and political party representatives, CIPE is building a political framework that emphasizes free market principles as a foundation for success. CIPE and its local partners have:

Established the [Iraqi Business Council](#) (IBC), which represents business associations, chambers of commerce, and economic think tanks throughout Iraq. The council is the voice of the Iraqi private sector both inside and outside the country and participates in the review of legislation pertaining to commerce and trade, puts forth a National Business Agenda, and contributes to the overall Iraqi development process. Similar to the IBC, CIPE established a [Kurdistan Business Council](#) (KBC), which represents the Kurdish private sector and participates in the development process in Kurdistan. KBC has also been working on drafting a national business agenda for the Kurdish region.

Trained over 300 [business association executives and board members](#). CIPE has held four business association training programs in Baghdad and Amman and three workshops in Arbil. These programs focus on key aspects of successful associations, such as governance, strategic planning, and membership development. A study tour was also organized in Egypt for Iraqi association executives to introduce them to association best practices.



Introduced the concept of [business talk television](#). For almost two years, a weekly business-oriented television program has been produced and aired by local CIPE partners in Iraq. The 60-minute Arabic-language program, called *Iqtisanda* (Our Economy), is the first show in Iraq to focus on economic and business issues. Past shows have focused on topics such as inflation, unemployment, and privatization. Additionally, CIPE partner ASK has broadcast over 44 Kurdish language economy-focused [weekly radio shows](#) in the Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, Arbil, and Kirkuk provinces of Northern Iraq. These programs keep the conversation going on economic reform among the Iraqi public.

Organized over 55 [policy roundtable programs](#) with Baghdad University and other think tanks. The roundtable series engages the business community, academia, media, policymakers, and other stakeholders in constructive dialogue on the best way to build a market economy and a participatory democratic system in Iraq.

▶ Provided **small grants** totaling over \$1,200,000 to 44 business associations all over Iraq. These small grants provide seed money for these local associations to provide programs for their members on public policy advocacy, firm services, and management training.

▶ Engaged over 30 political parties in issues of economic reform. CIPE has conducted four training programs for political parties that highlight **the importance of private sector engagement in the political process** and the need for political parties to communicate their economic vision. CIPE also arranged for over 160 representatives from Kurdish political parties, regional and local governments, academia, and the media to participate in **computerized exercises** that simulate the difficulties of rebuilding a nation in a post-conflict environment. The simulation addressed the need to improve coordinated decision-making by civilian leaders and the private sector and provided real-time feedback on the consequences of their decisions.

▶ Conducted annual **business community surveys** that poll over 1,000 business owners throughout Iraq regarding their opinions on the business climate and the changes taking place in the country. The surveys reveal that the business community is optimistic regarding the country's economic prospects. However, respondents stated that corruption is a serious problem. The programs for political parties capitalized on the findings, as Iraqi political parties recognized the need to court this sizable and influential constituency and address private sector concerns within their platforms. The 2007 poll is currently underway.



▶ Built a **nationwide virtual network of business associations and chambers of commerce**, providing them with computer equipment, websites, and computer-skills training. CIPE has supported the development of 28 websites for Iraqi business associations, as well as a web portal devoted to economic reform: www.ivban.net.

▶ Created one of the first **economic journalist associations** in Iraq, building a Media Resource Center in which economic journalists can access the internet, informational resources, and training materials. CIPE conducted training for journalists explaining the dynamics and institutions of a free market system and the role that economic journalists play in a democratic society.



▶ Partnered with various Iraqi universities and institutions to hold 40 **entrepreneurship training programs** to foster an entrepreneurial culture. Over 800 participants have completed the program to date.

▶ Distributed CIPE's **Arabic-language materials** throughout Iraq. CIPE has reprinted many of its key publications in Arabic and Kurdish and distributes a weekly e-newsletter to partners and public figures.

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