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FOREWORD

BY ANDREW WILSON, CIPE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges for markets and communities. The economic downturn threatens the survival of small businesses and reinforces economic inequality, with women and other marginalized groups disproportionately impacted by layoffs and furloughs. In many countries, including across Eurasia, women entrepreneurs are often concentrated in small- and micro-businesses that depend on social interactions and trading for business, and thus have needed to adapt or scale back their work. At the same time, household burdens have increased. Before the beginning of the crisis, women around the world did three times as much unpaid work as men.¹ Now, school closures and reduced access to social services have placed even greater demands for unpaid care and domestic work on women. The fact that women in many societies still lack basic civil rights and political representation compounds their inability to be heard and involved in potential solutions.

In April 2020, CIPE outlined “Six Essential Themes for an Economic Recovery Roadmap,” detailing key areas of focus for the global community as it supports efforts to recover and rebuild. One of the themes identified was Economic Challenges for Women and Marginalized Groups, recognizing the unequal economic impact of the pandemic on these populations. While CIPE renews its commitment to providing tools and support to women around the

world, we see that empowerment truly comes from within. Now more than ever, we have witnessed examples of women taking control of their actions and responses to COVID-19, empowering themselves to face and overcome challenges and also lead by example. In Eurasia, CIPE’s programs are supporting women to make changes in society by raising their voices in business and in constructive dialogue with government to address barriers women face in the economy. Whether through entrepreneurship or through advocacy and reform work, positive changes will occur when more women have the opportunity to harness and unleash their internal power and voice.

This essay competition is one way in which CIPE is providing a space and giving a public voice to that power currently being demonstrated in the Eurasia region. By offering these women a platform to share their stories, we hope to build on the strength that they have shown and contribute to the continued empowerment of other women worldwide. I invite you to reflect on these inspiring stories as you read through this publication. See how they resonate in your life and with your experiences this year overcoming the incredible adversity we have faced globally.
INTRODUCTION

To better understand how COVID-19 has impacted Eurasian women in the economy, CIPE reached out to its network of partners and contacts to encourage women entrepreneurs from across the region to tell their personal stories of challenge, success, and change over the past months. CIPE received more than 20 essays from women in six countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Strict lockdowns and restrictions on movement meant that many women business owners faced new difficulties in their families and their enterprises. As daunting as these challenges have been, these stories demonstrate how five women in the Eurasia region found their internal strength to forge ahead and develop creative and compassionate solutions.

Several common themes emerged from the stories, demonstrating these women’s ability to use creativity and compassion as effective tools to lift up their families, employees, and communities.

Compassion and Community – Through their businesses and responses to the pandemic, many of the women addressed specific economic and personal hardships women have faced and the comradery they found in dealing with the situation. Their work highlighted the need for women to support other women, to help single and divorced mothers, provide childcare while women work, and increase women’s financial independence.
Overcoming Adversity – Many of these women had experienced personal loss, economic and social barriers, and increased family responsibilities that challenged them in new ways. Several used these experiences as inspiration to start their own businesses, and then build on pandemic challenges to pivot to new strategies and find a way to continue supporting their employees and clients. Several women shared stories emphasizing the role of their local communities during the pandemic. Friends, neighbors, and loyal client bases supported the women’s businesses as they adapted to restrictions and new challenges, helping their businesses to survive and even thrive.

Adaptive Solutions – The challenges of the pandemic pushed some women to create or expand their digital presence, whether building a website, selling on e-commerce platforms or advertising through social media platforms. Through these tools, women retained and even expanded their client bases despite restrictions and economic challenges. Others faced formidable logistical challenges, leading them to look for new markets, engineer creative transportation solutions, and overcome trade barriers to keep business running smoothly.
HOW I HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Aida Djudupova, Kyrgyzstan

“And this, too, shall pass” I said to one of my crying employees. She is a single mother of four kids, who was trembling like a leaf because of all the uncertainty around COVID-19. I put all my efforts into sounding very calm, although down very deep, I was scared as much as she was because the stakes were just too high, and my business was about to default. Let me tell you my journey of how I opened two medium-sized restaurants in the capital city of the Kyrgyz Republic and how we managed to get through the most tough times.

“It wasn’t easy” is to say nothing when it comes to opening your own business in a patriarchal society, especially when you are a divorced single mother of three boys and work full-time as the head of the compliance unit in one of the leading banks in the country. I would say everything is possible when you are driven by higher values and mission. For me, opening the chain of restaurants was a tool to empower women in my country by supplying jobs and, most importantly, hope that they can achieve whatever they wish. I specifically focused on hiring women with difficult backgrounds like mine: single mothers, widowed, girls without higher education, etc. Every one of them had their own story to tell and hope to change it for the better. As a result, the business was prospering as we managed to open a second chain in the city and the number of clients was increasing exponentially.

As I reflect on it now, it was naive of me to think that challenging times for me and my female employees had passed. We have gotten through tough marriages with...
physical and emotional abuses, divorce, and then judgements from society about how we were bad wives and the beatings from our husbands were justified. I am proud to say that my employees and I have gotten through tough times and we overcame every barrier on our way with our heads held up to the sky and strong will in our hearts. We managed to build something great on our own and it was working well. However, this is exactly the time when COVID-19 decided to teach us another lesson of how to be flexible and adjust to the fast-changing environment, which strengthened our resilience even further.

The 2020 pandemic was not only a challenge for our health system, but also a test of our human spirit. When the number of COVID-19 cases increased, the Kyrgyz government decided to quarantine the country and shut down non-essential businesses, which had a direct impact on my business. At the same time, I still had fixed costs to cover; I had to pay my rent and pay salaries for employees. It became clear the business would not sustain for much longer and something must be done. Wasting no time, I initiated the following activities.

Firstly, I asked my girls to take free online courses to expand their knowledge. They took the basic online courses from home on various digitalization and business administration topics. For myself, I have deepened my expertise in business strategy and people management.

Secondly, with the aim of adjusting to the new environment, we decided to offer food delivery services. At first, we were not sure whether there would be enough demand to cover our costs, as most Kyrgyz women cook at home and are expected to. But I also knew that being a mother and staying at home with your kids does not leave much time for cooking. Therefore, we used our social media channels to conduct a poll to see how big the potential market could be. Surprisingly enough, 80% of respondents answered that they would be willing to order food from our place. I have since reopened the two locations and restructured work in a way that only two people can work in one room at a time to mitigate the risks of getting infected. Consequently, I asked girls who do not have kids or elderly at home to come to the restaurants and work on special machines in person. The first problem was solved: jobs were given to single ladies.

“But how about single mothers?” I thought. I found the answer from the online business strategy course—to widen my range of services and products. I decided to deliver not only cooked meals, but also frozen pre-cooked food. It was a great initiative because it could help women spend less time in the kitchen and allow them to focus on their self-development, like working on their
education and careers. Furthermore, single mother employees could stay at home with their kids and prepare the meals that did not require some special equipment. Therefore, another problem was solved successfully.

The third initiative we have implemented is the development of the website. I have assigned one of my employees to take a free online course to create a simple website that will expand our clientele and display our products and services. Automation and digitalization became an essential part of running the business during the pandemic. Our website allowed customers to place orders online faster and helped us to keep our records in one place.

As the pandemic started changing peoples’ lives, I noticed the emotional condition of my employees getting worse, with productivity going down even as demand was increasing. Following my mission to offer a safe and open environment to my employees, I took the initiative to have one-to-one conversations with every employee every week so I could understand their feelings and offer my help. This became my fourth improvement around people management. I have implemented a voluntary and anonymous survey where they could ask questions and leave comments. At first, I did not get many replies, but as time passed and we had more conversations they became more willing to share their concerns. The results were great, as I could better understand their uncertainty around the pandemic and their fear of family members getting infected. Consequently, I started offering online yoga and meditation trainings three times per week. The results were amazing as the productivity went up and I could finally see happy smiles on my employees’ faces. It was such a relief.

The conclusion is that physical health is as important as emotional health.

Long story short: when life threw us lemons, we made lemonade. We got stronger, we adjusted, even as the numbers of infected people skyrocketed in the country. The media was full of stories about the deficit of doctors and nurses to take care of all patients. Those were horrible circumstances as many people died and many hospital employees had to work crazy hours. It was a time for us to react and try to make a difference. Everything has been stabilized on our end and we had extra energy to help those in need. Therefore, we contacted groups of volunteers and offered to deliver our products for free for hospital employees. We have supplied more than 150 lunches to medical employees in one week.

I would not have imagined this year to be so uncertain and difficult to cope with. Nevertheless, as I had to learn through my challenging life to always seek positivity in any situation, I had to fight for myself and
people who depend on me: my children, my employees, and their children. I had no choice but to stay strong and resilient to support my women employees and to not let the business (my dream and hope) die. I firmly believe that women empowering each other and working together can achieve big results through good times and bad.

*Aida Djusupova is the owner of Maida Manty, a restaurant located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.*
WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

By Eliza Asilbek, Kyrgyzstan

Almakan is a young widow with two small children. Her husband died in a car accident. He left Kyrgyzstan to earn money, and to become a good father for his two kids. For two years, he was a truck driver in Russia, and it was during a work trip on one of Russia’s biggest highways that he lost control of the steering wheel and was crushed to death.

Almakan held a university degree. However, she never had the chance to start a teaching career. She had to live with her in-laws for the first year of marriage, per Kyrgyz traditions. Later, she delivered two kids with three years’ age difference between them. Raising two kids was not easy, so Almakan sacrificed her teaching career and future to help her family.

Almakan has a very strong personality. Right after the death of her husband, she did not surrender. Instead, she started taking therapeutic massage lessons, three hours, twice a week. She wanted to become a professional masseuse, as she loved doing massage since her childhood. “I was the main healer at home. Whoever had any pain, I would do massage and cure them” she told me once.

Almakan joined my business three years ago. Very shy but physically strong, she had incredibly hot bioelectrical currents in her hands. She knew human anatomy and could answer my questions, although she needed more training in order to comply with our corporate specifications when doing massage. She turned out to be a diligent and hardworking mentee, and it took her only 5 weeks to become a fully competent employee of my company.

Siam Massage Spa Salon celebrated its 6-year anniversary this year. It has 16 fulltime employees and is a legally registered entity. Most customers are tourists visiting Kyrgyzstan. The busy season for the salon starts from April and ends close to the new year.

In early January 2020, we were bombarded with news about the coronavirus outbreak
in China. We were afraid but did not panic. The first cases of COVID-19 in Kyrgyzstan were reported in March 2020. An emergency lockdown was immediately introduced in capital city Bishkek. Among other small and big enterprises offering services, the Siam Massage Spa Salon was also locked down indefinitely.

Quarantine lasted 3 months, during which I could only pay out 25 percent of fixed salaries to my employees. Things got terrifying when I started running out of financial resources to further support my employees. 90 percent of my 16 employees, including Almakan, are women who are either divorced, or widows with small kids, who are often the single breadwinners in their families.

Prior to the pandemic, we did not take any preparatory actions for disasters like COVID-19, so as an entrepreneur I did not have any financial reserves. Once the quarantine was removed in June 2020, small business owners like me started lobbying the government through open letters to either help entrepreneurs or allow us to start working again. When I announced the re-opening of the salon, many of my colleagues could not hold back their tears, because it was the only source of earnings for them and they were happy to return. However, we later ran into other issues, as kindergartens were closed, and my employees had no place to leave their kids while they worked.

I suspected that my business might experience a significant and prolonged decline. My company’s profitability was negatively affected by the consequences of actions taken to stop the spread of coronavirus, such as:

- Closing all borders to the movement of people. All international and domestic flights were suspended, preventing the arrival of international tourists (our main customers);
- Reduction of the value of Kyrgyz currency, the Som, causing several significant payments to be fixed to USD;
- Quarantine lockdown in Bishkek, social distancing, and stricter sanitary and hygienic requirements made customers fear attending salons; and
- A sharp reduction in the flow of money transfers, significantly reducing the costs for potential customers.

After considering all the pros and cons, and especially due to the high levels of uncertainty, I decided to close the business. I called in all my employees and announced my inability to further continue doing business because of the COVID crisis.

After about 20 minutes, Almakan knocked on my door and asked if she could talk
to me. “Eliza!” – she spoke to me with a confident voice, “we are all women, and we should help each other during the hard times. I cannot imagine my life and the life of my kids without my earnings at Siam Massage. You should not give in because you are not alone. Too many efforts you have been making throughout 6 years, how can you easily give in?! How can you lose courage? You are the example for many of us! Please stay strong, we don’t want to be a burden to you, but we want to be your asset! Let us together win this crisis. We have some ideas that you should consider.” After her speech, I was shocked, my eyes began to tear up, and I hugged Almakan for her strong support.

Together with my girls, we started thinking about a plan to minimize costs to allow us to survive the crisis. We decided to change the location because a huge part of operational expenses was rent. The space had become too big for us now, considering the 60-70% cutback in customers due to the epidemic. Thank God for the last 6 years we have generated a good list of loyal customers, which would allow us to contact them with the address to the new location.

We also changed the salary system. There are now two components of the salary structure: the fixed part is smaller than it used to be, but the variable part offers a higher percentage. My girls would receive income depending on how many customers they
could serve. It was a fair settlement for me as well. Also, the girls offered to make a queue among themselves when receiving salary, making themselves available to wait until the next month if we could not cover salaries in the current month.

We rearranged pricing and the marketing strategy. Prices are now more flexible, depending on the number of membership tickets customers buy. We also started encouraging customers to subscribe with multi-visit tickets. We have also created a small room for kids where they could eat, play, and sleep while their moms worked.

I agree that there is always a way out of any difficult situation, especially when you have women encouraging and supporting you. We are still going through the pandemic, and no one knows when it will end. But I wanted to say, when the women support each other, every success is possible!

Eliza Asilbek is an entrepreneur and owner of Siam Massage Spa Salon
UNPRECEDENTED
By Firuza Tatybaeva, Uzbekistan

November of 2019. First news from China about a new fast-spreading and deadly virus. Shortly thereafter, China isolated a small city, Wuhan (small for China, that is).

Considering that China is one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in Asia, I knew global supply chains would be interrupted, and countries in Asia and around the world would have to pay more attention to food security and self-sufficiency.

I am one of the main suppliers of seed potatoes to Central Asia from Holland. Unfortunately, due to exorbitant prices for transportation from the Netherlands to Uzbekistan and low productivity of local farmers, the cost of local potatoes became extremely high. Hence, importing our potatoes from neighboring countries like Kazakhstan and even Russia was more profitable than local production.

For many reasons which I will not mention (for it will take too much space and time), I was bound to one distributor in Uzbekistan. This made my market position vulnerable and dependent.

Once the first quarantine measures were applied in China and Iran, I assumed prices for food would go up in many markets due to interrupted supply chains, the rising prices of imports, and countries stockpiling their reserves. Evaluating all these difficulties, I decided to step in.

Since my motto is “consider challenges as opportunities rather than problems,” I went to my distributor with an offer to urgently buy as many seed potatoes as possible from my company, Agrico, in the Netherlands.

Prices for fuel had dropped dramatically, allowing us to reduce transport costs immensely. This would enable us to compete with potatoes from Russia and other exporters. However, to my surprise, my counterpart did not want to take the risk of buying a sizeable amount of the seed potatoes without a secure sales plan of further distribution within the domestic market.
So, I ended the exclusive distribution agreement with the partners who did not share my vision and strategy, which ended up being advantageous for me. Instead of buying large amounts, they signed a tiny contract with Agrico and were forced to give me the possibility to find other ways to make my sales. I started reaching out to all potential clients and, as it is told “he who seeks always finds,” I found four new buyers and sold threefold the usual amount.

As I envisioned, when the pandemic spread around the world, local prices in Uzbekistan started rapidly increasing and the government decided to try to break its dependence on imports and boost local production. The government swiftly arranged special loans for farmers and encouraged them to plant more potatoes for it is the cheapest and most nutritious crop, often known as a “second bread.”

The orders for seed potatoes were coming from all corners of my country. The crisis also helped me to change the attitude of my Dutch colleagues towards my intention to control logistics. In good times, no one likes to challenge the status quo; people become rigid and reluctant to innovate. However, once we became affected by COVID-19, my colleagues wanted to sell without any headaches, so they were happy to delegate to me all controls over making contracts and choosing the means of transportation. I hired four logistics companies to deliver potatoes from the Netherlands to Uzbekistan, and pushed them to compete for my business, which they had no choice but to do because of unusually low fuel prices and little activity due to the quarantine measures worldwide.

Of course, the pandemic and the economic crisis it caused has been extremely painful globally. However, from a business perspective, the pandemic has led to one of the best seasons for me.

I have reached my long-pending goals:

- Get rid of forced distribution agreements;
- Gain control over logistics, as my business has price sensitivities and potatoes must be carefully transported;
- Diversify my distribution channels and create a new network of dealers; and
- Boost my sales.

Considering the male dominated government and business environment in Uzbekistan, my work has not been easy. I often feel as if I am Cassandra, who is always right in her predictions but never taken seriously. Often, the male businessmen in Uzbekistan and the Netherlands are not willing to readily share responsibilities and give a leading role in making decisions and implementing new market strategies to females. However, in problematic situations
like the pandemic, not taking initiative can be more damaging to businesses and their reputations. So, it was time for me to push forward and win!

I would say that crisis is the moment when you can realize some of your most brave ideas and potential. In normal times, there is no need for changes, because we do not have to fear our problems. On the contrary, we must use our problems as opportunities. When it is easy, you have a lot of competition; but in tough times, only brave and courageous people can prove their leadership and take control over the situation!

*Firuza Tatybaeva is an Export Manager - Central Asia and Azerbaijan for Agrico Tashkent, shareholder at Asno potato import company, and independent construction entrepreneur in Uzbekistan*
SURVIVORS OF THE STRAWBERRY-LESS SPRING

By Nino Mchedlidze, Georgia

“Of course, we start the season with strawberries again.” This was our thought at the beginning of the 2020. We had no idea that one virus would later turn our lives and production rhythm upside down.

Greetings, I am Nino. My friend and I have a small business of dry fruit. Our enterprise, Chirikela, will soon be three years old, and it already managed to gain the love of consumers. We thought 2020 would be a year of expansion and new directions. We planned to move Chirikela from a family business to a higher level, but not everything goes as planned.

We had plans, timelines. We knew exactly when to buy and what to buy and what to make. The season should have been opened with strawberries – but the region was being closed by the coronavirus.

Chirikela operates in Tetritskaro municipality, which we thought was safe. We calmly and quietly continued to work under the changing circumstances. We thought this was necessary for us, for our families, and out of respect to the Georgian cities and villages which were shut down. But then our region became a “red zone” and faced a much harder shutdown than other areas.

The number of infected people grew suddenly in our municipality. Our thoughts, plans, and ideas were soon replaced by the thought of how to protect ourselves and our families from the pandemic. We were observing the ongoing activities from our home and we understood that in such situations, economic conditions would worsen, so we had to think of something.
Despite the state of emergency and residing in a red zone, we managed to prepare our enterprise for work. We arranged our inventory and created hygienic conditions. We treated our essential workers in accordance with the rules and regulations. Considering that gathering more than three people in the same place was dangerous, my friend and I, just us two girls, did everything with our own resources and with our own hands, and prepared ourselves for the strawberry season.

Based on the climate conditions of the municipality, we must always purchase strawberries from adjacent municipalities or the capital. As such, we needed to get a special permit that allowed local entrepreneurs and distributors to move around for purchasing or selling products. Unfortunately, all attempts to get this permit resulted in rejections. The issuing agency probably thought it was impossible for a couple of girls to leave the municipality with the purpose of purchasing raw materials. So, we faced a new problem: we had no materials, and no one knew when the municipality would reopen or when we would be able to return to work.

Local distribution did its best to ensure the municipality was supplied with all essentials, but when it came to wholesale purchases, products were either too expensive or insufficient.

Thus, our town, Tetritskaro, and Chirikela were facing a strawberry-less spring.

It is extremely difficult when looking for ways to save your small business, especially when you have no idea whether it will be only spring that will have no strawberries, or if the
summer will also have no fruit as well. This is when you start to think that all is lost, that it is no time to think of business because the most important thing is health. But you also think that you must look further ahead into the future in such situations. We ended up deciding to try to find a person who could purchase raw materials and bring it to the border of our shut-down municipality.

We ultimately succeeded in finding a person who agreed to go to the capital in our place, purchase raw materials, and bring them to the border. This is when you realize that people will help each other to fulfil common goals, where a helping hand means a lot and we can do everything together. We no longer worried that we would have to move product boxes from the border to the workshop; it was impossible to find workers and hire them anyway. The most important thing was that we had materials. Using only our own forces, we got to the workshop, arranged the materials, and put it into production.

Despite the fact that we were living in a red zone and had no opportunity to save our small Chirikela with our own forces, we managed to find a way out.

It is never a bad idea to try, we survived strawberry-less spring.

_Nino Mchedlidze is the Co-Founder of Chirikela, a small business focused on producing and selling dried fruit in Georgia._
NEW CHALLENGES Emerge FOR Women ENTREPRENEURS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Zeinab Abuladze, Georgia

I am the Director of a cheese factory in Tsintskaro, Georgia, a village municipality mostly comprised of ethnic minorities and internally displaced persons (IDP). I am personally an eco-migrant from western Georgia, and it has been four years since we turned our family business and artisanal creation into a modern factory. We produce high-quality, natural products made from raw milk in an ecologically clean environment. We prepare different varieties of cheese, cottage cheese, and butter. We collect milk from 250-300 farmers not only from Tsintskaro, but also from several other villages and neighboring municipalities. The opening of our enterprise created new jobs in the village, and our factory has become a source of additional income for local farmers, especially female farmers.

The outbreak of COVID-19 brought new challenges to our business. At first, we were afraid of the situation; but later we felt a greater responsibility to contribute a positive change during this hard time. Consequently, our motivation and willingness to continuously offer our population high-quality products has doubled.

Fortunately, the quarantine across the country did not take place in winter when lactation is low. Therefore, this spring’s milk yield was moderate and the collection of raw milk from the farmers went without interruption. But there were several cases when farmers, based on fears caused by the pandemic, restrained themselves from selling milk. Even though the price of milk had increased, we kept the prices of our production at pre-quarantine levels.

Because the dairy products we produce are good for the human body and can help boost the immune system, it was essential to have them available for food rations.
during the pandemic. The market demand increased, and we started working and producing with doubled forces. During quarantine, the production process did not stop. As a result, my female staff members became overworked, so we decided to employ two additional female staff members. The production process was carried out according to the standards recommended by the World Health Organization, including FS&H standards and HACCP principles.

For safety reasons, the demand for packaged products had increased. Our packaging displays the Georgian Milk Mark (GMM), describing our product as a trusted and quality product, giving confidence to consumers and increasing our sales.

We have always followed the rules of safety and cleanliness in our enterprise. But since the spread of the coronavirus, we have started to use more disinfectants and sanitizers, started testing the temperature of the staff, and used facemasks together with other equipment. During the curfew, transporting goods was restricted.

However, we were able to obtain a permit for distribution from the Government of Georgia, which helped us to supply markets with our products without any interruption.

Finally, I would like to point out that while the pandemic has affected our enterprise and the lives of our employees, it did not have a totally negative impact. We have managed to quickly adapt to the situation and thanks to the right strategy, we were able to fulfill our responsibility, which is delivering natural products to our customers.

During the quarantine period, we developed strong feelings of gratitude for the people who had to deal with the pandemic. Therefore, we decided to take some charitable steps. Despite the limited time and
In these challenging conditions, we distributed our products to the Infectious Diseases and AIDS Center in Tbilisi to support medical staff during the outbreak. As the virus is more dangerous to the elderly, we have delivered our products to the beneficiaries of Barbare Otsdaerti Nursing Home. We believe that kindness is contagious, and we are proud to serve as motivators for other entrepreneurs to contribute as well.

I believe that any start-up enterprise will face challenges. As a female entrepreneur, I believe this is especially true for female-led businesses. But we always endure it through diligence, purposefulness, and collaboration. I see this daily in the women entrepreneurs who give us milk each morning and help us to have a constant production line in our enterprise.

Zeinab Abuladze is the Director of Ltd Tsintsarlo+ in Tetritskaro, Georgia.
ABOUT CIPE

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) is a non-profit international affiliate of the United States Chamber of Commerce and a core institute of the National Endowment for Democracy. Founded in 1983, CIPE’s mission is to strengthen democracy around the globe through private enterprise and market-oriented reform, fulfilling our vision of a world where democracy delivers the freedom and opportunity for all to prosper. CIPE does this by partnering with local business associations, chambers of commerce, universities, think tanks, and advocacy groups to advance democratic and economic reforms worldwide.

CIPE is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and currently has regional offices and representatives in more than a dozen countries, as well as a vast network of partners past and present. A wide range of donors directly support CIPE’s work, and CIPE regularly collaborates with other international development and democracy organizations to carry out joint projects.